



GEDATSU COMPANION

GEDATSU CHURCH USA
www.gedatsu-usa.org

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Gedatsu Kongo's Thought for the Month

*“Everything that happens to you
is a lesson for you
to create a good life.”*

You may pray to God for things to go smoothly. But even if you pray sincerely and live with integrity, difficulties may sometimes occur.

The question is, how should you accept those situations?

You should understand that something unfavorable to you is not always to your detriment. Who knows how the current situation will turn out in the future?

Therefore, it is important to earnestly do your best with the present situation you are in. You will then be able to step forward toward a positive future.



JUNE AND JULY ACTIVITIES

Due to COVID-19, in-person services and activities remain suspended. The L.A. and Sacramento Regional Boards will announce any changes in their respective regions.

June

- **Virtual “Never Forgotten” Memorial Services** (see page 2)
Sacramento Spiritual Center: Sunday, June 6, at 10 a.m.
Los Angeles Church: Sunday, June 13, at 10 a.m.
- **Appreciation Service, Mother Kiyota Memorial Service and Father’s Day Service** – Sunday, June 20, at 11 a.m. PDT.
Livestreamed from the L.A. Church.
- **Rokujizo Food Bazaar** – Canceled

July

- **Virtual “Never Forgotten” Memorial Services**
Sunday, July 11, at 10 a.m. – both Sacramento and L.A. Churches
- **Appreciation Service and Obon Service** – Sunday, July 18, at 11 a.m. PDT. Livestreamed from the L.A. Church.

Photo: Officiating the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony, Sr. Rev. Akira Sebe acknowledges the *Fudo* Guardian and expresses appreciation for its wisdom and guidance. See story and photos, beginning on page 3.



June “Never Forgotten” Online 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.

Because our churches are currently closed, our “Never Forgotten” services are video recorded and viewable at the time of each service on the Gedatsu YouTube site. A digital link to the video is emailed to members on the morning of the service.

The Sacramento Spiritual Center will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, June 6, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Kinuyo Nakatani, Mihoko Tanaka, Suyeko Hada Takemura, Motokichi Ide, Mine Kino Hirose, Isamu Yamada, Masaru Yamamura** and **Bettie Yamamura**.

The Los Angeles Church will hold its “Never Forgotten” Memorial Service on **Sunday, June 13, at 10 a.m.**, honoring the souls of **Harry Hidejin Arakawa, Kimiko Hirano, Kiyo Iwaki, Mitsuko Kaku, Masa Kikuta, Tsuchinojo Kimura, Kazumi Matsunami, Kameyoshi Michiuye, Manabu Mukai, Fusako Murakami, Phillip Nakamura, Robert Nakamura, Mary Anne Nolan, Ken Numata, Ai Okada, Hideyo Okada, Masakichi Okada, Michael O’Leary, Lawrence Sasano, Hidekichi Shiroishi, Tsuna Shiroishi, Hironobu George Terakawa, Ben Seiroku Toguchi, Carolyn Wong** and **June Tsuyoko Yamamisaka**.



Let’s Celebrate Our 2021 Graduates!

Despite church closures, we want to honor all graduates and their parents this summer.

If you have a student in the family who will be graduating this year from elementary, middle or high school; college; or graduate school, submit their name to be honored. Application forms (electronic and paper) are available from your branch office. Completed forms are due by July 1.



“Thinking of You Gift Cards and Messages



Fifty elderly L.A. Church members recently received a surprise in their mail – a personalized “Thinking of You” greeting card, along with a \$25 gift card or certificate to their favorite grocery or retail store – a gesture of care and friendship from their fellow church members.

The project was sponsored by the L.A. Regional Board and inspired by **Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi**, who phoned each gift recipient in advance “to find out where they liked to shop.” Gift cards were purchased from Target, Ralphs, Albertsons, VONs, Trader Joe’s and Tokyo Central (Japanese market), and greeting cards were crafted by **Marie Ishida**. The gifts were sent to L.A. Church members 70 years and older.

Heartfelt “thank you’s” immediately poured in from the surprised and grateful recipients -- like **Naomi Takara**, who resides in a skilled nursing facility. Her daughter, **Cookie Barthel**, was able to sit with her mother for the first time in over a year. “My mother was almost giddy when she showed me the Target gift card she received that morning,” said Cookie. “She said the church was so thoughtful and generous. She was so appreciative. She felt loved and cherished.”

Rokujizo Bazaar Canceled

Our annual fundraiser in Sacramento, normally scheduled for late June has been canceled for the second year because of the ongoing pandemic.

We thank our many volunteers, vendors, suppliers and the public for their annual support of our event and look forward to seeing everyone next year.



Spring *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony and Program

On Sunday, May 2, a modified *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony and Prayer Service was held before the *Fudo* Guardian on the *Goreichi* Holy Grounds of the Gedatsu Spiritual Center in Sacramento. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, attendance was limited to ministers and aides.

The service was conducted by **Senior Reverend Akira Sebe**, **Reverend Naoya Okano**, **Minister-Trainee Mica Rodriguez** and **Senior Deacon Jackson Ito**. They were aided by **Jason Detwiler**, **Dave Ide**, **Scott Taketa**, **Pop Vargas** and **Ami Vargas**. The program included remarks by Jackson and Jason (see pages 4 and 5).

Explaining the importance of the prayer service, Rev. Sebe said, "*Fudo* has protected and guided our American Gedatsu Church for many years. Through our sincere prayers, we are offering our appreciation to *Fudo* for its infinite wisdom and compassion in guiding and protecting us. I feel that *Fudo* is conducting the *Saito Goma* Ceremony. We humans are merely participating in it."

The *Saito Goma* ceremony/program was videotaped and is available for viewing on the Gedatsu Church official YouTube site.

Remarks given at *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony
May 2, Sacramento Spiritual Center

Fudo and Saito Goma By Senior Deacon Jackson Ito

I have been asked to say a few words of appreciation to the *Fudo* deity in connection with this *Saito Goma* service.

When we mention *Fudo*, many of us immediately think of fire. But **Sugimoto Sensei** taught me a deeper understanding of *Fudo's* blessing. We readily understand the concept that *Fudo* can use fire to burn and eradicate negative influences upon our lives.

However, as any chemist can tell you, fire and heat is only one catalyst to bring about positive outcomes from the blessings made available to us by the Universal Life Force. The Universal Life Force provides air, water and earth, which provide inorganic chemicals and compounds available for our use. This, combined with the energy of the sun, promotes growth of plants, animals and microbes (commonly referred to as "germs"). All of which supplies the organic ingredients to support us in life.

During both 2020 Spring and Fall Festivals, we burned special plaques requesting "Global Purification of COVID 19." Significant gains are being made to minimize death from COVID 19 and protect us from succumbing to its illness and reducing the economic loss to our society.

Today, we burned a fifth plaque, not to request additional favors, but to express our "Appreciation for All People Who Successfully Produced COVID 19 Vaccines." (See column at right.)

Although it was unfortunate that millions of people died from COVID 19, it was an opportunity for a learning experience we otherwise would not have recognized for the energy conversion capability of *Fudo* to benefit humankind with its blessings. It is important to remember to always give thanks for blessings we request and receive through our *Saito Goma* plaques.

During my first intensive lessons from *Sugimoto Sensei*, she told me that **Master Gedatsu Kongo** taught her that *Fudo* and our guardian angel *Inari* were the same. I could not understand that statement because I associated *Fudo* with fire and *Inari* with plants and animals.

So, the following year when I returned to Japan for my second lesson, I asked her to explain. She replied it was because both converted the energy of ingredients which were not yet useful to us in its present form into products that were beneficial to us.

Sugimoto Sensei said that during her youth, she had a great appreciation and love for science and mathematics. During her adult career, by using organic plants for cosmetics, she gained extensive business recognition and success for her talents. Likewise, **Bishop Eizan Kishida** advised me before I left for Caltech, to combine my physical understanding of science together with my spiritual understanding gained through *Gedatsu* to enable a successful life. I wish everyone would do the same.

Thank you for this opportunity to share this message with you.



Senior Deacon Jackson Ito explains his understanding of the meaning of the *Fudo* Guardian.

Five Special Plaques

During the *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony, five special plaques were offered to the sacred fire:

- Global Purification of COVID-19
- Unrested Souls of African Americans
- Unrested Souls of Native Americans
- Unrested Souls of All U.S. Territories and the World
- Appreciation for All People Who Successfully Produced the COVID-19 Vaccines

The plaques for African-American and Native-American spirits are intended to express appreciation for those communities and how their past and current struggles helped to create the society that we are able to live in today.



Remarks given at *Saito Goma* Fire Ceremony
May 2, Sacramento Spiritual Center

How Neutrinos Benefit Us **By Prof. Jason Detwiler**

Some of you know I'm a Professor of Physics at University of Washington. My father-in-law, **Sebe Sensei**, asked me to talk to you about the main subject of my research, which is one of the fundamental particles of nature called the neutrino.

If the neutrino is unfamiliar to you, well, to be honest, I also really did not know what it was either until I started researching it. That's natural, because the neutrino works behind the scenes and stays hidden from us. And yet, our very existence relies on it. That's what I want to talk to you about today.

We can't see or touch or sense the neutrino, but it's actually the second most plentiful particle in the universe. There's roughly one neutrino for every three particles of light. Most neutrinos were born during the Big Bang and have just been zooming toward us from the edge of the known universe since the dawn of time. Almost all of them go straight through us. To a neutrino, an atom looks like a swarm of bugs that it can easily pass through, only very rarely hitting an electron or proton or neutron.

The brightest source of neutrinos near us is the sun. The sun shines in neutrinos just like it shines with light. If our eyes could see neutrinos, we would see the heart of the sun, where neutrinos are being created in the hydrogen fusion processes that are the source of the sun's energy. Without the neutrino, hydrogen fusion could not take place, and the sun would not shine at all. So the warmth we receive from the sun comes to us in part thanks to neutrinos.

Actually, the Earth itself would also not be here if not for the neutrino. The material that makes up the Earth was originally made in a gigantic supernova blast in an ancient star. It started out as mostly hydrogen inside the star, and when the star's fusion energy burned out, the interior of the star collapsed as protons in the hydrogen started changing into neutrons by emitting neutrinos. Then the supernova blast splattered a hot proton-neutron soup from its core into its surroundings, where it clumped into highly radioactive elements, that then cooled and decayed into the elements we know by emitting more neutrinos!

The result was a gigantic dust cloud spewing out into the cosmos, filled with things like carbon, oxygen, silicon, and all of our favorite elements. That dust was the original ingredients of our solar system, some of which clumped together and formed the Earth. So, in a very literal sense, we are all made of star dust, which came about thanks to neutrinos.

(Continued on page 6)

(*Neutrinos* - continued from page 5)



Jason Detwiler describes how a fundamental particle of nature – the neutrino – deserves our gratitude.

However, it's possible that the neutrino is responsible for even more than that. Our models of the Big Bang describe a new-born universe filled with a hot plasma of matter and antimatter in equal parts, that then cools down as the universe expands. Today, when we look out in the universe, we see a multitude of stars and galaxies made of only matter, and no antimatter. One of the biggest mysteries in cosmology is how a universe made only of matter arose from ingredients containing equal parts of matter and antimatter.

The best explanation we have come up with so far points to the neutrino as perhaps being responsible. In these models, the neutrino that we know and love has a "big brother" that we haven't discovered yet that is much heavier. In the first instants after the Big Bang, a huge number of these big heavy neutrinos would have been around, and then as the universe started to cool down, they would decay and transform into lighter forms of matter or antimatter.

And here's the key: that heavy neutrino can maybe turn into matter more often than antimatter, often enough to generate the contents of the entire known universe today. In other words, your oldest ancestors might be neutrinos!

If this model is right, it predicts that we should see extremely rare events of matter creation in the laboratory. This is what I spend 90% of my time trying to do. It also predicts that neutrinos and anti-neutrinos should behave somewhat differently. There are new giant neutrino projects being constructed, including one in Japan called *Hyper-Kamiokande*, that are hoping to detect that as well.

Neutrino physicists like myself are very excited about these possibilities and are working very hard to see if they are true.

I'll try now to bring this science lecture back to Gedatsu study.

It's amazing to me how much we benefit from the neutrino, and yet throughout the history of humanity, we had no concept of it until about 80 years ago. Humans have gazed at the sun for thousands of years, wondering why it shines. We now know that the neutrino plays an important role, not only in that but in many other aspects of our existence as well. You might say we owe the neutrino our gratitude. If it feels strange to feel gratitude toward a subatomic particle, perhaps another way to look at it is to recognize the humbling fragility and wonder of our existence.

What else remains still hidden from us to which we owe our lives? More importantly, how can I make the most of this wonderful gift of the lives of myself and those around me? When I'm not absorbed in research, this is the question I try to answer every day.

Thank you for this opportunity.





“The Teachings of Master Gedatsu Kongo,” in Japanese, constitute the entirety of published writings by our Founder. These volumes are regarded as the basic source of Gedatsu teaching for Gedatsu-kai members in Japan. From these volumes, I have selected specific quotations that I believe are meaningful for American readers and have translated them into English. I hope these essential quotations will serve as a primary resource for Gedatsu study for current and future generations of Gedatsu students.

-- Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Quotations of Master Gedatsu Kongo Selected and Translated by **Rev. Hisakazu Taki**

Selected Quotations #1

- ☉ Gedatsu is to reflect within yourself and be free from ego. Self-approval is not the correct self-knowledge. Look deeply inside yourself with honesty.
- ☉ It is *you* who nurture or destroy yourself. Your mind is expressed as your speech and then as your action. Therefore, it is important to examine yourself honestly. You should be true to your word.
- ☉ When you know yourself correctly and keep on the right path, you will surely be blessed with good health, longevity, and prosperity. But contrarily, when you are ruled by selfish desires and keep doing reckless things, you will suffer, worry easily, and finally lose everything important in your life.
- ☉ Do your best in your daily duties and activities with sincerity. This attitude will make you happy and benefit the world.
- ☉ Your happiness or unhappiness is up to your thoughts and attitude in life.
- ☉ Cease being jealous, hateful, sorrowful, combative and arrogant. This is hard to accomplish because you are the extension of generations of ancestors. Seriously strive to understand this and try to live non-egotistically.
- ☉ No one can grow up by themselves. Your mother taught you everything: how to walk, how to use a spoon and fork, etc., when you were a small child. When you went to school, teachers taught you many things. That is why you became able to stand on your own feet. Never forget the greatness of the blessings you have received from your parents, teachers, and many other people to this day.
- ☉ 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 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 first. Those who focus only on the deterioration of society are looking in the wrong direction. They should look inwardly to themselves first and realize how, as a couple, they have been deceiving each other.



Gedatsu Q&A - Part 12

By Rev. Hisakazu Taki

Q *What is the significance of the mirror on the church altar?*

A Gedatsu is to reflect on ourselves and correct our selfish attitude. This is the path for our true happiness and improvement. A mirror reflects everything as it is. When we sit in front of the altar, the mirror on the altar reminds us of the importance of self-reflection. Facing the altar, the mirror also reminds us that we have the divine nature within ourselves.



Q *Does Gedatsu deny human desires?*

A Desires are essential for human existence. If we deny desires, we cannot live. However, desires sometimes cause human sufferings and conflicts among us. Therefore, it is important for us to deal with our desires appropriately. Religions have struggled to solve this question from ancient times.

Some religions emphasize the negative aspects of human desires and urge us to contain our desires. But Gedatsu does not deny human desires. Gedatsu encourages us to deal with our desires effectively.

Master Gedatsu Kongo stated: *“Do not be driven by petty desires but have grand desires to benefit the world.”*

Gedatsu is the path to live in accordance with the Universal Law. We should not be driven by desires but should control desires appropriately to live according to the universal law. When we become free from our selfish desires and spend our energy, time, and money to benefit the world, we will be able to attain true peace and happiness.

Human desires know no bounds. The more selfish desires we have, the more we will suffer. When we become free from selfish desires and live for the betterment of society and people’s happiness, all desires will work efficiently in a well-balanced manner within us. We will then be able to live a good and productive life.

Q *Is religion necessary for everyone to live a happy life?*

A We may think that those who believe in religion are weak persons, and that independent people do not need religion. When everything goes smoothly, we tend to think we can live without any help from others. But, when we encounter difficulties that we cannot handle, we may feel powerless and pray for someone’s help.

(Continued on page 9)

(Gedatsu Q & A - continued from page 8)

The truth is, we always receive immeasurable blessings and protection from many people and everything in the universe. But we are usually not aware of this. Therefore, it may be hard for us to recognize the significance of religion when things are going smoothly.

We are allowed to live by receiving immeasurable blessings from everything in the universe. We eat meals every day. They are all living things. Thanks to their sacrifice, we are able to sustain our life. We drink water, breathe the air, and receive sunlight. Our physical functions and the workings of our internal organs are all controlled by the universal life. This is how we exist today. When we become aware of this fact of our life, we will be filled with gratitude. This awareness will make us live fully.

Religion is the path to realize the significance of our existence through understanding the connection between human and the universe. Therefore, Gedatsu is necessary for everyone to live a happy good life.

Q *Will I be unhappy without religious faith?*

A I don't believe that, of course. However, I can say that we will be able to live with joy and hope when we have religious faith.

When we observe religions and their activities in the world, we may be skeptical about them. In fact, some religious organizations have harmful influences on society. Some went to extremes and killed people in the name of their religious beliefs.

Everyone knows that some religions coerce people to donate money, and others deceive the aged or the sick, saying that they will become healthier and happier by donating a lot of money. It is a shame if we deny the significance of religion because of those examples. We may think that only weak people need religion, or that religion is toxic because it makes people more dependent. This is merely our misunderstanding of religion.



I don't mean that we should belong to a specific religious organization but, rather, we should be aware of the religious sphere. What is the religious sphere? It is a boundless world we can realize when we become aware of the connection between the unseen spiritual world and ourselves. When we realize that we are profoundly connected with everything in the universe, and that we are nurtured and supported by everyone and everything in this world, we will be able to understand the true meaning of our existence and our role in the world. We will then be able to appreciate what we are and live fully with joy and hope.

If we have a chance to study a specific religion, it is good to learn that religion. Through studying the specific religion we join, we will be able to understand ourselves more deeply and then become aware of the boundless world of life.



The Home is a *Dojo* of Religion **By Reverend Kazuo Yamada**

Our founder, Gedatsu Kongo, stated, "Life is religion, and religion is life."

By this, he meant that the various happenings in our daily lives are given to us by the Law of the Universe as lessons to cultivate and enhance our souls. Life, therefore, is where the soul learns through experiences.

For example, in our various human relationships – with couples and families, with people we meet at work, at school and in the community, with friends, acquaintances, neighbors and strangers – all are lessons to cultivate our soul.

Based on karmic scenarios from previous lives, individuals meet each other in relationships that mutually promote the growth of their souls. Marital and family relationships, in particular, are the closest relationships that train one's soul.

To this point, Gedatsu Kongo stated, "The home, indeed, is the *dojo*, or training hall, of religion and a sanctuary of faith."

This means that you don't have to meditate in a secluded area or sit cross-legged beneath a waterfall to polish your soul. When you wake up in your bed in the morning, you are already in a religious *dojo*.



Rev. Kazuo Yamada is resident minister of the Gedatsu Church in Hawaii. He formerly served for 10 years at Gedatsu churches in Los Angeles and Sacramento.

Gedatsu emphasizes that the home and family life is the place to learn how to improve yourself.

That is the beauty of Gedatsu. We don't need to spend a lot of time and trouble to go to some remote place to cultivate our soul.

Personally, I know that my own soul has received a lot of training through my marriage. Thanks to my having a wife, I have been forced to strive to be a decent person, even a little bit.

When you wake up in your bed in the morning, you are already in a religious *dojo*. . . That is the beauty of Gedatsu.

If I were still single, I would have lived a more careless, messier life. Most of my meals would have consisted of instant ramen and beer, I would have bathed less, and worn the same unwashed clothes every day. So, no one would have approached me.



Rev. Yamada and his wife, Yoko, are a welcoming presence among Gedatsu Church members in Honolulu.

Couples have the opportunity to cultivate their hearts, thanks to their partner. In other words, couples are in a relationship that encourages each other's soul growth.

Learning to be considerate and loving people is cultivated ever more deeply through repeated practices and failures that are the daily lessons of couples and families.

(Continued on back page)

APRIL 2021 OFFERINGS

Northern California Total: \$3,025

General Donations: M/M D. Tsuboi, S. Nishino, J. Detwiler/J. Sebe, M/M J. Horner, M/M R. Hu, Anonymous, M/M T. Matsumoto, M/M D. Ide, R. Nakatani*, S. Tanaka*

Special Acknowledgments

J. Tanaka December "Never Forgotten"*
J. Tanaka New Year Appreciation*
M/M S. Sekikawa New Year Appreciation*
M/M S. Mukai Spring Festival (\$500)
J. Ito Spring Festival (\$500)
M/M D. Ide Spring Festival
M/M Ho. Tsujimura Spring Festival
M/M R. Ito Spring Festival

* Donations received earlier but not recorded

Southern California Total: \$4,969

General: M/M T. Fukushima, M/M M. Ishida, T. Ishida, J. Ito, M/M K. Kuritani, M/M T. Matsumoto, T. Misumi, M/M V. Mizokami, T. Murakami, M/M L. Muronaka, M. Nakamura, R. Nakamura, T. Nakamura, Y. Naruko, C. Oishi, T. Oishi, M/M N. Okano, A. Okimura, M/M K. Shiroishi, F. Sueyoshi, T. Toyama, M/M H. Tsujimura

Special Acknowledgments

J. Ito In memory of Kazuye Ito
Jo Ann Kaku "Never Forgotten" for Thomas Mahoney
Jo Ann Kaku Appreciation for Spring Festival
M/M K. Kuritani "Never Forgotten" service

Online Donations: Total: \$1,953.83

General: A. Sebe, N. Tsuboi, M/M A. Kishida, M/M S. Shiroishi, H. Tsujimura

Special Acknowledgments

J. Reid "Never Forgotten" for Tomoyo Ogura
J. Hamamoto "Never Forgotten"
H. Taki Appreciation for Spring Festival (\$500)
M/M P. Reid Appreciation for Spring Festival
R. Sakamoto "Never Forgotten" for Arthur Sakamoto
J. Tanaka "Never Forgotten" for Karl Kaoru Tanaka

GEDATSU RESOURCES



DVDs of Gedatsu Videos and More

If you, or someone you know, don't have access to a computer or internet or have no email address, you can still stay connected with Gedatsu and informed on church activities.

DVDs containing church videos and other online communications (such as IN TOUCH bulletins and other notices) are available from your local church.



YouTube videos, like the recent interview with L.A. member Tom Itsuto Okimura are available on DVD by request.

Private Consultation and Family Services

Our ministers are always available to support members and friends by phone, videoconferencing and other means for private consultations, family blessings and memorial services, and holy *Goho* and *Hiho* practice.

To arrange a service or consultation, contact your local church:

- Los Angeles Church: **Rev. Naoya Okano**
(626) 288-1212 naoya_okano@gedatsu-usa.org
- Sacramento Spiritual Center:
Ms. Mica Rodriguez (916) 363-6054
gedatsuchurchsac@gmail.com

Regarding Offerings

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

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The *Gedatsu Companion* is published monthly for members like **Judy Hamamoto** of the L.A. Gedatsu Church. A Gedatsu member for more than 50 years, Judy and her husband **Ben** reside in Rosemead. She works part-time for a doctor in Little Tokyo and enjoys spending time with

her children **Bryce** and **Jennifer** and grandson **Brevyn**. An avid crafter, during the pandemic, Judy made hundreds of face masks for family and friends.

"Gedatsu has taught me the importance of family togetherness," says Judy, "and expressing kindness and caring towards each other – as well as having gratitude to my parents and ancestors."

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Sr. Rev. Akira Sebe, **Deacon Jo Ann Shiroishi**,
Rev. Hisakazu Taki, **Rev. Kazuo Yamada**, **Yoko Yamada**

(Home Is a Dojo of Religion - continued from page 10)

Couples are in a relationship that encourages each other's soul growth.

What would you have been like if you hadn't had your current partner or children? What about your family? Your relationship with your co-workers? Your friends?

Each of these relationships is the school to learn how to be kind and helpful to others. As we practice these positive behaviors in our daily life, we gradually polish our soul and cultivate our mind, ultimately strengthening our connection to God.

Keep in mind Master Gedatsu Kongo's words, "The home, indeed, is a *dojo* of religion," and let us polish and cultivate our hearts through our families.

That is because, as we polish our soul in this way – day in and day out – we become a higher-dimensional soul whose happiness is fulfilled in pleasing and helping others even after our body is destroyed.

Let me give you an assignment. Today, at home, review your relationship with your partner, your family members, and those who are close to you. Then do so once again from a spiritual perspective. You will surely want to thank your partner, family and all others for being the source of your soul's education.

