

**Don't Search for God Up in the Sky.  
Focus on Cultivating Your Mind with Love and Faith.**

By Rev. Tatsunori Kamiya

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When I was a little child, my father used to take me to a Christian church. I used to think that God was up in the sky and always watching us. When I felt sad or lonely, I tried to remember that God was always with me, and that made me feel secure.

My wife's parents used to take her to Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines whenever they went on a hike. She remembers that she used to ask many things when she visited the temple or shrine. For example, "Please make me healthier" or "I want to be in the same classroom with my best friend."

When she was a teenager and started studying Gedatsu teachings, she realized that she had been doing the wrong thing. She was supposed to say "thank you" instead of asking for something at the temple or shrine. She also learned that she was supposed to return to the same temple or shrine to say "thank you" for answering her requests, whether or not the result was satisfactory. In this material world, if we ask someone for help, we should say "thank you" after they help us. It is the same thing. When we ask God or our ancestors for help, we must say "thank you" to them later.

Over 20 years ago, when my wife belonged to a Gedatsu branch in Japan, a Gedatsu teacher visited there as a guest speaker. During his speech, he said that if we do not say "thank you" after we ask God or our ancestors for help and receive results, our unthanked requests would affect us like an invisible debt. Even though we try to do the right thing or try to be a good person and become happy, our invisible debt stops us, because we forgot to say thank you after requesting something.

My wife instantly realized that she had a lot of invisible debts because she had been requesting many things every time she visited a shrine or temple, and, of course, she hadn't expressed any thanks after that. She did the practice of repentance for requesting many things to God without saying "thank you."

Rev. Aoyama, who has been providing an explanation about the Gedatsu "Thought for the Month," explained the difference between faith and right action. I am going to read an excerpt from his writings.

"'Faith' is a strong belief in God or something holy. People put their hands together or kneel to pray or make a wish. We are here to pray and God is over there to answer our prayer. We ask Almighty God for help. Sometimes church ministers, Buddhist monks or priests help us as a guide. This has been a very traditional style of most of the religions in the world.

"Our founder, Gedatsu Kongo, however, clearly called them 'genetic believers' and said, 'They are not true religious people.'

“The Japanese words ‘faith’ and ‘right action’ are pronounced the same in Japanese: *shinko*. Our founder always encouraged us to do the ‘right action.’ He emphasized that we should try to reach the higher spiritual level and try to be generous, compassionate and mighty like God.

“We are part of the universe. We should remember that and follow the law of the universe.

“Our founder said, ‘Love is God. Faithfulness is also another dimension of God.’ He tried to tell us not to search for God up in the sky but to focus on cultivating our mind with love and faith. He also said, “God is within us. God is with us and we can reach the holy spiritual level.’

“There is another quote by our founder. ‘It is simple and easy to reach the holy spiritual level like God or Buddha. Just let go of your selfish desire and serve others sincerely.’ Focusing on helping others is the key. When we serve others with love, we can reach the holy spiritual level. So introducing Gedatsu to your friends is not only for others, but also for ourselves. Spreading Gedatsu is a very important practice of ‘right action.’”

That is an excerpt from Rev. Aoyama’s writings. I hope you share Gedatsu with your friends and family.