

Gedatsu Is about Practice, Not Knowledge

By Rev. Tatsunori Kamiya

January 2017

We have offered opening prayer together. I wonder if you have thought about the meaning of each prayer. One of the “Five Articles of Faith” is “Our attitude and objective is to confirm by personal experience.”

There is an explanation of this part in this book, “Invitation to Gedatsu 2.” The basic motto of Gedatsu is to practice what we have learned. Then we should learn from experience, self-reflect and change ourselves for the better. That way, we can not only study the theories of Gedatsu, but also apply the teachings to real life. We can truly cultivate our mind and become a better person.

That is the biggest characteristic of Gedatsu. Our founder, Gedatsu Kongo, used to emphasize, “Our life is supposed to be based on religious faith. Religious faith is supposed to be applied to our life.” We cannot understand Gedatsu by reading books or listening to sermons. We can understand Gedatsu by practicing the teachings in our life. To practice and learn Gedatsu is to try out what we have learned at the church or from books. That is the only way to confirm the teachings. If we can continue to practice, we can develop a confident faith and life style.

The thought for the month is: Gedatsu is not about accumulating knowledge. It is all about practicing the teachings in your daily life.

Let me read the explanation of the thought for the month in the Gedatsu monthly magazine of this month.

Our founder said, “Gedatsu is not about accumulating knowledge” in his writings. However, he did not say that accumulating knowledge is not good. He appreciated the value of knowledge, but he encouraged us not to be stuck on the level where we study only with our head. He told us to move on to the next level, where we practice the teachings, experience and learn the real teachings.

For example, the founder used to say the same advice to Gedatsu members over and over. One Gedatsu member said, “Sir, I know what you mean.” The founder said, “Idiot, who told you to listen and learn by your head?” The Gedatsu member said, “Oh no, you are telling me about the same thing again?” It is said that the founder didn’t give any advice to the member for several months.

Even though the teachings are great, if we don’t practice that, they are useless. They are not helpful to create a happy life. That is why the founder kept saying, “You cannot understand Gedatsu by listening or reading by head. You can only understand Gedatsu by practicing the teachings in your real life.”

There is a true story about practicing Gedatsu.

There was a man who had a short temper. He asked a Gedatsu teacher for help. The Gedatsu teacher said, “When you are about to lose your temper, look at this and hold your temper, okay? This is a promise between men.” Then the instructor tied a tiny paper ribbon around the

finger of the man. Since then, the man kept trying not to lose his temper by looking at the paper ribbon around his finger. People around him wondered if it would work. Six months later, they were surprised to see the outcome. His family felt happy about his change. One year later, the atmosphere of his family became peaceful. Many people began to come to his home to study Gedatsu and his house became a Gedatsu branch.

It is not easy to change our bad habits or our bad ways of thinking, which we have been doing for years. However, nothing is impossible. If we follow the teachings and continue to practice what we have learned in our daily life, we can do it.

Let's remember that motto this year.