

Gedatsu Teaching 10
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Translation and commentary by Rev. H. Taki

Gedatsu is truly sacred and precious.

Get rid of your ego, self-reflect and sincerely practice morality. Live each day and night with a deep sense of appreciation and requital. Work for the salvation of mankind and follow the path of humanity. I have repeatedly explained this in the monthly Gedatsu newsletter.

A selfish person neither believes nor accepts the path of gratitude, the Gedatsu path, even when he hears the Gedatsu teaching. In fact, he may feel annoyed on hearing it. According to Buddhism, this is because of the Five Impurities: (1) turbulence of the times, (2) degenerating ideology, (3) spread of earthly desires, (4) lowering of human nature, and (5) shortening of life. By pursuing various desires, a person spends his lifetime astray, in a state of confusion and lawlessness. It is only natural that he suffers.

Buddhist teachings explain that there are four basic human sufferings: birth, aging, sickness and death. Beyond these sufferings, there are others, such as grief, as well as sufferings due to material cravings, greed and attachment. When one demonstrates greed and various cravings, one will not only suffer on earth while alive, but also will suffer further in hell after death. There are also other sufferings, such as poverty, parting from loved ones and confronting adversaries. Buddhist teaching states that you should not explain the teaching to those who scheme and ridicule, who are lazy, or who have egotistical views, because they won't believe or accept the teaching even when they hear it. They are attached to selfish desires and cannot understand. Therefore, the Buddha said you should not explain the teaching to those people.

By contrast, if you renounce your ego, even while living in the present social environment, you can live happily and freely. You can also succeed in life, enjoy longevity and live contentedly without fear, boredom and troubles.

This is because, as I have stated, Gedatsu is sacred and precious. Gedatsu is truly profound and vast. I urge you to study and inquire into Gedatsu more deeply. Please read my book on the Gedatsu doctrine and monthly Gedatsu newsletters thoroughly.

Self-reflect, self-reform and render salvation to those who suffer mental conflicts, while working hard in your occupation. This is the path of humanity to save people and benefit the world.

Without changing your negative attitude in life, how can you find peace and happiness even when you pray to God? I urge you to seriously consider this.

Commentary on Gedatsu Teaching 10

Gedatsu Kongo explains again the Gedatsu teaching. In particular, he emphasizes here the importance of self-reflection as the means to achieving true happiness.

He also emphasizes the importance of self-renunciation and observing the highest morality. He urges us to live with appreciation and gratitude, and work for people's happiness, as this path of Gedatsu will bring forth happiness for yourself and others.

Some people may listen to and follow the teaching. Others, however, will neither believe nor accept Gedatsu, because their egos prevent them from hearing the teaching. This state of mind is called the "Five Impurities" in the Buddhist tradition.

The Five Impurities are the indications of a degenerated society: (1) turbulent times, when famines, plagues and wars arise, (2) degenerating ideology caused by erroneous views, (3) spread of earthly desires, (4) lowering of human nature because of people's rejection of morality, and (5) shortening of life.

Ego: The Source of Human Misery

Gedatsu Kongo describes the degenerated state of present society by using the above-mentioned Buddhist terminology. Without my going into detail, the founder simply describes the selfish state of the present world. When people are selfish, their egos are the source of every human misery in the world. Selfish people won't listen to the teaching or believe it. Therefore, it is very hard to save these people.

You are very fortunate to be able to study the Gedatsu teaching. While none of us is perfect, by listening to the teaching, you can become aware of your selfish thoughts, and will be able to correct your wrong attitude. This is possible not only because of your efforts, but also because of the guidance of your ancestors. This is an important point to understand.

When you self-reflect and become aware of your egotistical thoughts, you will be free from egoism, and will be physically and spiritually happy. Thus, self-reflection and self-reform is the path to your true happiness. This is why Gedatsu Kongo repeatedly states that Gedatsu is truly sacred. He urges us to carefully read and study his books and writings in order to understand this point. He also encourages us to try to share this path of happiness with people who are suffering. This is your sacred duty bestowed by God.

Change Your Thoughts to Change Your Life

Gedatsu Kongo concludes this writing with following words: "Without changing your negative attitude in life, how can you find peace and happiness even when you pray to God?"

Some people may think that to have religion is just to pray to God for personal gains without any effort and self-reflection. Such an attitude will never lead you to happiness. Gedatsu, the path of happiness, always starts with your self-reflection and self-reform. When you self-reflect and become aware of your selfish thoughts, you will apologize to God for your wrong attitude in life, and will be able to become a new person by correcting your faults. This total change of your mind is the beginning of your true peace and happiness. 

For Your Personal Study . . .

To aid you in your study and practice of Gedatsu, take a moment to ponder the following questions:

Question 1: *Our founder Gedatsu Kongo repeatedly stressed the importance of self-reflection. How do you practice self-reflection in your daily life?*

Question 2: *Do you practice Gedatsu in your daily work? If so, how? If not, why?*