



Myohoji Temple

Did You Know? #14

About Offerings

When making offerings to the Gohonzon your attitude should be the same as if you were making an offering to the True Buddha Nichiren Daishonin because the Gohonzon is the enlightened life of the True Buddha. Therefore the following guidelines should be observed out of deep respect for the benefit of being able to practice True Buddhism.

Daily Offerings include, evergreen, water and incense. These are offered to the Three Treasures of True Buddhism and signify the manifestation of the Three Inherent Potentials in our lives.

Here are some guidelines:

Any accessories that are used in making offerings to the Gohonzon should not be used for any other purpose.

WATER: Water should be offered in a small water cup especially for that purpose. This water cup should never be used for any other purpose than making an offering to the Gohonzon. When offering water, run the tap to clear the pipes of any sediment, place the cup in the altar prior to morning Gongyo and silently recite the following:

"I offer deepest gratitude to the Three Treasures of the Buddhism of Sowing,
Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo."

Leave the cup uncovered for the day. Before beginning evening Gongyo, remove it from the altar. You may replace the empty cup with a lid on it, or put it away until the next morning.

EVERGREEN: Evergreen should be of the type that will remain green for at least a week, always fresh cut, and the water should be changed as often as needed so that the water remains

fresh. Never use a live plant as an offering because dirt in a container in front of the Gohonzon is not acceptable. Shikimi is used in many countries because it is fragrant and remains green for a long time. However, Shikimi is not available in the United States, so we use something similar.

INCENSE: Incense should be the stick type that is available at the temple store. This incense is high quality and will not produce a smoky film that could damage the Gohonzon. Incense should always be laid flat and burned from left to right. The incense is laid flat rather than standing up, so the ashes won't scatter signifying a scattered mind. You may purchase smokeless incense if the smoke bothers you or others in your household. Three sticks of incense are generally used, however, if this produces too much smoke, you may use fewer.

Candles and Food Offerings

*CANDLES: Candles should always be white and replaced before burned to the end.

*If you prefer, you may use electric candles or clear oil burning candles instead of wax candles. (Do not use colored oil)

FOOD: Use only vegetarian foods and fruit as offerings. Remove all labels and clean before placing on the altar. Food offerings should be placed on a tray or plate that is used only for this purpose. Leave on the altar only as long as it remains fresh. Do not cut the fruit unless it is very large such as a watermelon. After placing the tray with the food offering on the altar silently recite the following:

"I offer deepest gratitude to the Three Treasures of the Buddhism of Sowing
Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo."

RICE: DO NOT place uncooked rice in the altar. If you would like to offer rice, use cooked rice. Take the first portion placed in a rice cup for the purpose of offering; ring the bell 3 times, silently recite the following: "I offer deepest gratitude to the Three Treasures of the Buddhism of Sowing Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo." then immediately remove the rice.

OTHER: Other offerings can be made for special events, such as an unopened bottle of sake. Be aware of the potential attraction of insects to sweets and other such items. If you do offer cooked vegetarian foods or cut watermelon, make the offering then immediately remove from the altar.

Offering As Part Of The Gongyo Ceremony

BELL: Ringing the bell when performing Gongyo is also considered an offering and should be done according to the instructions in the front of your sutra book.