

Question: What is Gokuyo?

Answer: Gokuyo means to offer our gratitude to the three treasures in the form of financial offerings or material goods.

The Three Treasures of the Buddha, the Law, and the Priesthood

In Buddhism, we are taught to believe in the three treasures of the Buddha, the Law, and the priesthood and carry out our practice. The three treasures refer to the Buddha, who appeared in this world, the Law (teaching) that the Buddha taught, and the priesthood, who preserve and teach the Law so that it can continue to be transmitted to future generations. In Nichiren Shoshu, the three treasures are:

- The treasure of the Buddha: Nichiren Daishonin, the Buddha of Intrinsically Perfect Wisdom, who appeared in the Latter Day of the Law
- The treasure of the Law: Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, the inner realization of the Buddha of Intrinsically Perfect Wisdom, embodied as the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of the Essential Teaching
- The treasure of the priesthood: Second High Priest Nikko Shonin and all of the successive High Priests of Nichiren Shoshu, who each received the transmission of the Heritage of the Law entrusted to a single person

We are able to receive benefits only through believing in the three treasures and diligently reciting Gongyo and chanting Daimoku. This is why we revere the three treasures. This may be a little difficult to grasp at first, but herein lies the core of the Nichiren Shoshu practice, so correctly understanding this is critical. At the bare minimum, please try to learn the term, “the three treasures—the Buddha, the Law, and the priesthood.”

Showing our Gratitude with Concrete Action

In the Goshu, “Letter to Niike,” the Daishonin states:

If one truly understands Buddhism, he should show this in his respect for the priest, reverence for the Law, and offerings to the Buddha.

(Goshu, p. 1461; MW-1, p. 260)

Gokuyo will protect Head Temple Taisekiji and local temples and will allow for the development of new temples. At the same time, Gokuyo is the source that will enable the Daishonin’s teaching to be propagated into the future. We are able to receive tremendous benefits by making offerings to the True Buddha and

upholding correct practice. Here is a wonderful passage from one of the sutras that illustrates this point:

One day Shakyamuni, who was visiting a place called Rājagriha, [the capital of the kingdom of Magadha in ancient India] was offered a mud pie by a small child who was playing in a sandbox. Shakyamuni was delighted in having received this offering and said to his disciples, “One hundred years after my passing, this child will be reborn as a great king.”

With this prediction, Shakyamuni taught the benefits of making offerings. True to Shakyamuni’s words, the child was later reborn as King Ashoka and ruled his country superbly by protecting the teachings of the Buddha.

Let us try to make sincere offerings to the Gohonzon. The Gohonzon surely will reward us without fail.

Cleaning Also is Considered Gokuyo

Gokuyo offerings can be divided largely into three categories: “offering of material goods,” “offering of the body,” and “offering of the Law.” The offering of material goods refers to the offerings that you make to the Gohonzon through your chief priest. You may have witnessed your parents offering money or rice during the Oko Ceremony. These offerings enable a temple to operate for kosen-rufu. To offer one’s body means to assist a chief priest by cleaning the temple, making paper flowers for the Oeshiki Ceremony, and so on. Don’t you feel satisfied after cleaning up a mess? You almost feel as though your mind also has been purified. Let’s all try to participate in a cleaning effort for an immaculate temple. The offering of the Law means to propagate the Daishonin’s teachings by sharing with others the immeasurable greatness of the Gohonzon and the importance of faith and practice. Also, reciting Gongyo and chanting Daimoku to the Gohonzon is considered an offering to the Law.

For many of the young people, since you do not work yet, it may be difficult for you to make offerings of material goods. However, any one of us can make an offering to the Law through reciting Gongyo, chanting Daimoku or cleaning the temple. These are great offerings so please challenge yourselves to make the utmost effort. The Daishonin teaches us in the “*Hakumai ippyo Goshō*”:

A person, who never forgets the mind of offering to the Buddha can attain happiness.

(*Goshō*, p.1544 [summary])

As the Daishonin instructs, let us continue to make offerings to the Gohonzon. The amount of one’s offering does not matter. What is of paramount importance is that you have gratitude toward the Gohonzon when making the

offering. Please do not forget that what constitutes correct practice when making an offering is not pressuring yourself, but doing what you can for the Gohonzon with sincerity. If you can begin by making efforts to clean the temple at the end of the year and even offer a little money from your *otoshidama* (New Year's gift money) to the Gohonzon for the New Year, which would be wonderful.