

What is the Gohonzon?

The object of worship of Nichiren Shoshu is the life of the True Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin. In order to save his disciples and believers who would take faith after his passing, the Daishonin inscribed his enlightened life in the form of a mandala as the object of worship. It is called the Dai-Gohonzon. By inscribing the Dai-Gohonzon, Nichiren Daishonin established the cause for the universal propagation of true Buddhism and the securing of peace throughout the world. All Gohonzons enshrined in temples and homes of believers are transcriptions of the Dai-Gohonzon and derive their power from it.

When we are seated before the Gohonzon, we should realize that we are in the presence of the True Buddha.

Our devotion to the Buddha, expressed through our sincere chanting of Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, is the means by which we can fuse our lives with the life of the Buddha. While in this state of fusion, the powers of the Buddha and the Law permeate our existence, purifying our minds, extinguishing our evil karma, and planting seeds of wisdom, compassion, and virtue in our lives.

Having established the correct object of worship and the correct way of faith and practice to manifest the Gohonzon's beneficial power within the lives of believers, the Daishonin transferred the living entity of his inner enlightenment to his sole successor, the Second High Priest, Nikko Shonin. This transmission, entrusted to a single person, is the basis upon which each successive High Priest transcribes the Gohonzons that are bestowed upon disciples and believers of succeeding generations. This unbroken flow of the Buddha's life between master and disciple is the means by which the Daishonin's enlightenment will remain in the world to save all mankind throughout eternity.

All believers of Nichiren Shoshu are granted a Gohonzon that is loaned to them by the Head Temple, so they can worship in their own homes. The Gohonzon is transcribed only by the High Priest of Nichiren Shoshu. The chief priest of the local temple bestows the Gohonzon to believers who are ready to receive.