

Gokuyo is an offering to the Three Treasures of True Buddhism, the Buddha, the Law, and the Priesthood. It is an integral part of our practice to the Gohonzon. There are two types of offerings:

Zai-kuyo refers to material offerings such as financial or food offerings one makes at the temple.

Ho-kuyo refers to the offering of the Law. This means to spread the teachings of True Buddhism through shakubuku.

These two types of offerings are an expression of our gratitude to the True Buddha, Nichiren Daishonin. We accumulate tremendous good fortune in our lives by performing these two types of offerings to the Gohonzon.

Go means “respect,” ku means “to offer” or “to support,” and yo means “to nurture.” By making our precious offerings, we are nurturing and supporting True Buddhism with deep respect and gratitude for our great fortune to have encountered the Daishonin’s teachings in this lifetime.

Nichiren Shoshu is very different from other religions with regards to offerings. Many other religious groups will accept donations from non-believers, corporations and fund-raisers. Nichiren Shoshu, however, can only accept offerings from believers. This is because offering Gokuyo is a part of our practice to the Gohonzon, and is a supporting cause for accumulating fortune and attaining Buddhahood.

There is a famous story in the Devadatta (Twelfth) Chapter of the Lotus Sutra regarding the offering made to Shakyamuni by the Dragon King’s daughter. Upon hearing Shakyamuni preach the Lotus Sutra at Eagle Peak, she immediately attained enlightenment. However, none of the members of the assembly could believe it because she was a female and also a dragon. She then offered a great jewel to Shakyamuni and he immediately accepted it. The Lotus Sutra states:

At that time the dragon girl had a precious jewel worth as much as the thousand-millionfold world which she presented to the Buddha. The Buddha immediately accepted it. The dragon girl said to Bodhisattva Wisdom Accumulated and to the venerable one, Shariputra, “I presented the precious jewel and the World-Honored One accepted it—was that not quickly done?” They replied, “Very quickly!” The girl said, “Employ your supernatural powers and watch me attain Buddhahood. It will be even quicker than that!” (“The Lotus Sutra” trans. by Burton Watson; p. 188)

Shakyamuni’s immediate acceptance of her offering verified that she had, indeed attained enlightenment. In the same way, our sincere Gokuyo is accepted as verification that this is a supporting cause for our attainment of Buddhahood together with Gongyo, Daimoku, and Shakubuku.

It is not possible for Nichiren Shoshu to accept offerings from non-believers, because without the faith and

practice of True Buddhism, these offerings could not be a supporting cause to attain enlightenment. Gokuyo therefore, is part of our faith and practice, and is not just a “donation.”

Since Nichiren Shoshu can only be protected by the believers, it is our responsibility to support True Buddhism with our sincere Gokuyo. In the Gosho, “The Gift of Rice,” the Daishonin states:

Therefore, saints consecrated themselves by offering their own bodies, whereas common mortals may consecrate themselves by the sincerity with which they give. (MW-1; p. 268)

We sincerely offer Gokuyo to the Gohonzon in place of our own bodies. We need not be concerned about the amount we offer, just as long as it is offered to the best of our ability with an honest and pure spirit. Since we are offering precious treasures that sustain our own life for the sake of True Buddhism, we accumulate fortune greater than we could ever imagine. The Daishonin stated:

In the deepest sense, earnest faith is the will to understand and live up to the spirit, not the words, of the sutras. What does this mean? In one sense, it means that offering one’s only robe to the Lotus Sutra is equivalent to tearing off one’s own skin, and in a time of famine, offering the Buddha the single bowl of rice on which one’s life depends is to dedicate one’s life to the Buddha. (MW-1; p. 267)