

**Question and Answers on Faith**  
**Why Do We Carry the 'Omamori' Gohonzon?**  
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**Q: I have recently received an *omamori* Gohonzon. Could you explain the meaning of the *omamori* Gohonzon and how I should take care of it when I'm traveling?**

A: The small Gohonzon, known in Japanese as the *omamori* Gohonzon — which has been made available to SGI-USA members, especially to those who must travel frequently — is offered in the spirit of supporting members' daily practice when they cannot chant at home.

Its size allows members to carry it along easily when traveling, which is why it is also sometimes called a pendant Gohonzon or portable Gohonzon. This small Gohonzon is not meant to replace the Gohonzon that members have enshrined in their homes.

*O* in the term *omamori* is an honorific title showing respect for *mamori*, which comes from the Japanese verb *mamoru*, meaning to protect. So *omamori* literally means a protective Gohonzon.

But an important point to bear in mind about this Gohonzon is that it is not anything like a good luck charm. (Actually, there are no good luck charms in this Buddhism.) Always, it is the power of our faith in and practice to the Mystic Law, or the Gohonzon, that enable us to manifest the power of Buddhahood from within our lives — and protect ourselves.

In this regard, Nichiren Daishonin states: “A sword will be useless in the hands of a coward. The mighty sword of the Lotus Sutra must be wielded by one courageous in faith. Then he will be as strong as a demon armed with an iron staff” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 120).

Therefore, in carrying the *omamori* Gohonzon when we travel, the correct spirit is, as always, to have a strong faith in the Mystic Law. Then we can make protective functions innate in our lives and the environment manifest themselves. It is wrong to think that we gain protection simply because we have an *omamori* Gohonzon with us. It is our strong life-condition that plays the lead role in tapping the supreme, benevolent functions inherent in the Gohonzon.

In a message to those receiving this small Gohonzon, SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya once emphasized, “Nichiren Daishonin wrote that those who are wholehearted in faith and its practice for attaining Buddhahood and promoting kosen-rufu will definitely tap the boundless, immeasurable power that is innate in the Gohonzon in accord with the powers of their faith and practice.”

As Nichiren Daishonin says: “Faith alone is what really matters. No matter how earnestly Nichiren prays for you, if you lack faith, it will be like trying to set fire to wet tinder. Spur yourself to muster the power of faith” (MW-1, 246).

Concerning how to care for the *omamori* Gohonzon, there are no special rules. As with the larger Gohonzon, *prudence* and *respect* are the watchwords, especially while traveling. While it is meant to be carried on your person — on a chain around your neck or in your pocket — at times you can carefully place it in your handbag, briefcase or other appropriate place. You can use a small altar if you choose; candles, incense and other offerings may not be appropriate. (Note: the small Gohonzon case is not designed to open more than 90 degrees. Opening it wider than that can cause the hinges to break.)

When you're at home and going through your normal daily routine — work, school, errands, etc. — you may carry it with you or place it safely in your home altar.

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