

On Gohonzon and Gosho

Questions;

1. Is it okay to print the Nichiren Gohonzon and frame it and bestow it on ourselves? And what about the eye opening ceremony of the Gohonzon?
2. Is your Gosho based on Gosho zenshu translation or showa tenon? I'm looking for showa tenon writings too for accurate translation.

Answer;

I have spoken on these subjects several times and have videos posted here on these questions. These answers can take many words to convey, and so I apologize if this summation seems incomplete. But I will try to answer simply in the hopes that you can research further my responses. Firstly, on the subject of the Nichiren Mandala of Gohonzon;. Let us begin with a basic understanding of "Gohonzon". Per Nichiren's own words, "Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself". This mandala is a mundane representation of the inherent Gohonzon in your life. It is your mundane mental ability to conjure, perceive and realize your innate Buddha nature/mind. So, Gohonzon is never 'given' or 'received' but instead, it is awakened. This is done via a ceremony to "open the eyes" (another Nichiren Gosho). This ceremony consists of performing a full Gongyo recitation of the Lotus Sutra and Daimoku. Thusly, it is your practice of Lotus Sutra teachings of immediate and perfect enlightenment. Finally, all this does not and explicitly precludes any organization or sectarian authority. In fact, any "authority" exists solely in your Buddha nature. This is the essential point. No group or organization can confer your enlightenment upon you; ONLY you can do so. Also, Nichiren inscribed this mandala. It is this Nichiren inscribed mandala that is his enlightenment of the essential practice of Lotus Sutra Buddhism. There is no other inscription, signed by any other person, or monk or priest that is the Nichiren mandala. AND that Nichiren inscribed mandala is the universal object of mundane awakening for instantiating Buddha mind or Gohonzon (Buddha within this human mind). So it is intended to spread throughout Jambudvīpa as the universal tool to aid in one's practice of Lotus Sutra. It is not to be bargained or held as a carrot! It is not the province of any group or temple to confer. This Mandala is as universal as Buddha awakening is, just as inherent, just as attainable. Anything else is authoritarian rule and a grievous insult to Shakyamuni Buddha's original

intent. Secondly, with over 40 years of research and study, I have encountered many translations, interpretations, and commentaries regarding the writings of Nichiren Shonin. My own scholarship calls into question the insipient tendencies of Western actors in the scholarship of Buddhism. One of several conditions presents themselves rather obviously. Firstly are the "translations" that conveniently make use of Western religious terms to sway Western minds toward membership in organizations seeking to grow their numbers to gain prominence either politically or financially for their organization, or; to implant false equivalence of Buddhism as a convenient and superior religion to existing conventional cultural norms. Both, in my estimation, are less meritorious means than Devadatta or the several "schools" of distortions present in Nichiren's day vying for popularity and profit. So although I use many translations as a starting point for my sharing of Nichiren's teachings, I am diligent (though imperfect) in my constant editing out of these political and cultural manipulations wherever and whenever I am able. My collection is therefore unique, and I make no apology for that. Accuracy comes from profound understanding of the intent of Shakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren's support of that intent as, for example, Shakyamuni's exhortation that we study broadly All Buddhist teachings and commentary as well as non-Buddhist scholarship. I do so with zeal and with determination to remove any influences from outside agendas or desires.

With Love and Respect,

Sifu Sylvain

NaMuMyoHoRenGeKyo