

PERSPECTIVE
SINCERE OFFERINGS BECOME PRAYERS
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Most of the SGI members I'm privileged to know feel a profound and sincere desire to participate in the May Commemorative Contribution activity regardless of any promise of the good fortune they are creating by doing so. Their earnest desire is to promote kosen-rufu. However, many times discussion and encouragement about this campaign comes in the form of sharing past material benefits derived from participation. Though such good fortune is remarkable and welcome, I find myself more interested in what possible effect my contribution could have. I did a little research.

Contributions or offerings have a long history in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. The Daishonin was supported by the sincere contributions of food, clothing, writing materials, cash and other necessities made by those of his followers who were ready to do anything to help him. Did you ever notice how many of the letters addressed to the Daishonin's followers begin with an acknowledgement of an offering? I received the unlined robe, the string of coins, the rice, the sake (or whatever) you sent, a letter might read. What effect did those followers have on the spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism?

Think about it. Put yourself in the shoes of a 13th century man or woman in Japan. Without either plumbing or electricity, you scratched out a living. Somehow you had the good fortune to meet Nichiren who advised you to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. You'd heard rumors that he was some kind of crack-pot, but there was something about the man himself that persuaded you to try his teaching. That did it. It wasn't long before you were convinced that every word he spoke was the absolute truth. You made up your mind to support him in his efforts. You spoke to your friends and family and you managed to set aside a bag of rice or a robe to send to him.

To your surprise and delight, you received a thank you letter from him acknowledging your gift. In addition he wrote two or three pages of a careful, easy to understand explanation of some point in faith you were having trouble with. You preserved this letter and treasured it throughout your life. Somehow this letter was kept intact and passed down through the centuries until over 700 years later millions of believers around the world are able to read it. Because of this letter, believers deepen their understanding of Buddhism and deepen their faith. They raise their life-conditions and accrue incredible benefits. They propagate the Mystic Law and participate in the May Commemorative Contribution Campaign, and the world becomes a better, happier place all because you sent the bag of rice or robe.

Little did you know, back then, how amazingly far reaching the effect of your contribution would be, and it's not over yet. The ripples from that little pebble you dropped all those years ago are still going strong.

Could it be that my seemingly insignificant contribution this month might have such a far-reaching effect on the course of kosen-rufu? I'm counting on it. I'm praying for it.

The Daishonin was grateful and full of praise. He wrote, "In this life, your sincere offering becomes a prayer for the fulfillment of your every desire and a treasure" (Gift of an Unlined Robe, *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1515).

President Ikeda says, "For an offering of but a single unlined robe, the Daishonin promises eternal good fortune and benefit. This is because he perceives the sincerity with

which the robe is imbued” (*Learning From the Gosho: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 25).

Eternal good fortune!?! WOW!!!

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