

護摩行とは What is Gomagyō?

護摩とはサンスクリット語の「ホーマー」が語源でそれを音写して護摩(ごま)と言われるようになりました。「焼く」「炊く」という意味になります。もともとバラモン教の宗教儀式に由来し、仏教が起こるよりはるか前、紀元前13世紀頃インドに入ってきたアーリア人によって行われたといわれます。バラモン教の宗教儀式だった護摩行は中国に伝わると、仏教に取り入れられて密教に伝わり、やがて日本にも伝えられました。日本へは真言宗の宗祖である空海が中国から伝えたといわれ、空海は護摩による祈祷に長けていたとされています。

The word goma is derived from the Sanskrit word homa, which was transcribed and came to be pronounced goma. It means to “burn” or “cook”. The ritual originated from religious rites of Brahmanism and was practiced by the Aryans who entered India around the 13th century B.C., long before the rise of Buddhism.

Gomagyō, which was a Brahmanic religious ritual, was introduced to China, where it was adopted by Buddhism and introduced into esoteric Buddhism, and eventually spread to Japan.

It is said to have been introduced to Japan from China by Kukai, the founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism, who was skilled at praying with goma.

護摩行のやり方 How to perform Gomagyō

護摩堂というお堂の中にご本尊と護摩壇を安置します。

護摩壇の中央に開けられた火炉に護摩木と呼ばれる薪(たきぎ)を投げ入れ勢いよく燃やし、手で印を組み不動明王真言を唱えます。そして一心に祈りながら今度は火炉へ供物を投げ入れます。

この供物はお米、小麦、小豆などを投げ入れますが、祈願内容によっても変わることもあります。

The principal image of the Buddha and gomadan altar are enshrined in a hall called the Gomado.

Firewood known as gomagi is thrown into the furnace opened in the center of the gomadan altar and is burned vigorously, and the participants make a sign with their hands and chant the Fudo Myō mantra. Next, offerings are thrown into the furnace while the participants pray from the heart.

Rice, wheat, azuki beans, etc. are thrown as offerings, but this may vary depending on the content of the prayer.

何のために護摩木を燃やすのか What is the purpose of burning gomagi?

護摩の炎は不動明王の背負う炎を表しています。また不動明王は大日如来の化身であることから護摩の炎は仏の智慧も表しています。

投げ込まれる護摩木はただの木片ではなく、私たちの煩惱を表しており、護摩行というのは仏の智慧の炎で煩惱を焼き尽くすという意味合いの儀式となります。

The flame of the goma represents the flame carried by the deity Fudo Myō. Since Fudo Myō is an incarnation of Dainichi Nyorai, the flame of the goma also represents the wisdom of the Buddha.

The gomagi that are thrown into the fire are not just pieces of wood, but represent our earthly desires, and Gomagyō is a ritual that is meant to burn away these desires with the fire of Buddha's wisdom.

護摩祈祷によるご利益は？ What are the benefits of the goma prayer?

護摩行には先述の煩惱を焼き尽くす儀式的意味の他に祈願成就のためにも行われます。

息災(そくさい) ▶ 自然災害、病気等の災いを取り除く

増益(ぞうやく) ▶ 健康の増進、商売や学業の成功など

敬愛(けいあい) ▶ 恋愛成就、人間関係の和合

調伏(ちょうぶく) ▶ 魔物(災い)など敵をくだすこと。こちらは呪術的な要素も強いので阿闍梨(あじり)という高い修行を積んだ高僧しか行いません。空海によってもたらされた護摩行が現世利益をかなえてくれると当時の貴族の間で強く信じられたため真言密教が貴族層から多くの支持を集めたと考えられています。



現在では、護摩行は集中力や忍耐力などの精神修行になるということで、広くスポーツ選手の間でも取り入れられています。

In addition to the aforementioned rituals for burning away earthly desires, Gomagyō is also performed to fulfill prayers.

Sokusai (good health) ▶ Removes natural disasters, illnesses, and other calamities.

Zoyaku (increase in profit) ▶ Improved health, success in business, school, etc.

Keiai (love and respect) ▶ Fulfillment of love, harmony in relationships.

Choubuku (exorcism) ▶ Bringing down an enemy, such as a demon (calamity). Because of its strong magical element, only highly trained high priests known as "ajari" can perform this type of ritual. It is believed that Shingon Buddhism gained a lot of support from aristocrats at the time because they strongly believed that the Gomagyō rituals brought by Kukai would bring them spiritual benefits.

Today, Gomagyō is widely practiced by athletes as a spiritual exercise to improve concentration and perseverance.