



# GOMA FIRE RITE

The goma (Jp. 護摩) ritual of consecrated fire is unique to Esoteric Buddhism. These fire ceremonies are rarely held outside of Japan and are a unique experience that inspires the senses of those who watch.

The goma fire rite was introduced to Japan by Kobo Daishi in 806 CE. Kobo Daishi brought many esoteric texts and rituals from India and China to Japan, but the most popular and powerful was the goma fire rite. The spiritual purpose of the goma fire rite is to ward off ill-fated fortune, to protect the body, and to remove obstacle objects. In ancient times, it was also used for the purpose of national safety.

The fire of the goma rite is traditionally called the Fire of Great Wisdom (Jp. 大智火) that leads us towards emancipation. It removes the darkness of ignorance and brings the light of enlightenment.

The goma rite is both physical and spiritual. In the physical ritual, the ministers, deities, and congregation are united by the fire and chanting of mantras. Spiritually, participants mentally burn their misleading karma and sow the seeds of enlightenment. Thus the significance of the goma rite lies not only in gaining benefits and rewards but in enhancing the scope of one's mind towards enlightenment.

Goma rites are performed at Koboji during various services throughout the year. A special goma service called "saito goma" is officiated every November or December in the temple yard outside. During the saito goma, an extra large fire rite is performed by a goma master.

At all goma services, attendees are invited to submit prayer sticks with their wishes that are consecrated and burned in the fire by the ministers. Prayer sticks are received by donations.

The goma fire rite is only performed by ministers after intense spiritual training. Although it has a deep spiritual significance, it is a mystical ceremony that can be enjoyed by all. We look forward to welcoming your attendance at an upcoming service.

For more information about goma or other services, please call the temple office.



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