

**BOARD POLICY #1 - CONFERRAL OF THE GOHONZON
FOR SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
ASSOCIATION DE LA SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONALE DU CANADA**
(a federal corporation)
hereinafter referred to as “SGI Canada”.

Policy Type: Board

Policy # 1

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This Board Policy emanates from General Operating Bylaw No. 8 for SGI Canada, as amended from time to time, and is to be read in conjunction with Bylaw 8 and the other Policies adopted pursuant to Bylaw No. 8.

The definitions contained in Bylaw No. 8, as amended from time to time, shall apply to the provisions of this Board Policy.

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INTRODUCTION

The Gohonzon is the object of devotion in Nichiren Buddhism. Individuals who join SGI Canada are entitled to receive a Gohonzon, as described in this Policy, to be enshrined in their homes for their daily practice of gongyo (reciting the sutra and chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo). The Gohonzon is a sacred object and is therefore to be treated with utmost respect. It is solely for the purpose of Buddhist practice and is conferred to Practitioners with this understanding.

BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy describes SGI Canada’s procedures relating to the conferral of the Gohonzon, including consideration for replacement when lost or damaged. One of the privileges of becoming a Practitioner of SGI Canada is the ability to receive a Gohonzon, the object of devotion in Nichiren Buddhism, which is essential to furthering each Individual’s practice of Soka Gakkai Nichiren Buddhism. There are three types of Gohonzon: the regular Gohonzon, being the standard Gohonzon; the Omamori (portable) Gohonzon; and the Special Okatagi Gohonzon, being the large Gohonzon that is given to eligible Practitioners who have had and have been practising with a regular Gohonzon for at least 15 years.

Prior to conferral of any type of Gohonzon, the relevant application forms must have been completed and submitted to SGI Canada and approved. The applicable District, Chapter and Area Leaders must sign the forms, to reflect their approval (for the Omamori and Special Okatagi Gohonzon, Regional Leaders must also sign to reflect their approval). However, Practitioners and Junior Practitioners who will be moving to a country where they may face danger or persecution for having a Gohonzon will not be granted any type

of Gohonzon out of concern for their personal safety. Where a Practitioner is a member of an SGI Organization from another country but would not qualify to receive a Gohonzon in that other country and will likely be returning to that country, SGI Canada may choose not to grant a Gohonzon to that Practitioner out of respect for the policies and procedures of the applicable SGI Organization in that other country.

One regular Gohonzon is allocated to each household. As such, eligible Practitioners and Junior Practitioners (who are 16 years of age and older and have obtained parental/legal guardian consent), may receive a regular Gohonzon for their household if there is not already a Gohonzon in that household. The applicable District Leader must first have visited the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner to confirm a suitable altar has been prepared for the Gohonzon in their home and must also have obtained verbal confirmation from the family members residing in the same household that they are supportive of the enshrining of the Gohonzon in their home.

Practitioners and Junior Practitioners (who are 16 years of age and older and have obtained parental/legal guardian consent) may be granted an Omamori (portable) Gohonzon where they engage in frequent overnight travel or live in a dormitory or other living arrangement where it would not be possible to enshrine a regular Gohonzon.

The Special Okatagi (large) Gohonzon may be conferred upon eligible Practitioners who have had and have been practising with a regular Gohonzon for a minimum of fifteen (15) years. The calculation of the fifteen (15) year period would commence as early as the age of sixteen (16) and would include any time spent as member of an SGI Organization in another country. Prior to the conferral of the Special Okatagi (large) Gohonzon, the Practitioner must have returned his or her regular Gohonzon to SGI Canada.

Where a Gohonzon is damaged, lost or destroyed due to circumstances beyond the control of a Practitioner or Junior Practitioner (e.g. theft, fire or flood), a Gohonzon may be replaced by SGI Canada once the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner has submitted a completed application form requesting a replacement Gohonzon and the applicable District, Chapter and Area leaders have approved the replacement.

Where a Gohonzon is damaged, discarded or destroyed as a result of the careless actions of a Practitioner or Junior Practitioner, at least six (6) months must elapse from the date of the damage, discarding or destruction of the Gohonzon, after which time the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner will be visited and interviewed by an Area, Regional or National Leader to confirm whether it would be appropriate to provide a replacement Gohonzon. Once approval from the applicable Regional Leader has been obtained, the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner must submit a completed application form requesting a replacement Gohonzon and the applicable District, Chapter and Area leaders must also approve the replacement. Where a Gohonzon is damaged, discarded or destroyed as a result of the deliberate actions of a Practitioner or Junior Practitioner, the Gohonzon will not be replaced.

1.01 Types of Gohonzon

There are three types of Gohonzon:

- (a) Regular Gohonzon, being the standard Gohonzon given to eligible Practitioners and eligible Junior Practitioners in accordance with section 1.02 of this Policy;

- (b) Omamori (portable) Gohonzon, being the smaller portable Gohonzon given to eligible Practitioners and eligible Junior Practitioners in accordance with section 1.03 of this Policy; and
- (c) Special Okatagi Gohonzon, being the large Gohonzon given to eligible Practitioners in accordance with section 1.04 of this Policy.

1.02 Who is Eligible to receive a Regular Gohonzon

- (a) Practitioners and Junior Practitioners (16 years of age and older) who have not already received a regular Gohonzon from SGI Canada or an SGI Organization from another country are eligible to receive a regular Gohonzon from SGI Canada for his or her household, provided that the following requirements have been met:
 - (i) the applicable District Leader has visited the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner to confirm that a suitable altar has been prepared within the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner's place of residence and has verbally confirmed that the family members residing within the same household are supportive of the Practitioner's or Junior Practitioner's enshrining of the Gohonzon in their home;
 - (ii) no family member residing in the same household has received a regular Gohonzon for that household (since only one regular Gohonzon is given to each family household);
 - (iii) the relevant application form to obtain a regular Gohonzon has been completed and submitted to SGI Canada and approved;
 - (iv) for Junior Practitioners aged sixteen (16) and older, prior written consent has been obtained from the Junior Practitioner's parent or legal guardian to receive a regular Gohonzon; and
 - (v) the prior written approvals from the applicable District, Chapter and Area Leaders have been obtained, as evidenced by their signatures on the application form.
- (b) Practitioners and Junior Practitioners who will be moving to a country where they may face danger or persecution as a result of possessing a regular Gohonzon may not be granted a regular Gohonzon out of concern for the personal safety of the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner, as determined in the sole discretion of the applicable Regional Leader.
- (c) Where a Practitioner is also a member of an SGI Organization from in another country and would not qualify to receive a regular Gohonzon in accordance with the requirements of that SGI organization, or such Practitioner's household in the originating country already has a regular Gohonzon, SGI Canada may in its discretion choose not to grant a regular Gohonzon to such a Practitioner where it can be reasonably assumed that the Practitioner will later return to the originating country in which the said SGI organization is located.

1.03 Who is Eligible to receive an Omamori (portable) Gohonzon

Practitioners and Junior Practitioners (16 years of age and older) are eligible to receive an Omamori (portable) Gohonzon from SGI Canada, provided that the following requirements have been met:

- (a) the Practitioner, the Junior Practitioner or a family member residing in the same household as the Practitioner or the Junior Practitioner, as the case may be, has already received a regular Gohonzon;
- (b) the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner, as the case may be, engages in frequent overnight travel or resides in a dormitory or resides in such other living arrangement where it is not possible to enshrine a regular Gohonzon, as determined in the sole discretion of the applicable Regional Leader;
- (c) the relevant application form to obtain an Omamori (portable) Gohonzon has been completed and submitted to SGI Canada and approved;
- (d) for Junior Practitioners of SGI Canada aged sixteen (16) and older, prior written consent has been obtained from the Junior Practitioner's parent or legal guardian to receive an Omamori (portable) Gohonzon; and
- (e) the prior written approvals from the applicable District, Chapter, Area and Regional Leaders have been obtained, as evidenced by their signatures on the application form.

Practitioners and Junior Practitioners who will be moving to a country where they may face danger or persecution as a result of possessing an Omamori (portable) Gohonzon may not be granted an Omamori (portable) Gohonzon out of concern for the personal safety of the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner, as determined in the sole discretion of the applicable Regional Leader.

1.04 Who is Eligible to receive a Special Okatagi (large) Gohonzon

The Special Okatagi (large) Gohonzon may be given to eligible Practitioners and is conferred at a ceremony held once a year. Practitioners are eligible to receive a Special Okatagi (large) Gohonzon from SGI Canada, provided that the following requirements have been met:

- (a) the Practitioner has had and practised with a regular Gohonzon for a minimum of fifteen (15) years, counted from as early as the age of sixteen (16) and including time spent as a member of an SGI Organization from another country;
- (b) the relevant application form to obtain a Special Okatagi (large) Gohonzon has been completed and submitted to SGI Canada and approved;
- (c) the Practitioner has returned his or her regular Gohonzon to SGI Canada; and
- (d) the prior written approvals from the applicable District, Chapter, Area and Regional Leaders have been obtained.

Practitioners and Junior Practitioners who will be moving to a country where they may face danger or persecution as a result of possessing a Special Okatagi (large) Gohonzon may not be granted a Special Okatagi (large) Gohonzon out of concern for the personal safety of the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner, as determined in the sole discretion of the applicable Regional Leader.

1.05 Replacement of Gohonzon

(a) Replacement of Gohonzon due to circumstances beyond the control of the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner

Where a regular, Omamori, or Special Okatagi Gohonzon is damaged, discarded or destroyed due to circumstances beyond the control of the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner, as the case may be, including, but not limited to theft of the Gohonzon or fire or flood or such other circumstances beyond the control of the Practitioner or the Junior Practitioner as determined in the sole discretion of the applicable Regional Leader, the regular, Omamori or Special Okatagi Gohonzon, as the case may be, may be replaced by SGI Canada upon receipt of a completed application form and the written approval of the applicable District, Chapter, Area and Regional Leaders.

(b) Replacement of Gohonzon due to the actions of the Practitioner or the Junior Practitioner

i) Where a regular, Omamori, or Special Okatagi Gohonzon is damaged, discarded or destroyed as a result of the careless actions of the Practitioner or the Junior Practitioner as determined in the sole discretion of the applicable Regional Leader, a minimum of six (6) months must pass from the date of the damage, discarding or destruction of the Gohonzon. The Practitioner or the Junior Practitioner, as the case may be, will then be visited and interviewed by an Area, Regional or National Leader in order to determine the suitability of the Practitioner or Junior Practitioner, as the case may be, to receive a replacement Gohonzon. Once the applicable Regional Leader has determined in his or her sole discretion that the Practitioner or such Junior Practitioner, as the case may be, should be granted a replacement Gohonzon, a replacement regular, Omamori or Special Okatagi Gohonzon, as the case may be, may be conferred by SGI Canada upon receipt of a completed application form and the prior written approval of the applicable District, Chapter, Area and Regional Leaders.

ii) Where a regular, Omamori or Special Okatagi Gohonzon is damaged, discarded or destroyed as a result of the deliberate actions of the Practitioner or the Junior Practitioner, as the case may be, as determined in the sole discretion of the applicable Regional Leader, the Gohonzon will not be replaced. In rare cases involving extenuating circumstances, a replacement Gohonzon may be conferred subject to the sole discretion of SGI Canada.