

## The *Goma* Fire Prayer Ritual

The *Goma* fire ritual is central to the religious observances of Naritasan Shinshoji Temple. It is performed at set times every day in the Daihondo Great Main Hall. Visitors write a prayer onto special, wooden tablets called *gomagi*, which are then burnt in a sacred fire before the Buddhist deity Fudo Myoo. The fire is thought to carry the written message directly to Fudo Myoo, so that he may answer and alleviate followers' concerns. Everyone is welcome to participate in this ritual, following in the footsteps of so many people whose prayers have been answered over the centuries. Participants may also have possessions precious to them passed through the flames during the *Goma* ritual, to receive protection from Fudo Myoo, which is called *obikaji*.