

***Goshuin* Temple Stamps**

In recent years, many Buddhists who visit Japan's temples and shrines do so carrying a notebook called a *goshuincho*, which can be stamped at each temple or shrine.

A *goshuin*, or “temple stamp,” is said to have originally been a kind of certification given to pilgrims who had undertaken sutra copying (*shakyo*). Indeed, in days gone by pilgrims brought along a book known as a *nokyocho*, with “nokyo” referring to the act of submitting a hand-copied sutra and “cho” meaning “notebook.” This would only be stamped if a visitor first undertook *shakyo*.

Today such notebooks are not a requirement when visiting Saihoji, but the custom does provide an insight into temple-going practices, and the designs of the notebooks and temple stamps themselves are often quite striking. Saihoji's *goshuin* stamp is offered throughout the year.