

Goma Rituals

Every day the priests hold a fire ritual (*goma*) in the Zaodo, or main hall. As they chant, the priests build small towers of kindling and wooden prayer plaques (*gomaki*), which are inscribed with the prayers of believers. These are then burned in front of the altar, which is thought to carry the prayers to the Buddha, so that he may grant the wishes and hopes.

While other Buddhist sects also perform *goma* rituals to the chanting of sutras, accompaniment by the conch-shell horn and drums during the ceremony is unique to Shugendo temples like Kinpusenji.