

**Message on
the new *Ryogemon*, a way of appreciating the teaching
“Gratitude for the Jodo Shinshu Teaching”**

In March of this year, we will be observing the Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin’s Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching. This series of commemorative services is a great opportunity for us all to express our gratitude for the benevolence of Shinran Shonin who clarified the Jodo Shinshu teaching that we are able to appreciate today. During the occasion, we will be able to share the joy of following the same spiritual path with fellow Nembutsu followers. It would be even more wonderful if the younger generation, as well as those who have yet to become connected, will take this opportunity to become more familiar with Buddhism and the Jodo Shinshu tradition.

It goes without saying how important it is for us, a religious organization, to transmit the teaching in correct and understandable ways. To rationalize and update it for people, we must modify our ways of sharing it in accordance with the times, environment, and people’s way of thinking. For this purpose, in 2021, on the occasion of the annual Commemorative Service of the Establishment of Jodo Shinshu, I proclaimed a message on “Gratitude for the Jodo Shinshu Teaching.” This text was written to express its essence and intended to be recited by everyone on various occasions. Thus, I aspired that we learn from Shinran Shonin’s way of living and transmit the tradition to the next generation in approachable ways.

Since the time of Rennyō Shonin, we have adopted the passage of the original *Ryogemon* as a way to express our appreciation. The original *Ryogemon* outlines and describes the Jodo Shinshu teaching, such as ‘the entrusting heart as the cause of our birth in the Pure Land,’ as well as ‘the Nembutsu as an expression of our gratitude,’ in simple phrases that were easy to understand for the then common people. Therefore, the role of the original *Ryogemon* should be highly regarded even today.

However, we cannot deny that the connotation of the original *Ryogemon* has faded with the changing times. Therefore, we may need a modern version of *Ryogemon*, a way of appreciation for the teaching as Nembutsu followers, expressed in plain and simple words which we can recite to reassure ourselves and share it with others. In consideration of this, today, I reissue “Gratitude for the Jodo Shinshu Teaching” as a modern version of *Ryogemon*, with the addition of a verse that expresses our gratitude to Shinran Shonin and all our predecessors.

Namo Amida Butsu.

“Entrust yourself to me. I will liberate you just as you are.” This is the calling voice of Amida.

My blind passions are embraced in the Buddha’s awakening,

So the Buddha calls to me “I will liberate you just as you are.”

Gratefully responding to the Buddha’s call,

I find that I am already on the path that leads to the Pure Land.

And the Nembutsu flows freely from my thankful heart.

It is due to the guidance of Shinran Shonin
and successive spiritual leaders
who have transmitted the teaching to us today.

Living with the Dharma as my guide
Softens my rigid heart and mind.
Gratitude for the gift of life I have received
Frees me from becoming lost in greed and anger,
And allows me to share a warm smile and speak gentle words.
Sharing in the joy and sadness of others,
I shall strive to live each day to its fullest.

It is my hope that this new version of *Ryogemon*, an expression of appreciation for the teaching, will be recited by everyone during various gatherings to share it with a wide range of people as well as the next generation.

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SHAKU SENNYO
OHTANI Kojun
Monshu
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha