

Message
Chōken Ōtani (Shaku Jōnyo)
The 25th Abbot, Shinshū Ōtani-ha

June 30, 2020

“In accordance with the principles of our Constitution, I will devote myself to the duties of serving the Shinshū Honbyō, and to listen to and entrust myself even more deeply to the teaching of Jōdo Shinshū. I hereby vow to respond to the trust which our fellow seekers have placed upon me.” This is the pledge I made to our spiritual forebear Shinran Shōnin and to all of our fellow seekers at the ceremony where I succeeded to the position of Abbot some twenty-four years ago. Since then, I have been given the opportunity to serve as Abbot for such a long period of time.

During my tenure, I have been able to experience such historic events as the 500th Memorial for Rennyō Shōnin, the 750th Memorial for Shinran Shōnin, and the renovation projects of the Founder’s Hall and Amida Hall. I have also experienced many tragedies, most notably the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in which we have all shared the grief of the victims with each other.

In retrospect, I have always been encouraged by all of you fellow seekers through the opportunities to listen to the teaching together and to deepen our relationships. Thanks to such encouragements, I have been able to perform the duties of Abbot as prescribed in the revised Constitution to this day. Reflecting on those precious opportunities, I have deepened my gratitude for the virtues of the Buddha and our spiritual forebears on the Buddhist path. On this occasion, I express my deepest appreciation for the tremendous support you have extended to me.

It is my sincerest hope that the teaching of the *nenbutsu* clarified by Shinran Shōnin which has been embraced by generations of fellow seekers to this day, will continue to be handed down to the future generations forever. With that, I renew my commitment to continue to listen to the Dharma for the rest of my life.