

### *Shinji*

*In the month of Aiju, reflect on your kokoro and deepen your gratitude.*

*The kokoro is precious because it's understanding deepens with the passing years.*

*The lives of human beings are colored through their experiences—it is about how each experience moves the kokoro and affects life.*

*For the human being whose entire past experience leads to enlightenment, life will be more enriching and they will become a person (existence) filled with love.*

*To the Shinja*

*Did you perceive Kami's kokoro as you gained understanding of the teachings this year?*

*The more human beings see people and things through the teachings, emotions deepen, the unmei comes together, complements, and the kokoro to live and bring out the best in one another blossoms.*

*This is what it means to live with the kokoro of Kami.*

*The more human beings draw closer to the kokoro of Kami, they will become people whose awareness of Kami's protection deepens and who will show their gratitude for this protection to family members, relatives, friends, and acquaintances.*

### Summary of the *Shinji*

The time of *Aiju Onrei Shinja Sanpaiji* is a time to reflect on your life and your *kokoro* and to deepen your gratitude. It is the last month of the year and it's important not to forget to be grateful.

Our awareness and understanding must deepen with the passing of the years. Otherwise, what a waste it would be if our life was filled with too many regrets.

The life of human beings is colored by their countless experiences. Each experience has an enormous impact on our life. From our life experiences, we gain awareness and understanding and become people filled with love.

Look back on yourself and if you feel that what you've achieved this year was satisfactory, then resolve to make the coming year better. If you feel that you could've done better, self-reflect and make the commitment to try and do better next year. If you were discontent, critical of, in conflict with, and in disharmony with others, reflect on your *kokoro* and do some soul-searching.

If you are a *shinja* who is in touch with *Kami's* teachings, there will be gratitude, the initiative to practice the teachings, to self-reflect, and the promise to give back—these are all movements of your *kokoro* that gradually synchronizes with *Kibō no Michi*. When this happens, you will begin to perceive the *kokoro* of *Kami*.

The *kokoro* of *Kami* is free of thoughts, emotions, and desires. It is the *kokoro* that hopes for the happiness and prosperity of each person. When you truly understand *Kami's kokoro*, it will free you of avarice. Your perception of other people and things will be filled with love, and as your existence with others comes together, complements, and tries to bring out the best in all of us. *Kami* asks us if our *kokoro* has moved in this way.

When the teachings are learned and we come closer to the *kokoro* of *Kami*, we are no longer inclined to be critical or to reject others, but are more compassionate and forbearing. And we gain a sense of mutual support.

When we gain a sense of detachment and our *kokoro* is free of avarice, we're no longer bothered by what many people are concerned about. We're not overwhelmed by information and knowledge. Thus, our *kokoro* is always calm. The closer we are to *Kami's kokoro*, we become more aware of our protection by *Shinkon* and our gratitude deepens. We begin to want to give back to *Shinkon* who protects us, to our family members, relatives, friends, and acquaintances who are there for us. This is what it means to be grateful to be alive, the gratitude for being allowed to live. Our joys and sorrows prove that we are alive. When we feel this, our *kokoro* is fulfilled and we are living in harmony with all living creatures.

Let's become the existence that generously uses the strengths given to us for the people around us. If we act sincerely on our gratitude, we'll be useful, accepted, and loved by many people, which returns to us as a life of meaning and purpose. At times, there will be self-reflection as we elevate ourselves. The *kokoro* to give back will grow and you'll live each day with a fulfilled *kokoro*.