

Deepen Your Appreciation and Gratitude

Shinji

Life is lived actively each day as thoughts and memories cumulate and become your footprint within a finite era (time).

Human beings whose daily activities are given back with love and respect will always be involved with people and all things with gratitude.

But there are many people who do not know the principles of life and live out their life (days) at odds with the path.

Because they live without the thought to give back, they are unable to have hope in their twilight years, and their life withers away and ends.

To the Shinja

Now that you know the truth about this year, how have you lived your life (your kokoro) sustained by the principles (the teachings) as you usher in the month of Aiju?

How many people do you see in your mind's eye to whom you should express your kokoro (thoughts) of gratitude?

The shinja, who entrusts their kokoro to Kami and receives Shinkon's unmei (strength) will increasingly deepen their feelings of gratitude.

They will deepen their life (kokoro) of etoku and their character is steadily elevated.

Hence conversations with family members will grow, deepen, and love and trust are fostered; and they become family members who meet the expectations of one another.

Gratitude (the kokoro) to Kami, Shinkon, the church, church staff members, kakari, shinja, family members, relatives, friends, acquaintances, and to the people of the world deepens.

Summary of the Shinji

Each day of our life cumulates to become a year—a year of life that never returns and becomes a part of our life journey. What is important is the extent to which the way we live our life relates to the people we meet in everything we do and everywhere we go. This is because what we achieve in our finite life is determined by our *kokoro*.

What *Kami* sees as your achievement is how high you have elevated your character. It is to foster a *kokoro* of love for the people around you through the insights you have gained; it is to try to do what you can, and to actively live to give back. The more these characteristics grow, gratitude for all people and things blossoms, characterized by courtesy and respect. Hence you will gradually achieve *kaiun*.

However, the reality is that the world is filled with people who are focused on satisfying their greed, ignorant of the way life works. They are callous about hurting others; and there are countless examples of how they go against the path. Strongly self-centered, many have very little thought about giving back to others, thus their life withers away.

In contrast, all who have gained awareness through *Kami's* teachings, are not consumed by the social climate or current trends. Their gratitude deepens; they are always conscious about giving back and live each day filled with love. Now that we have ushered in the month of *Aiju Onrei* that ends the year, we are probably sensing the steady growth and accomplishments of our *kokoro* this year.

This has been achieved thanks to *Shinkon's* protection. As you *kigan* and strive to live by *Kami's* teachings, the ties between *Shinkon* and you grow increasingly stronger, and you are greatly protected.

You have undoubtedly tried to use your strengths to be useful to those around you and made many people happy. Your days have probably been a progression of the goodness and kindness that you have shown to others. This kind of life that is based on *etoku*, elevates your character, and places you closer to achieving *kaiun*. This kind of person will find that conversations with family members increase, love and trust are fostered, and mutual expectations within the family are met.

During this time of *Aiju Onreisai* when *shinja* visit *Shinsohonbu* to give thanks, how many people, who have come into your life this year, do you remember to thank? It is only when your gratitude deepens to *Kami*, *Shinkon*, the church, church staff members, *kakari*, fellow *shinja*, your family, relatives, friends, acquaintances as well as society at large that *kaiun* is achieved.