

Section 1 *Kannōsai* (The Engagement Ceremony)

Kami teaches us that a betrothal or engagement of marriage is based on the principle of connecting two families through the ties between two people who desire to get married. The aim of the *Kannōsai* ceremony is to give thanks to the parents of the bride and groom, who nurtured and raised them, and to ensure that they abide by *Hotoke no Michi* (the path of your ancestors). This allows the *kokoro no michi* (the path of the *kokoro*) of both families to become one and to build kinship through blood and marriage. When this kinship deepens, the couple will live a life of happiness; and both families will prosper.

Kami has given us this deep principle of *Kannōsai* in the following *Shinka* (poem).

Tabidachi no Uta (The Start of a New Journey in Life)

In looking back on your life until today, this day's happiness, in a word, is like a dream. In thinking back on the days that have passed, there was happiness. In thinking about the life ahead, there is hope.

There is joy today with the hope that the culmination of your life is happiness and prosperity.

Walk the path of light, Shinjitsu no Michi, without wavering.

Give of yourself with sincerity to Kami, Shinkon, parents, and friends. This is your vow to walk the path of happiness and prosperity with this Shinka, The Start of a New Journey in Life.

An engagement is a public pledge of marriage; and responsible behavior is demanded of the couple who is getting married. The personal commit-

ment and responsibility to create a family is truly the start of a journey in a person's life.

It is important to be sincere and to show gratitude in your relations with *Kami*, your parents, grandparents, relatives, and the people, who support you in your life, as well as with your in-laws and family members of your future spouse. If the members of both families build relations through the two people who form the central bond, the prosperity of the family will grow and spread.