

Johrei Fellowship



Annual Ancestral Service

Sunday May 4, 2025

In Johrei Fellowship, we observe the Annual Ancestral Service on the first Sunday of May in memory of our ancestors and loved ones who have passed on. By acknowledging their lives and our connections with them, we honor family, help them grow further in the spirit world, and strengthen our connections with ancestors.

Cultures worldwide honor their ancestors and loved ones in different ways and through various expressions. Each custom is unique. Along with customary prayers, expressions of respect and remembrance may include offerings of food and drinks. Others have shrines built at home; some may have a simple ceremony at the final resting places. Each form may be different, but the intention is universal. We acknowledge our history and honor the connection that extends through the generations.

The annual ancestral service ceremony involves more elaborate preparation than regular monthly services. We prepare a special altar to place the favorite foods our ancestors enjoyed. Through the invocation of special chants, we invite the souls of the ancestors and create a connection between the spiritual and physical realms for this special ceremony. Special prayers of gratitude and flowers are then offered to

our ancestors. Through this ceremony, the Light in the spiritual realm expands to elevate the souls of the deceased further.

Our ancestors are also helped in the spiritual realm through our virtuous deeds, extending our love and gratitude toward them. Our founder, Meishu-sama, reminded us that we can continue supporting our ancestors throughout the year by simply serving others sincerely. He said, *"It is time we realized that all human beings do not simply exist by themselves, that we are closely linked to, and are an extension of our ancestors. It means that an infinite number of ancestors are joined together to make one of us - that their countless number of spiritual cords are connected to our single spiritual cord."*

*I have realized
That my body and spirit
Would not be here now
Without the father, mother,
Who gave birth to me, cared for me.
Making our parents and ancestors
Happy in the spiritual world
By our good deeds
Is the best and greatest
Of filial acts.*

- Meishu-sama -



Traditional ancestral service at the Sacred Grounds in Atami, Japan.