

Spiritual Journey



On July 27, Rissho Kosei-kai celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of Dharma dissemination in the United States by holding a commemorative event in Las Vegas. During the convention, four members presented a combined Dharma Journey talk using the title “Satori Story.” We will feature these satori stories in installments in the September and October issues.

How My Daughter’s Illness Taught Me the True Meaning of Happiness



Ms. Joyce Manalo
Rissho Kosei-kai of Hawaii

A LOHA! My name is Joyce Manalo and I am a member of the Hawaii Dharma Center.

Over forty years ago, my mother joined Rissho Kosei-kai of Hawaii due to my sister’s asthma. My mother became very active in the Dharma center by going to Sunday services, *hoza*, and family visitations, and by helping with various duties there.

I grew up in a close and happy family; I didn’t really have any worries or hardships. But since my mother couldn’t drive, when I became a high school student and got my license, my duties to assist my mother multiplied. I drove her and other members to various Dharma center activities. This was not hard, but I didn’t have any freedom. Being at the Dharma center, I met other Dharma center members and their

families. I remember thinking about how nice everyone was, but also that I was not going to be a “church lady” like my mom.

My first turning point in my faith was when I was asked to join the youth group at the Dharma center. Aileen Ozaki was our youth leader and she was always so nice to me. Slowly I started to come to the Dharma center and make friends with the others. *Hoza* was interesting, and the special sutra studies opened my eyes to other ways of thinking.

Later, I got married and started a family. Our first child, Yoshimi, was born. Life was good—of course we had everyday struggles, but nothing hard. Then, when Yoshimi was around nine months old, she became sick with asthma. I remember one night while Yoshimi was on the breathing machine, I thought to myself, *Why me and our child?*

My grown sister never practiced the Dharma and seldom came to the Dharma center, and her child was fine and healthy. I, in contrast, came to Dharma center, prayed, and practiced the teachings. So why was our child so sick? What happened to all my good luck? I wasn’t supposed to have any sufferings; I’d followed all of the things I was supposed to do, enshrined an altar in my home, went to the Dharma center, and participated in activities and studies. So why was our child so sick?

I received guidance to make my practice my own—now that I was an adult with my own family, I had to practice the teaching for my family and myself. Our family experienced many of life’s chal-



Ms. Joyce Manalo delivers her Dharma Journey talk at the U.S. Sangha 60th Anniversary Convention.

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lenges. Some challenges I thought we would not be able to get through. Each time, I sought guidance and it helped me. I had guidance such as doing *toban* (volunteer service at the Dharma center), making donations (both volunteering at the Dharma center and offering monetary donations), performing ancestor veneration services, and connecting people with the Dharma. Through each encounter and by following the guidance given to me, I was able to deepen my faith.

In thinking back over the past thirty-one years, our daughter's asthma was the Buddha's arrangement to turn my life toward the teachings and my faith. It was the true turning point in my life. I learned that the Buddha and the Dharma showed me the real meaning of happiness.

Currently, I am the advisor to the youth director in training. Through my encounters with the youth, I realized the challenges they have. I hope to be able to convey the spirit of the Dharma and support them to deepen their own faith.

Thank you very much!

