

“Momoka, where did you go during the summer vacation?” Well, I do not have a summer vacation. Summer is the busiest time of the year. Do you know why? My house is a temple. My father, is a teacher on the weekdays and a monk on the weekends. Many Buddhist events are held in the temple such as funerals and Buddha’s birthday. The main event is the Bon festival, which is a Japanese religious custom to pray for ancestors. An important part of living in the temple is helping my family. For example, cleaning the inside and outside of the temple, and serving tea to the guests. Furthermore, I have to listen to my father’s lecture. In my father’s sermon, he always says; live for other people and do for other people. I do not mind what my father says. It’s just that, I should not have been born at the temple because of the endless work. I want to have a summer vacation like everyone else does! I complained about living in a temple until one unexpected situation happened.

One summer afternoon, a stranger came to my temple. His clothes were dirty and he had not taken a bath for a long time. I was very scared of this complete stranger, however, my father asked “Are you OK?” smiling at him. Then my father listened to the stranger’s story. After that, father gave this man a meal and a bath. The stranger became happy and thanked my father. I was moved by what my father had done.

Three years ago, I took the wrong train at Namba Station on my way back from cram school and found myself at a strange station. I did not have a smartphone and the evening was getting darker and darker. I was totally lost and did not know what to do. A young lady walked up to me. She said, “What’s the matter? I can help you.” She checked the train schedule and told me how to change trains. She was also kind enough to take me to a main station so I could manage to change trains. I was saved! I thanked her from the bottom of my heart.

There is a similarity between my father and the young lady. Do you know what it is? It is courage. Courage saved the stranger and me.

I looked up courage in the Longman Dictionary. Courage is defined as, “the quality of being brave when you are in a difficult situation.” Where does courage come from? I think it is formed little by little. When others help you and you feel gratitude to them, you want to return the favor to other people. Repaying the gesture could motivate you to produce courage. As for me, the young woman’s and my father’s acts would encourage me to be brave.

One day, I gathered my courage. There was a blind man with a white stick in his hand and he was having difficulty getting off the train. I gave my shoulder to him. He looked very relieved and showed his appreciation. I was very happy and felt very good.

I would like to introduce my favorite saying from Malala. “One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.” I am going to add “courage” to this phrase. I believe that “One act of courage can change the world.”

Father, thank you for showing me what courage is. You passed me the baton of courage and your words of wisdom will always be part of me.