

Something important is close to me

Groaning sound of the bell awakens me every morning. I live in a temple. My father is a priest. But he is also an office worker. I have a little strange lifestyle.

My typical day starts at six a.m. when my father rings the temple bell in my house everyday. After waking up, we always listen to buddhist chant reading by my father. It's just 15 minutes. Then, we prepare for school or the office. However, I sometimes feel that it's a waste of time. I want to be in bed for that time. But my father is very strict about religious events. When my father found I was drowsy, I was scolded badly. I always hated these situations, and I wish if I was a child of a normal house.

The biggest difference between my home and others is really serious for childhood. I haven't believed in Santa Claus since I was a little child. That is because my parents told me, "Santa Claus doesn't live in the real world." This means, of course, that I have never got a Christmas present from Santa Claus or my parents. Many children said that they got a present from Santa Claus. I was shocked. My parents told me not to tell other children that Santa Claus doesn't exist. I became alone on Christmas and I felt an invisible wall between friends and me. Christmas is the ordinary day for my family. I

didn't like Christmas day and didn't like the temple because I couldn't celebrate Christmas events.

One day, there happened to be nothing heard at 6 o'clock a.m. It was just because my father was going on a business trip so no one rang the bell. Then, some neighbors hurried to come to our temple and said, "Something must have happened to the priest! Today I can't hear the bell! Is he all right?" I was surprised. I thought it was an exaggeration. I thought that they didn't hear the bell and it was just noisy. Until then, I didn't notice that my father had played an important role not only in telling the time, but also as the symbol of the town.

I was also shocked by the story I heard from my mother later. She said that the temple was once burned down before I was born. My grandfather thought that it was difficult to restore, so he decided not to rebuild it. However, neighbors around the temple gathered to discuss what they should do to keep the temple and collected enough money to rebuild the temple standing now. When I heard the story, the temple is my home as well as the home of many local people living around here. I found out that they loved the temple very much.

Gradually I changed my mind about the temple after hearing these stories. It is because I realized the people around me care about the temple and time spent in that place and social disposition, and they tried to protect. Then, as a daughter of the temple, I also need to cherish it. I began to think about that.

I decided to do something I can contribute to the temple. I took a “Tokudo.” “Tokudo” means training and test for becoming a monk. I refused his offer many times because it was very hard and require patience. After practicing hard, I could complete “Tokudo” and became a monk. Now I can understand why my father is always strict and punctual. He has experienced such a hardship and gained dignity and respect among locan residents.

After that, I started to participate in temple events that I hadn’t attended because I was too lazy. I became more social and could talk with more people. Through these, I learned the importance of taking care of things near me. It’s often difficult to see what’s right in front of your eyes. If the field of view is narrow, I may miss something important. Now that I was able to find what is important, I am sure I can be a part of protecting the temple as my home.

Majestic sound of the bell tells the time as it always is. [696 words]