



Rissho Kosei-kai of New York

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April 2022 Newsletter

Hello, everyone!

Hope you are doing well.

Vernal equinox has passed, and we are gradually heading towards the warm spring season.

As vaccination progresses, many of the mask mandates have been eased, and attempts to return to the daily life before COVID have appeared in various forms. As for RKNY, I would like to consider reopening the facilities in NY, Chicago, and Ft. Myers, without rushing, while gradually watching each situation.

And yet, many people have passed away thus far, and many people are still in the hospital receiving medical treatments.

Let us pray for the spirits of those who have passed away due to COVID so that they may rest in peace and pray for the safe recovery of all those who are being treated in the hospital and at home.

Let us also not forget to thank all the medical staff and the essential workers who have been working throughout this period.

Furthermore, in addition to COVID, Ukraine has suffered many casualties due to the sudden Russian invasion. There has been a continuous outflow of numerous refugees out of the country.

Let us pray together that the solution for peace will proceed as soon as possible.

Now, on the 31st of last month, Yuri Sugino, our Director of Administration, who lived in NY for 23 years, returned to Japan. On the 20th, we held a Zoom farewell time with her. I would like to share with you the farewell greetings I gave at the time as a way of thanking her, again, for her hard work and great endeavors over the years.

Farewell to Mrs. Yuri Sugino, our Director of Administration

Yuri Sugino, our Director of Administration, will be returning to Japan on March 31st, after completing her 23-year life in New York. While supporting her husband, Kyoichi who worked at Religions for Peace International Headquarters, she tirelessly played the role of supporting the New York Center, serving under many ministers. She was appointed to the important role of Director of Administration by Rev. Fujita, and, until now, has worked together with Yoshi Iimura, Chief of Dharma Center, as supporters of the Center's management.

Looking back to 23 years ago, Yuri was carrying Motoki, who was just six months old at the time, and with Kyoichi, landed at JFK in the cold of the winter sky. After that, Kanon and then Takumi were born in New York. They were coddled and loved by everyone at the Center and grew by leaps and bounds. And now, Kanon and Takumi have developed into impressive university students here in the United States.

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I am deeply moved that I have been given the opportunity to welcome the Sugino family to New York as the minister of the NY Center at the time, and now, to send them off as they return to Japan as their minister of the NY Center again.

Before Kyoichi and Yuri were married, I worked with them at the Headquarters' External Affairs Department, and after they got married, I also sent them off with another staff member when they were leaving for Geneva.

After Kyoichi started his new assignment, they unfortunately suffered the extremely painful experience of having their first child stillborn. I think the hardships they endured cannot be fully explained simply in a word. However, they were able to overcome such a major challenge and build the fine family they have today.

Yuri hails from Ageo Kyokai in Saitama Prefecture. She was raised by her parents and grandmother in a deeply religious family where she thrived. I heard that during her high school years, she studied abroad in the United

States and the members of the Chicago Chapter had taken very good care of her.

Yuri once shared an episode that happened while she was studying abroad. When the Founder visited New York, she at first came to the NY Center with the sole purpose of wishing to catch a glimpse of the Founder. But once he arrived, she was so overwhelmed with emotion that she could not stop crying out loud and thus could not remember a word of what the Founder had said.

After returning to Japan, Yuri became a staff member at RK's Headquarters. While working at the Headquarters for the Youth Division, she was placed in charge of the "Donate One Meal Movement" and was also devoted to youth development.

Thereafter, she moved to the External Affairs Dept and went on many overseas business trips to actively participate in peace activities. On one of those trips, she met the person destined to be her husband.

In New York, by making use of such numerous experiences, she has played an important role in the Center's management as our Director of Administration.

In addition to missionary matters, she has been working on everything from accounting to negotiations, contracts, etc., with the governmental agencies and various vendors.

It would be difficult for me to suddenly take over such work in the future, so I have already asked RKI Director Akagawa, and have received his consent, for Yuri to continue with the role for NY Center even though she is transferred to Rissho Kosei International (RKI). Therefore, Yuri, please understand that I cannot release your role of Director of Administration today, and I would like to ask for your continued support.

Furthermore, in addition to the role she held at the Center, Yuri was involved in various activities outside the Center. Besides acquiring the license for Cosmetology, she is quite an expert in variety of crafts. Utilizing her talent of creating various items with beads and by improving her skills in creating shadow boxes and decorative boxes, she held classes to teach such crafts for the mothers from Japan living in Manhattan. Yuri has a remarkable ability to form a broad range of human relationships

Also, a female doctor I met said, "Yuri-san is kind and thoughtful to everyone, a wonderful person who immediately runs over to help anyone facing difficulties. It's as if we have Mother Teresa in New York. Rissho Kosei-Kai is certainly wonderful."

For us, it is very painful to have such a "super lady" return to Japan and worry about the future. But let us accept this as a great opportunity for each one of us to stop the tendency to ask and rely on her and help one another to do our best, so that our Director Yuri Sugino can from now on, play an active role at the Headquarters with peace of mind.

There are so many other memories that I can't possibly share them all here, but I would like to express our gratitude on behalf of all of us for your endeavors and great contributions thus far as I close my words of well wishes for our Director of Administration, Mrs. Sugino's return home.

Even after you return to Japan, I have been told you will oversee North America as a staff member of RKI, and so, I appreciate your continuing to take on some of the NY Center's work.

Please be well and take good care of yourself.

Thank you very much.

From this month, it will be a "new start" for us. Let us work together as a team on this 40th Anniversary Year of the establishment of the NY Buddhist Center and sufficiently and effectively prepare for the commemorative ceremony in October.



Gassho

Rev. Tomokazu Hatakeyama

Minister RKNY