

Tale Winds

Heartwarming stories
from the sky

Rieko Saegusa

Former ANA Flight Attendant/
Instructor at ANA Learning

Experience the humanity that deeply touched a former flight attendant 39,000 feet in the air. Thirty-three heartwarming stories passed down in the ANA family of companies.



About the author

Rieko Saegusa is an etiquette instructor at ANA Learning and a former ANA flight attendant. A graduate of Aoyama Gakuin University with a degree in British and American Literature, she joined All Nippon Airways (ANA) and served as chief purser on both domestic and international flights. Prior to leaving the company, she also served on VIP flights (accommodating members of the Imperial Family, the Prime Minister, and state guests), and was appointed as the training instructor for newly recruited flight attendants and as a member of the Service Efficiency Project Committee.

Today, as a representative of Stroke Japan, Co., Ltd., in addition to guiding companies in the field of corporate communications, she actively serves as an etiquette instructor, transmitting codes of etiquette for the global executive by giving talks on a variety of subjects that revolve around the theme of "enriching the heart via emotions, smiles, and ambitions." Some of these talks are titled, "Hospitality that Moves the Heart," "The Secret of Winning one Fan Every Day," and "How to Become an Attractive Adult." She also serves as an instructor of the Training Division at ANA Learning, carrying out talent training at various companies, including the ANA group of companies.

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およそ39000フィートの上空では、様々なドラマが繰り広げられています。

お客様はそれぞれのストーリーを背負って、飛行機にお乗りになります。

楽しいこと、うれしいこと、悲しいこと、時には悔しいこともあるでしょう。

お客様一人ひとりの背景を読むことは簡単ではありませんが、少しでも、お客様の心に寄り添うことができれば……、そう願って、空の旅をご一緒させていただいています。

機内は、空の上にある特別な舞台です。

ゆっくりお休みいただくホテルにもなれば、

おいしい食べ物、飲み物を堪能していただくレストランやバー、免税品などの買い物をするデパート、

最新の映画を楽しむ映画館、

眺めが抜群の観光スポット、

資料を作成する仕事場、

読書や音楽でリラックスする趣味の場、

そして、静かに自分と向き合うことができる空間でもあります。

空の上という舞台で繰り広げられる、数々のシーン。

そこには、キラキラやワクワク、ドキドキがいっぱいです。

別世界であるこの舞台に立つと、不思議なことに、感性が豊かになり、心がキラキラ輝き出します。

当たり前なのが想像以上の感動につながり、ほんの些細なことがワクワクする感激に変わります。

ドキドキすることで生まれる奇跡もあります。

それが、空の上でかけることができる魔法だと、私は思っています。

そのためであれば、サンタさんにも魔法使いでも、キューピットにだってなります。

本書では、ANAが大切にしている「あんしん」「あったか」「あかるく元気」のうち、「あったか」に焦点を当てて、

大切なお客様との触れ合い、

ANA魂をもった仲間たちとの交流、

お客様からのお手紙など、

本当にあったハートフルなエピソードをご紹介します。

エピソードを通して、飛行機に乗ること、そして空港に行くことが楽しくなり、人と人とが織りなす絆を感じていただけたら最高です。

飛行機は、今日もまた、様々な想いを乗せて飛び続けます。

三枝 理枝子

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Story 1

Flight from Haneda to Fukuoka

A veiled birthday

When I was returning to Fukuoka with my wife and daughter, due to our doctor's decision, my daughter was designated as a stretcher patient and allowed to board the plane lying down, instead of being assigned an ordinary seat, as she was for our outbound flight. (The stretcher is a makeshift bed attached above the seats in the plane. It's for passengers who are unable to sit due to illness or injury.) Since the stretcher is partitioned off behind a beige-colored curtain, regular passengers certainly notice there's something unusual going on, but they most likely can't even begin to imagine that behind the curtain, a bed-ridden patient is flying together with them.

My daughter is in the fourth grade and suffers from heart disease. She had undergone surgery in Tokyo during this trip, but the operation had failed to make smooth progress. For this reason, we ended up returning on this day to Fukuoka without seeing a full recovery.

More than anyone else, my daughter herself knew this, along with the fact that her long-held dream to be able to run with all her strength had grown distant again.

We were allowed to board the plane ahead of the other passengers, since the installation of the bed would take up time.

Even though it was her second time, my daughter was not used to this experience yet, and her face was stiff with tension, just as I also felt.

However, many of the flight attendants put our minds at ease, giving us a warm welcome by saying things like, "Hello, thanks for boarding," and "It's going to be all right."

They promptly transferred my daughter to the rear of the cabin and moved her from the gurney to the stretcher bed. There were several belts attached to her chest area, and my wife and I sat next to her, straddling the aisle. Moments later, the flight attendant in charge appeared and tenderly greeted us with a smile, and said, "My name is so and so, and I'm the attendant personally assigned to you for this flight. Please feel free to ask me anything I can help you with. Are you comfortable?" She then went on to relate funny stories of her own

grade-school days, helping my daughter to relax and feel more at ease.

She must have been exhausted from the long trip, because soon after the other passengers boarded and the plane began to move, she was sound asleep.

After liftoff and the drinks, the flight attendant who had appeared a while ago returned to check on us. I began to chat with her, and before I knew it, I was talking away about my daughter's surgery, about how excited she was about flying in an airplane, and about how, in fact, it was her tenth birthday today.

A little while later, she awoke. Then, lo and behold, the flight attendant in charge returned with two other flight attendants and began to sing in a low voice, "Happy birthday to you!"

And that wasn't all. After saying, "Congratulations!" they brought a basketful of handmade candies and a picture postcard filled with messages of encouragement written by all the crew members.

To be sure, my daughter was surprised at this sudden turn of events. Still, she wore a huge smile on her face. It was a smile I hadn't seen for some time now.

As soon as the flight attendants finished singing the birthday song, we heard "Happy birthday to you" again. And it was coming from the other side of the curtain, for that matter. "What was going on?"

My wife and I and the flight attendants exchanged glances, all of us surprised. So we opened the curtain a little, and became even more surprised. A lady passenger seated nearby was singing for my daughter. She probably overheard the talk I had with the attendant earlier.

While her voice wasn't too loud, her singing resounded throughout the cabin. Moments later, a man's voice joined with hers, followed by many others from beyond the curtain.

I began to feel calm and happy. The singing voices were simply wonderful, helping my daughter forget all





the fatigue from the surgery and being hospitalized.

What a blessing it was to have so many people celebrate my daughter's birthday. Filled with gratitude as well as pity for her, I was overcome with emotion and my eyes began to brim with tears. Even my daughter's eyes were overflowing with tears.

I said to her, "Nice, isn't it? To have your birthday celebrated by so many people. You must be very happy." She answered happily, "Yes. I've never had so many people wish me well."

I just kept bowing my head, thanking everyone for their singing, even though the curtain veiled my bed-ridden daughter from their view. With all the encouragement and warmth from everyone there, I felt reaffirmed that people are basically warm-hearted, and that the world isn't all that bad after all. I still vividly remember the look on my daughter's face when she began hearing the singing voices from behind the curtain, and asked, "For me?"

While we still have a rough road ahead, the three of us as a family will join hands and live strong.

I wonder who it was who started singing first. Without this person, people who would have otherwise been perfect strangers to us began singing and celebrating together. This person must have wondered if there was anything she could do just herself; something helpful; something to bring some joy.

I think it's amazing someone could act on such thoughts. It's touching and makes you believe in people.

To be able to freely think about wishing to do something and then take action; I believe we all have it in us to be able to take such a first, pure-hearted, honest step forward. This was a flight in which my heart was touched by the kindness of others.

Let's all plant the seeds of kindness together, in-

stead of waiting for someone else to make the flower bloom.