Today is Father’s Day.

“Daddy, this is Akiko. Happy Father’s Day.” This is what my mom told the Christie family on the phone the other day. The Christies are an American family who invited my mom to stay with them when she went to the US as a foreign exchange student 27 years ago. While talking to “Daddy” on the phone, my mom’s voice started to tremble a bit. I think this was because she was touched by his kindness.

A while ago, something very sad happened to Daddy -- his most beloved wife, “Mom,” died of heart disease. Last February, my mother received a letter from Daddy saying: “A while ago, Mom was taken to the hospital, but since no treatment can cure her anymore, I would like to bring her back home so she can enjoy some peace. I don’t even know whether she’ll make it through this month.” My mother had actually started worrying about Mom, since she hadn’t received any letters from her for a while.

When reading Daddy’s letter, my mom felt so helpless that she decided to pack her bags and visit the Christie family. When she arrived at their home in the US, Mom was apparently still able to talk a bit, and when she opened her eyes and noticed my mother, she even uttered a soft cry of joy. My mother took care of Mom as good as she could, and when she left Mom and Daddy again, she took Mom’s hands in hers and expressed her thankful feelings: “Thank you, Mom. You know, I really love you. Thank you for everything.” Mom replied to her: “Please take good care of your children, will you?”

Recently, my mother received another letter from Daddy in which he wrote: “Please let me know the birthdays of your children, since I would like to send them a birthday card just like Mom used to do.” I felt happy. If Daddy is fit enough to travel, I would love to invite him to come and visit us in Japan.