



The Konko Missions in Hawaii will fulfill Ikigami Konko Daijin's vision to embrace the world with the Konko Faith.

Happiness Is The Greatest Medicine

By Rev. Edna Matsuoka, Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Happiness is a choice; not a result. Nothing will make you happy until you choose to be happy. No person will make you happy unless you decide to be happy. Your happiness will not come to you. It can only come from you.

-Ralph Marston

It is so important to be happy. Are you happy? What makes you happy? What percentage of your day is happy? Happiness attracts happiness!

I watched "The Secret", which is a documentary

on how to make good things happen by the "Law of Attraction." I saw this video on Netflix a few times already in the past. And I must say it's a great film. Every time I watch it, I am re-inspired and feel re-energized. The teachings in the Konko faith practice are the same. I read them for many years, over and over again. The same teachings I read when I was an 8 year old hold new meaning versus when I read it at the age of 15 and again, a new meaning when I read it in my twenties, and now a deeper understanding of the same teaching when I am in my thirties. I wonder what the same teachings will mean to me when I am in my 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and 100s?

In the documentary, The Secret, it mentions that we are all equipped with automatic indicators of when we are able to receive blessings. Can you guess what it is? It's our feelings. When we feel happy, happy things and situations will be attracted to us. But when we feel anger, sadness, fear, depression and any other negative thoughts, undesirable situations get attracted to us and the so called, a chain of "bad luck" starts happening.

Okage wa wagakokoro ni ari, "The divine favor depends upon ones own joyful, harmonious and compassionate heart." This is a line mentioned in the Tenchi Kakitsuke (Divine Reminder) of Konkoko.

It's exactly what the documentary tries to explain. Divine favor is realized within our hearts. Whether they are feelings of joy or hatred—whatever we think will materialize.

If we are able to switch our hearts, we will immediately begin to notice that blessings surround us in every aspect of our lives. When I get upset or the feeling of irritation fills my heart, I say "Konko-Sama" in my heart, and I try to be mindful of my anger and try to force myself to think of something that brings me joy. Or I try to think about other people in much more troubled situations than me. Then the feeling of anger dissipates and I am able to feel grateful again. This takes a lot of practice. The moment we start dwelling on the negative events in our lives, the more our situation will get worse.

I saw this in a patient of mine one day. I work on the medical/surgical oncology unit, so many of the patients have cancer. This patient had lung cancer. It wasn't hard to tell that life was currently a suffering for him. He never smiled; he did not like it when the staff entered his room. He was stoic and quite particular.

One evening I helped him back to bed from the bathroom. His body was weak. He limped carefully while I supported his right arm. His shoulders curled inward and his back was slightly hunched. I could sense his energy level was very low. His wife stood at the bedside.



Something in me wanted to help this patient. I knew his energy levels could change—with a bit of advice. I asked my patient, "Mr...., would you like to know something that can perhaps change how you feel?" He suddenly turned his head to the right and said, "Yes, please, I want to know. Please tell me as soon as I go back to my bed."

I helped him back and pulled his tan fleece blanket to his shoulders. Then he and his wife gave their full attention to me. "Ok, you can tell me now," he says. I asked him, "Have you ever talked to your or-

gans, your cells, your body parts?" He replied, "No." I further said, "Right now you have lung cancer, but have you ever given thanks to your lungs for having worked so hard and kept you alive till this day?" He replied, "No." "Are you able to say, 'I love you dear cancer cells?' 'Have you ever said Thank you and I am sorry dear cancer cells?'" A deep furrow formed between his eyes—the kind of puzzled look of "why would anyone say I love you to cancer?" kind of look.

I further elaborated that cancer cells are just like adolescents who rebel against their parents. They don't listen. But there is a reason why they rebel. A good parent would talk to their rebelling child and try to understand what is going on. However, a bad parent would kick their rebellious child out of the house.

I asked my patient how he feels about his cancer. "Don't usual people hate cancer? They want to fight it, kill it, burn it or cut it out through surgical intervention, right?" He nodded. Cancer cells do not want to hear those words, and they don't want to feel your hatred towards them. Doing so will make the situation worse.

Furthermore, not many people give thanks to their body parts when everything is normal. And the only time they would talk to their body parts is when it is not going well for them, or when it is hurting. Imagine you being a hardworking employee for a company for many years. You over-worked yourself to the point of exhaustion, and now you are fatigued and broken beyond repair. Then your boss tells you that you are being lazy, and to work harder. How would you feel? You would become very upset and hurt. We do the exact same thing to our own bodies when we develop diseases and injury. Appreciation is so important. Our physical state and happiness level is a direct indicator of the entire health state of our body.

Pain and illness are the final visible indicators that are trying to communicate to you that something is broken in your body, and we need to be mindful of that. We need to be mindful and appreciative while we are still pain free and disease free.

I explained how it is important to be mindful of not only our own body, but every element that sustains our livelihood. We need to be thankful for the family and friends that support us, the hospital and staff that delivers care, the food that is served at the hospital, the blankets and bed for your com-

fort, the elements of heaven and earth that enable all life to live—the sun, the moon, the air, water, and everything. The patient's wife began nodding her head in excitement, "Yes! Yes! My mother used to say to me every time, 'Kansha' (Gratitude). That when we are thankful for everything, the problems will naturally switch to good!"

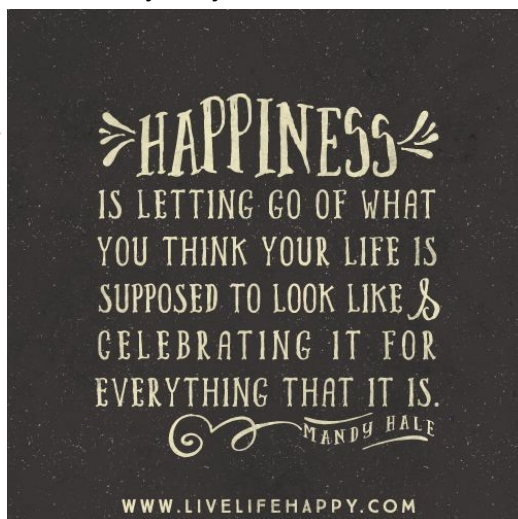
The patient and his wife were in shock. Big drops of tears were rolling down the cheeks of his wife and his eyes were also welling up with tears. They plucked the tissue on the table and dabbed their tears away. The patient stated, "Wait, wait, wait, I must write this all down. I don't want to forget a single thing

you said to me. I have never heard of such things in my life. Thank you so much." In my heart, I thought there is no need for this man to write down a single thing, for the energy level in his body has already changed to the better. The shock that they received is enough to change things around 180 degrees. I could feel his inner spiritual furnace bursting with energy. His heart had changed to positive. That night, around 10:00, the patient's son came to visit. When I came into his room to offer his night medications, he said, "Edna, can you please tell my son every-

thing you told me earlier. I want him to know this, too." Now, the patient, his wife and the son gave me their full attention and listened to me. It was a repeat of what I said earlier in the evening, but again, the patient and the wife were inspired. His son was also grateful and listened very carefully as he heard this for the first time.

From the moment I shared my thoughts to him, he did not talk to his family and the hospital staff in a gloomy, upset manner. Even his tone of voice changed. Instead of the, "can you get out of my room," phrase the staff would get from him, his expression changed to "oh, you can come on in." He began to say, "Thank you" for everything and to every body. The next day, I saw him out in the balcony of the end of the hallway in the wheelchair, accompanied with his son, quietly observing the world outside, and breathing in fresh air. It was a beautiful, peaceful scene. I opened the door to the balcony and greeted the patient. "Hi, it's your nurse, Edna. How are you feeling today?" He had his son turn his wheelchair so he could look at me and greet me, and replied, "I feel much better." He was stable enough to go home a day later.

In Japanese, disease is called *Byōki* 病気. It is made of two kanji characters. The first character, *Byō* implies a person lying in bed feverishly (according to wikitionary.org). The second character, *Ki* means



mood or spirit. Illness originates from the spirit or our mood.

When our heart is happy and full of joy, our container to receive blessings is big and empty, so an infinite amount of happiness can fill that container.

When we become sick, we tend to baby our diagnosis. We feel sorry for ourselves and constantly dwell on the thought of being sick, tired, and in pain. Sickness is probably just taking over 10% of our entire wellbeing. But because we dwell on it so much, it is taking over 90% of our lives. In actuality, 90% of our life is perfect, and only 10% is the disease. If we focus on the 90% that is perfect and give sincere thanks for it, we will be able to switch even that 10% of the disease in to good. And your life will soon normalize.

Konko Daijin teaches, "When you come here (to the church) and think you are receiving blessed teachings, your heart becomes tranquil. But when you are at home thinking about various things, you get angry. And your heart becomes disturbed. When you get angry, your face, even your lips change color. Those with weak bodies will succumb immediately and may experience headaches. Convulsive people will suffer from stomach pains. These maladies occur because when they get angry; their bodies stiffen, constricting the flow of blood. After one begins to cool off, the constricted blood starts to circulate again. When you are angry, reform yourself by praying to Kami to polish the mirror in your heart. Practicing faith to ward off sickness is having your heart save you. (Gorikai I Yamamoto Sadajiro 59-1,2,3)

Mrs. Fusami Kudo

Inspirational talk given on April 22, 2017 at the Konko Mission of Honolulu about her battle with cancer and her journey to discovering the Power of Gratitude

First of all, I want you to understand just one thing. I am going to talk about my miraculous experience. My story doesn't deny the importance of medical care. I don't say that you don't need to go to a hospital. Medical workers work hard to cure many ailments and we need their help. So, please don't think you don't need to go to hospitals. Please do not misunderstand.

Diagnosed with Cancer

"Slap!" The sound of the doctor slapping me on the thigh, the pronouncement of the doctor sitting across from me kept ringing in my head. "You have cancer! Why did you let it get this far!"

After I was called to the private room, while looking at my X-ray photos, I thought I would be told, "I am very sorry to say this, but you have cancer..." like something out of a movie or a TV show. But reality was different: a slap on the thigh and being shouted at. This was a day I would never forget, May 1st, 2006, the day I was diagnosed with cervical cancer.

This was followed by an exam to check if the cancer had spread and if it was possible to have surgery to remove it. There were a lot of patients waiting for surgery, but they would fit me in somehow. My condition was so severe it couldn't be put off.

Two weeks later, I went into the hospital just before the day I would have the surgery. I could only think about the surgery. That evening, the surgeon came to visit me and said, "I'm sorry, we can't perform the surgery. Your cancer has grown too big, if we were to remove it, it is highly probable we would



damage other areas. Even if we did the surgery, we are not confident that we could remove all of the cancer." In other words, they said that they couldn't perform the surgery.

I thought it would be as easy as taking out the bad parts and I would get better. Hearing that they couldn't perform the surgery, I lost hope. I was so shocked, I couldn't even cry.

Actually, during the exploratory examination, my blood vessel was damaged and the bleeding had not stopped. So

the doctor suggested, "First, in order to stop the bleeding we'll use radiotherapy to fix the blood vessels. We will do radiation one minute every day for 30 days. It does not hurt at all. We will do it from the front and back by your uterus. Also, when the radiotherapy is over, you will then do the very painful 'RALS' treatment three times."

Since I was told they couldn't operate, I was so disappointed but, at least there was another way. Thank goodness! I hadn't heard of RALS before, but if I could get through it I could go home in a month. With these thoughts I felt like I had a ray of hope.

Radiation began once a day for thirty days. It was true that the beginning treatments did not hurt at all. But about after the 25th time my skin looked like it had been burned. It looked like I had keloids, and my skin was peeling off. Because it hurt so much, I could not go to the bathroom. I was afraid of going to the bathroom so I didn't like to eat or drink. If my underwear even touched my skin a little bit, it hurt so much. Even with all of this, I was able to finish all 30 treatments.

Only 3 more RALS treatments left and I can go home! That was all I could think about. I wanted to go home as soon as possible and see my kids. I wanted to make lots of good food for my growing boys. Only three more treatments and I'm done! I thought that I was making my kids sad, so I wanted to go home as soon as possible.

RALS

Finally, the long awaited first treatment of RALS. That day was very hot so I brought a sweat towel with me around my neck. I left my room and headed to the basement where the radiation treatment room was. On the way, the nurse stopped me and said, "Don't forget to bring a towel!" I showed the nurse the towel I had around my neck and said, "Yep, I've got one!" Then the nurse said, "No, no, no. A towel to put in your mouth."

When I heard those words, my smile disappeared and I suddenly got very nervous. What did she mean by a towel to put in my mouth?! What on earth is going to happen???? I'm so scared. I began to feel more and more nervous. I managed to go back to my room and grab another towel, and with shaking legs went down to the radiation treatment room.

I was lead to the radiation table and was finally given an explanation.

"The very painful radiation treatment will now begin. We will not use any painkillers. We will not use any anesthesia as well. This is because, if we use such things, a doctor must remain by your side at all times. The doctor cannot remain by your side because of the radiation. Therefore, we will now put the towel in your mouth. You must endure the pain. You cannot move even one millimeter from where you are right now. Therefore, we will now restrain you. It will take one hour to prepare the machine and restraints. After that, the treatment will take one hour. It will also take one hour to remove the machine. "As they were saying this, they started to restrain me and push the towel into my mouth.

I wanted to run away! I felt this from the bottom of my heart. Before they stuffed the towel in my mouth, I wanted to say, 'Let me go home!' Now that I was completely restrained, the doctor started to arrange the machine inside my uterus.

It wasn't a matter of just hurting. It wasn't a matter of just pain. At the same time the treatment started, I began to scream. But because of the towel in my mouth I couldn't scream.

Why do I have to suffer through this??? There was nowhere to hide. I was completely defenseless, I could only endure it. I continued my soundless scream. Tears welled up in my eyes and I couldn't wipe them away. My brain shorted out from the pain. I didn't want to think. I didn't want to feel. I didn't care about anything. I cursed myself for being here; I

cursed the situation that brought me to this point, all of my regrets swirled around in my head.

Finally, the treatment was finished. They wheeled me back to the room but, I could not get on the bed because I was shaking too much. I crawled into my bed. The pain and fear continued to stiffen my body so much that I couldn't believe that it was my body. I couldn't even walk. How did I even get cancer? I blamed myself. I cried all night. I felt so hopeless; I felt that my life ended.

This was not treatment, this was torture. Even though I felt this hopeless, I still had two more treatments to go. Thinking this, I just wanted to go home so badly. Was there any reason to stop the treatment? Was there any way I could go home? I began to think of ways to run away. I wished with all my heart that I didn't want to be cured, that I just wanted to disappear.

Afterwards, the nurse talked to me about RALS and that during treatment patients became so hopeless that they would try to run away, so they would be watching over me carefully.

Receiving the Book

Several days later, on the day before the second RALS treatment, one of the teachers at my son's school sent me a book. He wrote me a letter. "This book really moved me. I went to a seminar in Tsukuba (Translator's note: A city near Tokyo), and the talk by Dr. Kazuo Murakami really moved me. Then, I read his book. Please read this book as well and get better."

When I opened the envelope, the book, The Divine Code of Life: Awaken Your Genes and Discover Hidden Talents was inside. It was written by Dr. Kazuo Murakami, Professor Emeritus at Tsukuba University. Just what kind of book was this? What does "Read this book and get better" mean?

Even though I couldn't forget the treatment I was about to endure tomorrow; even though I didn't want to do anything; I was happy there were people thinking about me, and so I thought I'd read the book.

There were a lot of difficult words like DNA and biotechnology. But, while I was reading, it was like one revelation after another. So interesting. I was so excited. Before I knew it, I was completely absorbed in the book.

Alone on the Bed

These are some of the things written in The Divine Code of Life:

"A person who weighs 60 kilos has 60 trillion cells. A newborn has a few trillion cells."

"In each of those 60 trillion cells resides the exact same DNA."

"Contained in one human cell there is the basic genetic information that can be written in 3 billion letters. If one were to make this

into a book, you would have 1,000 letters on each page, and it would be 1,000 pages long, and you would need 3,000 books. This vast amount of information found in just one cell is also found in each of the 60 trillion cells."

"While I continued reading, I asked myself. 'What are genes?' 'Just what purpose do genes have in my body?' these sorts of questions kept coming up.

"Inside the DNA of a human body, only about 5% of them are running and working while the other parts of them are not sure what they are doing.

When I read this, if this is true, 95% of my DNA is dormant, and on top of that, if I can awaken even 1% of the good DNA, I can probably get a little better than I am now. That is what I thought. In other words, I made the connection that, 'if I can awaken my dormant DNA?' ...And a moment later, I shouted, "Hooray!"

"Hooray! Thank goodness! I am a human!" I didn't care if I attracted attention, and just shouted out at two in the morning. The other cancer patient I shared a room with had taken sleeping medicine so they were sound asleep. Personally, no matter how badly I couldn't sleep from the pain, while I was in the hospital I would not take sleeping medicine. At this point in time, in the dark hospital room, with this timing, holding the book sent to me, I was moved. I had started reading this book to try to forget about the radiation treatment tomorrow, but instead I received something much better, hope. If, in that book it is written that, "All of the genes are operating at 100%", then I think I probably wouldn't be alive now. Precisely because of the fact that it is written that 95% of the genes are sleeping, I was able to see some hope for me. For the 60 trillion cells in me, if I could awaken even 1% of the sleeping 95% in the cells, I would probably feel a little better than I do now. Oh, I see now, if that's true, I think I have hope. I was so, so happy; I was moved by the idea that people had limitless possibilities.

Humans Are Amazing

In another place in the book it says, "Even though a huge number of Nobel Prize winners tried, no one could create a single coli bacillus." Dr. Kazuo Murakami, a professor emeritus at Tsukuba University is a world renowned pioneer and in 1983, discovered that a hidden cause of hypertension is found in the human enzyme renin after successfully decoding it. This amazing scientist doesn't say, "There is nothing that science cannot explain," but instead says, "The birth of life is a miracle." Dr. Murakami is known for naming the great power of existence which is beyond human intelligence and possibility as 'Something Great' to describe the idea.

"Humans say many things like defying nature or mastering nature but, we live by its mysterious power. Dr. Murakami humbly asks that we shouldn't for-

get." With his kindly admonishing disposition, I wanted to know him better and I was pulled more and more into his world.

"My father has 23 chromosomes and my mother has 23 chromosomes. When you put those chromosomes together, there is a 1 in 70 trillion chance that it will result in a child. The probability of a human being born is the same as the probability of winning the 100 million yen lottery, 1 million times in a row." It is hard to believe such an amazing fact. I see. So that's how it is. If you think of it that way, I can't help but feel happy that I was born a human.

My beloved three sons were also a 1 in 70 trillion chance of being born. My family and friends, everyone was also born as a 1 in 70 trillion chance. I too, exist as the miracle of the 1 in 70 trillion chance. What a wonderful thing. What a joyous thing. I was so thankful that I couldn't stop crying.

Everyone is the same. Everyone on this earth is so precious. Everyone hospitalized in this building, all the people in Kumamoto, also all of the people on Kyushu were all born as a 1 in 70 trillion chance miracle. Without wiping away my overflowing tears, I just experienced the happiness welling in me; my awareness became greater and greater. All the people in Japan, all the people in the world, everyone's existence was a miracle.

When I thought that, like a dream or an apparition, I felt like I took flight and left the earth. Up and up I flew, up into space, and looked down on the blue earth. And I thought that all of the people on the earth are a miracle; I loved everyone's existence, and was so full of joy for their existence and before I knew it, the earth was lit up all over and I hugged the earth.

"Everyone, I'm so glad. So glad. It really is great that you were all able to be born on this earth." It was the middle of the night in the hospital room and I sat alone on the bed with only a curtain between the other patient and myself. I felt my consciousness leave my body and fly up above the earth and into space and embrace the earth.

The earth was lit up by lights all over. All of the different points of light that I could see were people. Yet, when I looked closer, I noticed that the lights of the nature around us was even brighter. It was almost as if nature was the real light and the energy was distributed to the humans. While observing this light I realized, "Humans are living because of the earth and mother nature. In order for humans to live, the earth prepares the water and air, and we take it for granted, pollute it, and act like humans are special."

What a thing to say. The earth really is like a mother that loves us freely. We don't give ourselves life, Something Great gives us life.

Thank You to My 60 Trillion Cells and All

of My Genes

Tomorrow I must do the painful treatment again. But, now that I had this new information, I didn't need things like hopelessness. When I think about the treatment tomorrow I felt nervous, scared, and that I couldn't handle it. At that moment when I thought my body was miserable to have to go through this kind of treatment, I noticed that my body told me something like this, "We have supported you up until now" and I felt so thankful. I'm so happy. I don't know how long I have left to live. Therefore, right now I need to make sure to state my appreciation. Also, though it might not make sense, I think I should express my appreciation to all of the DNA in all of my 70 trillion cells one by one.

"Although for this body there might be only a little time left as my body, I thought in my heart that I should say thank you to all of my cells and DNA one by one and then die." I kept saying thanks.

Around that time, the sky started to lighten. It was dawn. Even so, I continued to say thank you. One by one, within my heart until the second RALS treatment began I continued to say thank you.

Then, at last it became time for the RALS treatment. I brought two towels, made up my mind, and went down into the basement to the treatment room. As I was walking down the stairs, I kept repeating words of encouragement to my body.

"I am now going to have a very painful, stressful treatment but I don't care about the pain. Therefore, to the cancer in my uterus, I don't want you to think it's painful. I'm really sorry. And thank you for everything up until now. My cancerous cells, I love you. If I am not thankful and loving to my own cancerous cells, who else would be? I really do love you with all of my heart. I am so thankful that you supported me up until now. I love you."

Just like the first time I went through this treatment, a towel was stuffed into my mouth. Up until the very last second I could use my mouth, I continued to say thank you. And again, they tied down my body and the second treatment began.

No Pain!

A strange thing happened. The last time it was so painful and stressful, I screamed without stopping for three hours during the treatment, but for some reason, this time it did not hurt at all. I was so surprised. Just what did this mean? I was so moved that I could not stop crying tears of happiness.

Just what on earth happened inside my body? It was clear that a change had happened in my body. I only wholeheartedly thanked my cells and genes. Somehow, this must be the reason that this time was different. When I compare the extreme pain of the last treatment to this time with no pain, that is the only difference I can think of.

More than anything, when I say thank you, I always feel good. By repeating these words, I realized

that my fear of the RALS treatment faded. I couldn't imagine the effectiveness of 'thank you'; I could only be mute with amazement. I didn't say all of those thank you's just to reduce the pain. I only wanted to give thanks to my cells and genes.

But with this, I learned that thank you has a special power. I had a hunch that this is one way that Dr. Murakami spoke about on how to 'awaken sleeping DNA'. It felt like I could see a small ray of light.

If I hadn't encountered Dr. Murakami's book, I probably would not have been able to endure the painful treatment and fallen more and more into despair. When I encountered Dr. Murakami's book and about the unlimited possibilities of genes, I was moved. When you say thank you, you feel better. When I learned that, from that time on I became more and more thankful to my genes and cells, continuing to say thank you to them.

Metastasis

It was a month and a half after the RALS ended. Once again, I'm in the hospital. It was an exam to determine how things progressed after the RALS treatment.

On the day the surgery was first planned, the doctor who told me "It's too bad. Your condition is so bad we can't perform surgery", was the one we patients secretly called, 'Iron Face'. He always had a sour face, and would never laugh. This was the doctor who looked at my x-rays and laughed. And the doctor looked at me and said, "It's gone...!" I couldn't believe my ears; I was speechless so I just looked at the doctor. The doctor also kept looking between the x-ray scan and me, so he couldn't conceal this astonishing information. That was the proof that my uterus was completely clean, that the cancerous cells had completely disappeared. We were both so grateful.

Because I believed in the special power of 'thank you', continuously giving thanks since the second RALS treatment to my cells and genes, led to the result that my cancer disappeared and I began to believe more and more in 'the power of appreciation.'

But, when the doctor who looked at the x-ray scans and I were overcome with joy, I got a call summoning me to the radiation treatment room. I didn't know why, but I had a bad feeling about this. Even with this bit of happiness, my uneasiness turned out to be true. My cancer had metastasized from my uterus to my lungs and liver. When you look at the x-ray scan, you could see that my lungs were covered in polka dot-like spots from top to bottom. Within the liver, there was a large fist sized cancerous mass, and on the outer surface of the liver, there were more cancerous masses that looked like scattered seeds.

Even though just moments before the doctor was laughing with so much joy, he kept looking at that x-ray and would not look at me. His shoulders were shaking. I knew he was crying.

.....Look for the continuation in the next issue

The Indomitable Minnie and Her Marvelous Paintings

By Dr. John Tamashiro, Konkō Mission of Waipahu

This article attempts to solve three mysteries about Minnie Fujita, perhaps the most distinguished Konkō believer in Hawaii: Where is she now? What is she really like? What are her paintings all about?

The first question arose when I noticed that she had not attended some of our church events such as our Godaisai earlier this year, so I began to ask members of the Honolulu church. Also, I thought she might have passed on because she was 99. But, fortunately, I was wrong! The second question I've had for a long time because, while friendly enough, she seemed somewhat aloof. Then again, maybe it's just the stereotype I have of Ivy League graduates like her. Question three—about her paintings—I wanted

to learn more about them as Wanda and I began to pay regular visits to our Honolulu Museum of Art (Minnie had taught there many years ago).

MYSTERY ONE: It was a little difficult to find her, but rewarding when we finally did. I don't know for how long, but she had been living in a senior care home on Maunalani Heights. At first, we thought we knew exactly where, because we had visited another senior in the area just recently. However, we were wrong. She lived even farther up the mountain.

MYSTERY TWO: As we entered the chandeliered dining room, her bright smile and her alert demeanor made Wanda and me feel that she didn't belong there. When we approached the varnished wooden table, she rose with a look of deep appreciation for our coming. Clearly, she was touched by our interest in her.

She posed for a photo with WANDA. Otherwise I would never have remembered what she wore: a gray blazer with dark blue stripes matched by a thin brimmed hat of a similar smoky color. Her pants were tan or beige; her shirt under her gray jacket was of a dark brown waffled texture. The horizontal lines of her blazer complemented the waffled brown verticals of her shirt. By strange or not so strange coincidence, I will point to parallels between her apparel and her artistry.

Then, as my talkative wife Wanda engaged in cheerful chatter, Minnie suddenly looked at me and said something like, aren't you glad you divorced your first

wife to marry this girl? When I corrected her with the question, "I wonder whom you had mistaken me for?" She recovered very quickly and said, with a smug side eye, "It's a secret."

In addition to her playful wit, her physical movements were also somewhat impressive. After introducing us to her companions (a retired general and a former principal), both nodding from their naps, she arose and walked—without assistance of staff or trusty cane—to the bathroom. According to a young hostess caregiver, as she showed us to Minnie's bedroom, this lady centenarian (as of this coming November) was the only senior resident with such mobility.

Once in her private surroundings, Minnie did not bother with formalities as we never had to ask for permission to enter. She simply showed us her warm bed, thick with futon covering. Next to it was a chair crowded with her teddy bears, some brown and some white, possibly her favorite colors. The largest she held affectionately like some people do with pets or grandchildren.

From her walls, hung slightly fuzzy photographs and two paintings that began to reveal the significance of KONKOKYO in her life. Regarding the former

black and white items on display, love of parents—a KONKO virtue—must

have been very important to her. Examining smiling mother, dignified father, and their young daughter with chawan cut, one gets the impression that they lived together and loved each other, but also led their own separate lives. Several years ago, I recall MINNIE saying that her father was Buddhist and mother was KONKOKYO. It's evident whom she sided with in her adult years. Until her mom passed on, I usually saw them together at church events.

MYSTERY THREE: While still on her bedroom tour, I noted a work of art that looked like a collage or an arrangement of prints superimposed on each other. Her creation suggested affectionate memories of JAPANESE culture and presented a multitude of figurines such as a thin necked vase (an art teacher who knew of her said that she had been a ceramist); a red kimono clad doll; a folding fan, and a mask of a bald headed man with fierce counte-



nance. All of these items, some distinctively Japanese, e.g., the folding fan was adapted from its earlier straight backed version from China, blended together in memories, becoming less clear, of hazy blue, misty ochre, and subdued red. (Even in Konko Hawaii as in her life, it is difficult to separate faith



"Blowhole abstraction"

from JAPANESE CULTURE).

Equally as personal and reflective was a second work of art that departed stylistically in its abstract expression. In fact, this one was so introspective its only nod to my reality was its title: "Blowhole" written in script at the lower right hand corner. I asked if she had taken canvas and brushes outdoors to capture its spectacular explosions not discernible on her wall.

Her negative reply suggested that, as her world had grown physically smaller, she still maintained a radical creative streak.

Imagination aside, I noticed her powers of observation had grown perceptive and gossipy. Minnie pointed to a snapshot of her physician brother and his adoring wife revealing the couple's mutual affection, but perhaps to the point of her exclusion. She said that the woman stuck to her brother "like mud." Soon after, she pointed to the house across the street and said, "Those people are high tuned, you know." I took that to mean, "stuck up."

Needless to say, we laughed a great deal, but I left with an admiration for this resilient, talented and warm hearted woman. She not only escorted us to the door of the care home, but returned to her bedroom window to wish us good bye. From her vantage point overlooking the street, as we were about to enter our car, she said, "Next time, I wish you would sleep over."

Our visit with marvelous Minnie was only one episode in our search for her true self. I hoped to find her spirit in three paintings which she shared with the public in HONOLULU. One hangs at the KONKO MISSION OF HONOLULU; a second is located in the OFFICE OF PLANNING in the LEOPAPA KAMEHAMEHA BUILDING and a third is suspended

on a wall alongside the desk of a state worker in the OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. The last two were purchased and loaned to state departments by the HAWAII STATE MUSEUM OF ART near our Capitol.

I believe I found all three with KAMISAMA'S assistance. The easiest to access was her painting of a shoreline scene at the Honolulu church. If I had not been a Konko believer I probably would not have ever seen it. The second painting, we located with the help of a state worker who just happened to be outside the entrance to the planning office. This mustached young man had a flare for snapping IPAD poses of art lovers uncovering colorful treasures. Painting three we finally stumbled on in a maze of corridors and hallways only because we had been referred to "Economic Development" by an Ozzie Kotani who accessed a computer directory of creative endeavors owned by the State of Hawaii.

With additional divine arrangement (SASHIMUKE) all three paintings fit together in a historical sequence which I suddenly apprehended at church only after studying them at home, for who knows how long. The one in the Honolulu church I interpret as geological—before the arrival of the ocean faring Polynesians. So I call it "close to the origin." The second is entitled by her "Makapuu Images" featuring Hawaiian people at our now famous Oahu lookout. Her title for the third is "Awa Kumolu." It depicts evidence of western man through his sailing vessels, a contemporary reminder of how Hawaii was discovered by Europeans.

Taking each painting historically, "close to the origins" highlights a huge profile of hardened lava thrust upward through the ocean's surface. On the side of

its dark brown surface closest to the viewer, the saltwater appears to make way, in splashing foam, for the rocky protuberance.

The previous painting depicted HAWAII before the coming of human beings, and her second work featured the arrival or presence of indigenous people. At first glance, the brown mass at the center of her water color appears as solid rock. On reflection, imbedded in the hardened lava, are images of early man.



"Close to the Origins"
in the Honolulu Church staircase

These arrivals lived in relative isolation until the landfall of English sea

captain JAMES COOK. The ensuing westernization of Hawaii is symbolized by white sailboats moored in a cove.

The central focus of each painting has been identified as a rock formation (painting one); native people (painting two); and a western man (painting three). How does each subject relate to its larger setting? "Close to the origins" conveys an uneasy emotional



"Makapuu Images"

aphor, I can hear the "lion" of hardened lava roaring at surging waters.

Whoever hung her creation on the wall above the carpeted steps, possibly the artist herself, matched the dynamic theme of the painting to the movement of believers between floors. The interaction of frothy surf with rocky outcroppings complemented the ascent and descent of adherents. Church members and waters moving vertically and horizontally.

In "Makapuu Images" the coming of human beings to the Islands, has evolved into a harmony between man and nature. In "Makapuu" the land mass at its center has fused with a group of the earliest human beings, while in the foreground, both entities are being partially submerged in water. Furthermore, although difficult to substantiate, the warriors appear to be swaying in meditative awe as they witness the ocean waves calmly rolling before them. Someone once told me that "makapuu" means bulging eye(s), perhaps a relevant fact.

The previously mentioned theme of group harmony was auspiciously suggested by its location in a conference room within the Department of Planning. In many other locations on the floor, civil servants did their jobs at individual desks or "cubby holes." MINNIE'S water color may have been intended to contribute to an ambiance of cooperation in a location for that very purpose.

In "Awa Kumolu" the sea craft, possibly yacht(s), appear almost intrusive as it projects into the sky and out into the ocean from its sheltered cove. About three fourths of the canvas space is occupied by these marine vessels. Perhaps, a less dominant theme is the blending of man and nature because awa or milkfish obviously refers to the sleek white craft while "kumolu," as best we could determine (with the help of a librarian in the Hawaii Pacific

balance between land and sea. The rocky outcropping appears to jut its "jaw" in defiance against a crashing surf. To use another met-

Room of our main library) means "taciturn anchor", a condition that is conveyed by the mirror reflection of these western modes of transportation in the still waters beside them.

Here again, the subject or theme of the work may have helped determine its location. Marine infrastructure is a legitimate concern for civil servants preoccupied with commercial activity in the Islands. Following this dialogue between natural elements within the paintings as well as between man and nature, what of the interaction between the artist and her world? What words did she use to imagine her beautiful shorelines? Here again, is Minnie's quotation printed under a computerized reproduction of "Awa Kumolu." "I find myself constantly drawn to the vastness, the wonder, and the beauty of nature." In my opinion, the vastness of nature is conveyed in Makapuu as an expansive seascape and skyline that runs the length of the rectangular work. In her first painting on the geological origins of the Islands, the wonder of nature is imparted by a mysterious

multitude of forces that appear to constantly draw earth and sea together and then apart. Finally, in her three paintings, the beauty of nature is suggested in a combination of JIMI colors such as navy blue, silver grey, and milkfish white as well as a balanced harmony between vertical and horizontal lines.

Interesting and probably more than coincidental is the appearance within our Konko "Prayer Book" of similar descriptions of nature. As an ex-

pression of vastness I discovered in

"Seasons of Life Prayer," p.18, praise for the "infinity of Heaven and Earth." In the same prayer, the wonders of nature resound. "The Earth brings forth beautiful green mountains and clear blue waters. . . . Kami's workings are mysterious and profound."

In the two aforementioned sentences, mountains and seas are called "beautiful." If these words do not explain, they, at least, express in four of her paintings, a fascination extending over many years, with the drama of those transition zones where the solid earth meets its liquid counterpart.

In summary, I found six bridges to BEAUTY linking her personal and professional life: first, an abiding preoccupation with people as family members, friends, and ethnic groups; second, an interest in history both autobiographical and social; third, a sense of cordial movement in her person and creative dynamism in her paintings; fourth, a correlation between dark subdued colors of clothing and shoreline scenes; fifth, a self-confident demeanor matched by ocean calm; and sixth, the impact of Konkokyo through her family and her art.



"Awa Kumolu"

Konko Missions in Hawaii

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KMH Mission Statement

The Konko Missions in Hawaii addresses the spiritual needs of the people of Hawaii by promoting the Konko faith through a better understanding of the life and teachings of Konko Daijin, and through the practice of Toritsugi (Divine-Mediation).

“Malamalama” is now available through e-mail!

For our devoted readers who would like to receive the “Malamalama” electronically, please let us know at kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org

For our readers who would still prefer a hard (paper) copy, please do not hesitate and let us know.

Thank you!

We welcome any and all article contributions! If you have an interesting story of faith, inspiration or have any ideas or suggestions for material you'd like to see in future issues of the Malamalama, we're all ears! Please contact us at kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org.

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