

Presencing Issue 26: A Healing Story



Healing Retreat: I met Yumeji san three years ago at a retreat center in the mountains called the North Alps, of Nagano prefecture Japan. The center is called Hodaka Yojoen and was set up for persons with difficult illness by the director Sunsaku Fukuta. I was there to present a seminar about the importance of presencing in healing work to the staff and guests. I had heard many good things about the center, hot springs, macrobiotic diet, treatment sessions in acupuncture, yoga, walks in nature, doctor supervision, ecological philosophy and architecture, pristine environment, and scenic beauty. I stayed there for a few days and was totally

impressed by the combination of patient support and the feeling of harmony with nature. This is one of the environments where the snow monkeys of Japan dwell.

Business: Yumeji san was staying there because she had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. It was suggested that she receive a session from me while I was there. I had been told that she had had previous medical treatments for a liver disease and that she was determined to not undergo invasive medical treatments for the cancer. I



was introduced to Yumeji san when I first arrived at the center. She appeared quite healthy, about 38 years old, very well dressed, and quite intent on scheduling with me. By her appearance I could tell that she was a business woman; I later found out that she had started her own businesses and was also working as a consultant for others. We were able to arrange a session right after breakfast the morning I was to leave.



Intake: Yumeji was right on time for her session. I could tell that she was ready to do her part to make sure the session went well... she was dressed in a new grey yoga outfit, very spiffy. In Japan it is very common for clients to receive sessions of non-massage bodywork in such outfits, partly due to modesty, partly to maintain appearances. My translator told her in the beginning of the session that it was important that she feel into her body as I worked with her. She complained of painful achiness in her chest, back and upper shoulders. She also said that she

had been experiencing quite a lot of fatigue. After the translator finished she left the room. So the session proceeded without further translation. Yumeji could understand my basic requests about body positioning and where to place her attention.

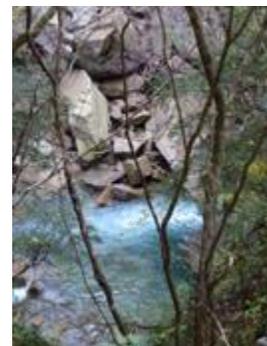
Good Client: It was clear to me from the beginning of the session that Yumeji san was determined to be a good client. It was also clear to me that her mind was preoccupied with many things, including her business dealings. During most of the session she had her eyes open and was trying to help me do my work. It was a reminder to me of clients who keep their cell phones on in case they might miss an important phone call during their session. There was no cell phone reception at Hotaka, which was part of the design for healing retreats.



Fix me: As I proceeded through the session I realized that she was expecting something amazing to happen to her but that she really had no concept of a role she could play. Like many clients she was turning herself over to the therapy, entrusting the therapist to do the rest. Her body was compliant but I could tell that her mental activity was in part stimulated by her fearful diagnosis. I worked with those areas she had symptoms and I could tell that the bodywork was helping her relax. When the translator came back into the room, Yumeji said that she felt much better. We said our goodbyes and shortly thereafter I left Hotaka.

Will to win: The return to Tokyo took about 5 hours by train. On the way back I discussed the visit to the center with my translator. However the session with Yumeji san was still on my mind. I kept wondering what I could have done differently, because I could tell that the session could have been much more effective had I been able to bring her into listening to and feeling into her body. Also thought about other clients and friends who were determined to deal with cancer outside the medical system. I knew of many women who had effectively ended their bout with breast cancer with minimal treatment. So, I was concerned that she would be using her strength of will to win her body back, just as she had created her business success.

Winning and losing: I had occasion to hear about her over the next few years from our mutual acquaintance. It seems that she pressed her resolute decision to only use alternative therapies for at least two years. During that time she would see occasional gains in which her symptoms changed for the better. She learned some energy work so that she could work on herself. However, overall her condition, bleeding and infection, and continual fatigue, worsened to the point of seeking some medical intervention. She had to let go of her businesses and reduce her client load to just a few. The cancerous tissue in the breasts had progressed to the point of necrosis and persistent pain. She had surgery to remove the dead lymph tissue, but at the same time she had developed an inoperable malignant tumor about the size of a baseball on her mid sternum.





Presencing: I was giving a class on presencing and healing in Tokyo almost three years after the session at Hotaka. Yumeji asked if she could attend as a model on the second day of the class. She participated in the class for the whole day despite her fatigue. She described her ordeal to the members of the class and even though she did not work on anyone she was willing to have class members work on her. Just after lunch I gave everyone an exercise to do called: "Inside and Outside are the Same." The exercise consists of having persons feel the center line of balance in their bodies and stay aware of that feeling as they go for a 15

minute "unplanned" walk outside in the neighborhood.

The walk: Despite her tiredness and pain, Yumeji decided to do the exercise. When she came back after her walk, she had a very peaceful look on her face. "For the first time in a long time I feel no pain. I feel a tremendous amount of energy in my body. I enjoyed feeling everything around me as I walked. The smells, the shapes, the patterns, the living things, the old houses... the birds, the sun, the breezes, everything is alive outside and inside of me!"



Life force: Yumeji had agreed to be my model for the last demonstration. Everyone knew I would be working on her. Because of the tumor I had a certain amount of timidity about what would happen when I worked with her in front of the class. I knew that I would be working directly on the tumor, which was enclosed with protective bandaging. The



demonstration was about working with clients' awareness where there is pain or injury. When I placed my hands on her I could feel the bandages and the shape of the tumor. However, when Yumeji started bringing her inner awareness into my hands, I could feel her life energy reaching into my hands through the bandages. I asked her to tell me what she was feeling under my hands. She said that she could feel a tremendous warmth and pulsing, and a growing sense of peacefulness and ease. I was experiencing the same thing!

No fear: After the students practiced on one another we brought the class to a close. Yumeji said that she was totally free of pain. She also said that she had very good feelings about her body and her life. She was the first person to leave the class. Upon leaving she looked at everyone in the class. Her eyes were literally sparkling, and her face was relaxed and truly beautiful. "I want you all to know that I feel no fear." She repeated these words with her goodbyes. We were

speechless and very moved.

Healing: Six weeks later Yumeji entered the hospital for the last time. She died in the night. Her parents later reported that she was very peaceful and that: "She had chosen her own path." When I heard this report I wept, not for her departure but for her healing. I think that we misuse the word "healing" when we confuse it with symptomatic relief, Healing is a lifelong process of conversion into the blessings of our livingness and that is not limited to our short time in physical bodies.

Blessings,
Jack

