

Perceptions of Color Light, and Magic

By Alicia W. Moore,
Charlotte, North Carolina

MY early years of practice began eighteen years ago in the South Jersey/Philadelphia area with the support of some very strong SGI-USA members. I began my practice as a single parent of three young children, one son and two daughters. During this time, I introduced all of my family to the practice: four of them received their own Gohonzon.

My children and I relocated to Louisville, Kentucky, where I worked as a teacher in the Jefferson County school system. My first obstacle was challenging my arrogant nature. Having moved from a big city with a large community center and very large membership, I felt like things were too slow, too backward, and just too small. Little did I know it was tailor-made for the advancement of my practice. Gradually, I began to understand and appreciate what it meant to be on the front lines as a pioneer member. I had the opportunity to become close to my seniors and receive lots of guidance.

One Saturday before school started for the year, I went to my classroom to add some finishing touches. On the way home, I became dizzy. I couldn't see a thing! I thought it was a result of all the fumes from carpet glue, oil paint, shellac and paint thinners, because our school was under renovation. I chanted and managed to pull over to the side of the road.

Over the next two weeks, I experienced the same feeling five or six times; more when I was driving. On the way to work one morning it happened again. This time it scared me enough to tell my boss, who sent me straight to the doctor. An M.R.I. revealed a tumor growing on the lining of my brain (meningioma). With false courage, I asked him, "Just what does that affect?" He told me I would have to talk to a neurosurgeon. This set off my "daimoku alarm!" Nam-myoho-renge-kyo!

At this point I knew I had to chant some serious daimoku. I waited a week for my appointment to see the neurosurgeon, only to find out that his office had no record of my referral. I told the nurse I had a brain tumor, and she replied, "Oh, it seems you would want to get in right away then."

Things moved quickly to a "two alarmer." The neurosurgeon told me the tumor had to come out right way; that the symptoms would only get worse. It was growing rapidly. Surgery was scheduled for the following week. It had become an automatic "four alarmer." I made phone calls to all corners of the SGI-USA for daimoku support.

When our joint territory leader visited Louisville, I went to him for guidance. I shared with him that when I heard health experiences of other members, I thought: "Wow, that is so encouraging. They are so strong. I don't want to be tested like that. My practice is not that strong!" He gave me confidence that I could do it, saying: "You are an emissary, a votary of the Lotus Sutra. Now it's your turn to show actual proof."

Title: Alicia W. Moore: Perceptions of Color, Light and Magic

Subject: Living Buddhism 11/97 v.1 n.11 p.54 LB9711p54 Charlotte, North Carolina

Author: Alicia W. Moore

Keywords: Alicia Artists Career Carolina Charlotte Color Experiences Expressions Gallery Health
Light Magic Moore North Perceptions

THE day before surgery I went to the hospital for pre-operation tests. I was given an angiogram (iodine injected into the blood stream through a catheter tube). As I watched the monitor, I chanted that the catheter tube would hurry and reach its destination. It took one-and-one-half hours. After the test, I was moved upstairs to recuperate. Two hours later, I was finally given a meal. I was drinking some juice when I began to choke. Before long there were doctors and nurses all over me asking what was wrong. I became aware that I was crying and could not get my words out. I struggled to convey that I felt pressure in my brain. I was having a stroke.

I lost all feeling in the left side of my body, my face dropped and my speech became slurred. I was placed on 600 mg. of Dilantin, an anti-convulsive medicine. The doctors told me they had never seen this happen before. The brain surgery was postponed for four weeks. I was so disappointed, but I was encouraged to look at it as an opportunity to chant many more daimoku. But I didn't see it that way at the time. My faith was about to be tested on another level.

After about ten days, I was sent home. It got to the point that I couldn't finish a thought, a sentence or even see the words to do gongyo. I was literally walking into walls. My neurologist had told me to make an appointment to have my Dilantin level checked in two or three weeks. Two weeks later I learned my Dilantin level was much too high. I began to itch all over and I noticed that food got lodged in my throat. A friend who was a doctor encouraged me to go to the urgent care facility immediately. There I was told that I had something called "the Steven-Johnson Syndrome." From that moment, I think I was in shock. By the time I reached the hospital, the syndrome was in full effect. Every inch of my body swelled to enormous proportions and I broke into a rash equivalent to third- degree burns. I was moved to a private room where members enshrined the Gohonzon. I welcomed the opportunity to tell everyone about the practice. After ten days, I was ready to be discharged again. Because my veins had collapsed, the head nurse ordered a "pic line" to be threaded through my chest into my arm. At home, a visiting nurse noticed that it was infected. She pulled it out, put an alcohol patch on my arm and left. Sunday morning, pain was throbbing through my entire body. Even my eyelids ached. The infection had spread throughout my body.

This time, while in the hospital, I wanted no flowers, no gifts, no visitors and no phone calls. I wanted to be left alone. I was tired of fighting, and I still had not addressed the primary issue of the brain tumor. Now they were talking about surgery on my arm.

DURING my self-imposed seclusion, it became clear to me that I needed to make a decision. Was I going to "float aimlessly on the sea of suffering" or was I going to take charge of my own life and change this karma? Buddhism is win or lose.

I had so many doctors during this journey. One day I overheard one telling the other: "If I were her surgeon, I wouldn't touch her. She has such bad luck!" This was not the energy or the attitude I wanted. I needed to tell all the doctors who would have anything to do with me about my practice. I wrote a five-page letter

to the doctors, nurses and staff explaining my Buddhist philosophy. I thanked them for their efforts, and assured them that in my practice there is no such thing as “luck,” there is only fortune—something that is solidly grounded in one’s life from the causes we make.

It was time for me to show actual proof of my practice once again. I had to take full responsibility for my own life. I determined that I would arise victorious. At last I was released without needing surgery on my arm. Two weeks later, my neurosurgeon met with me to re-schedule my original surgery for the fourth time. He thanked me for the letter, and we discussed my Buddhist philosophy. He told me that I was a very fortunate young lady, because he had known two other cases like mine, and neither had survived.

ONE week after surgery, after regaining consciousness, I learned there had been many complications during that week, but the result was very successful. On my path to recovery, there came a need to express what had been bubbling up inside for years—I began to paint. Since then, I’ve had the benefit and opportunity of my work being displayed in many galleries, homes and businesses around the country.

My family and I are now living in Charlotte, North Carolina, where we are lovingly embraced by the SGI–USA members with their great spirit. I would like to honor my ancestors, especially my brother Dwight, who continues to share his gifts. My deepest appreciation goes out to Daisaku Ikeda, the members, my family and many friends throughout the world.

Art: The Journey

MY artwork speaks of the journey in my life and my practice, which I now know are one. The vibrant colors speak to the passion that runs deep. The free-flowing movement of energy signifies the constant healing taking place. The contrast speaks to the diversity in all things and yet the oneness of it all. I experience the Mystic Law at the core.

In my experience, color is one of the most exciting things I have encountered. For me it is an opportunity to share the mystical, magical world of color, light and movement hidden inside. There is no doubt in my mind that the many hours of daimoku and the challenging of my health karma unlocked a hidden world of talent that had been lying dormant for many years. It was an opportunity to change consciousness, opening the heart to love, light and inner wisdom. This allowed me to participate fully in the ongoing creation of the universal rhythm and express it on paper.

My work goes beyond the normal, everyday sensory perceptions of light, color and composition. In traditional approaches, artists seek inspiration and knowledge of light and color from natural phenomena. In this work, I am expressing my own individuality, intuition and my own inner search for light.

One of my many gifts from President Ikeda is the spirit of self-reliance. It is a reminder that I am not only free to be who I am; it is my mission as a Bodhisattva

of the Earth to live my light, which pulsates from the depths of my life into the hearts and lives of others, and express it through my art.

In my Cosmic System of Healing, the use of color is combined with the energy of the Mystic Law. The mental and emotional factor in health and disease is connected with the etheric, the causal and the spiritual levels of consciousness, which contribute to the final output (effect) of either harmony or disease in the physical. I have found that color is a vibration or a frequency of the energy of light. Depending upon the frequency, our physical eyes see a specific color. Disease is a want of harmony in the system. Colors help restore harmony, therefore the objective is to restore or supply this need through art.

My media of choice are watercolor, oil pastels and oil sticks. The style is abstract, lending to the free-flowing movement of different levels of consciousness. The watercolor techniques range from the traditional overlays of thin washes to the bolder wet-on-wet, wet-on-dry, light-to-dark, dark-to-light techniques. Although the oil pastels are more opaque in my abstract compositions, they are as vibrant and fresh as the watercolors. The free-flowing strokes give the effect of powerful movement and an air of excitement in each painting. The technique of cropping creates a multidimensional perspective, encouraging the viewer to step out of a linear way of experiencing it. □

Title: Alicia W. Moore: Perceptions of Color, Light and Magic

Subject: Living Buddhism 11/97 v.1 n.11 p.54 LB9711p54 Charlotte, North Carolina

Author: Alicia W. Moore

Keywords: Alicia Artists Career Carolina Charlotte Color Experiences Expressions Gallery Health
Light Magic Moore North Perceptions