



よろこびの種を

Seeds of Joy

The seeds I received are for someone else.

1. Deep into the heart

Several customers said, “Before and after seeing this film, I see the pictures differently.” Older people, in particular, seemed to be comparing Mr. Masanori's life with their own. There were many people who came out of the movie room with red eyes.

In the latter half of the exhibition, more and more people said they came to the exhibition through friends. I heard that you went to the exhibition and that it was very good. I am really glad I came.

Some of them were at a loss because their own husbands had been bedridden in an accident, and they wanted to ask Yayoi how she had recovered.

Such customers showed us that Masanori's personality and way of life deeply and quietly seeped into their hearts. I believe that Masanori's paintings and figures have the power to gently wrap you in their warmth and tenderness, as if they were gently accompanying you through your life.

2. Documentary film “From Heaven's Eye View”

When Masanori was 10 years old, he was caught in a machine at his family's sawmill and lost both arms. Although he survived, he was unable to do the things he had taken for granted, and was teased and pointed at by those around him and at times even tried to stab his own throat, thinking there was no point in living anymore.

In his second year of junior high school, while withdrawn at home, Masanori visited a nun, Junkyo Oishi, at Bukkoin temple in Yamashina, Kyoto. After overcoming the horrific experience of having both of her arms cut off by her foster father, Junkyo Oishi dedicated her life to helping the disabled. She was also a painter who added brush strokes with her mouth.

When I told her that I could not do anything, she replied, “You must become a disciple. But there was a condition for becoming a disciple.

3. Conditions to become a disciple

The first condition was to commute alone from Masanori's home in Sakai, Osaka, to Bukkoin. At that time, it took about three hours one way to get to Bukkoin in Kyoto, where Junkyo Nun was located, and he had to change trains and buses five times. Each time, someone had to buy a ticket for him. When he boldly called out to someone, some people ran away when they saw Masanori without both arms, others shouted abuse at him, and some even made fun of him. But the nun Junkyo told him, "Think of those people as your teachers. There are all kinds of people in society, some kind and some not so kind. But everyone is a teacher who teaches us about society. This teaching leads to "karma and happiness are one and the same," a phrase that Masanori cherished throughout his life, which will be discussed later.



Another condition was to "draw pictures. From this moment on, Masanori began painting with a brush in his mouth. Holding the brush in his mouth was painful, his mouth and teeth ached, and his saliva spilled out. When he finally completed a painting, he felt that there was something he could do.

It was the moment when Masanori's thinking changed from "I can't do anything" to "I will try anything. When your way of thinking changes, your way of life changes. With painting as a springboard, Masanori began to take on any challenge.

4. Can' t and Won' t are not the same

The film also depicts Masanori's daily life. Masanori opens the lid of a tube of paint with his foot and squeezes it out onto a palette. He clamped the canvas under his chin and placed it on the table with great vigor.



Using a tool of his own making, he buttoned his shirt, put on his belt, and rode his bicycle.

According to Masanori's wife, Yayoi, Masanori was also very good at writing, and it was always his role to write thank-you letters. He would write on a scroll-like piece of paper, roll it up, and draw a cute little picture at the end. He was also very good at wringing out rags.

There is a difference between not being able to do something and not doing something. Masanori often said, "There is a difference between not being able to do something and not doing it. There is a difference between "I tried, but I couldn't do it" and "I gave up and didn't do it. When Masanori said that to me, the power of persuasion was completely different. I really thought he was right," said Yayoi.

5. Two words

There were two words that Masanori and Yayoi cherished.

The first is “Kafuku Ichinyo,” which was also taught by Junkyo Oishi, a nun.

It means that both misfortune and happiness are two sides of the same coin, and that they change depending on one's mind and how one perceives them.

It does not mean that one is unhappy because one does not have both arms. It is not that we are unhappy because we don't have both arms, but because we don't have both arms, there are things we can learn and know. What is important is the way you have a mind.

Even if you understand it in words, it is difficult to embody it. But Masanori embodied it. So when Masanori said that to me, I couldn't say anything,” Yayoi said.

The second is to “speak the truth gently and with few words.

In reality, it is very difficult to do this. If you want people to understand you, you have to say a lot of things, and even though it is the truth, it can have a tail, and “gently” can come off as sentimental. But because of Masanori's kindness and love, no matter what was said, I could accept it honestly. It was the same for both of us. No matter how we said things, neither of us took it in a strange way,” said Yayoi.

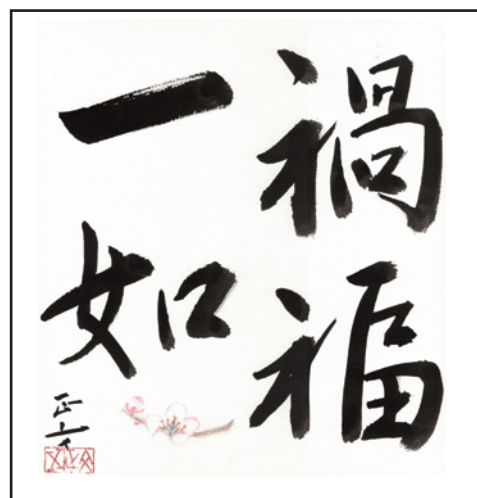
Every night, Masanori and Yayoi would sit facing each other and talk about what had happened today and how they felt.

“He called my name, asking me to help him, but I thought it was annoying, so I pretended not to hear him. Sorry.” When Yayoi said this, Masanori replied, “I was able to manage it myself, so I didn't call you any more.” He replied, “It's okay.” and that's now we've solved those little "huh?" moments along the way. Everyone has something on the other person's mind, but everyone can just let it slide. But before you know it, that small thing

can grow and become the spark of a fire. That is why we speak up. It takes courage and patience to speak honestly, but I think it is a very important act to understand each other from the core.

But it is easy to say so. What is important is how we embody it. Masanori and Yayoi are both people of practice and action. And they are honest and kind. That is why they are surrounded by friends who talk, laugh, and help them.

Whenever an exhibition is held in various locations, their friends gather around and say, “I'll help you! and they help set up, prepare, and sell their works at the exhibition halls. We are very grateful,” Yayoi said.



6. Let's sow the seeds of joy



Masanori held dear the words of his life. "Even the smallest thing I can do is fine, sow the seeds of joy." With this thought in his heart, Masanori picked up his brush and continued to paint. The seeds of joy that Masanori left behind will continue to reach many people. I'm sure Masanori is watching them sprout and blossom in different places.

How many people have been encouraged and delighted by Masanori's paintings and calligraphy?

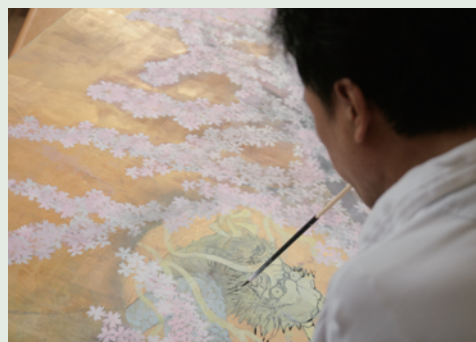
The seeds that were received will be passed on to someone else. I think that's how the seeds of joy are relayed.

Profile

Japanese painter Masanori Minami

Masanori Minami Born in
September 1951 in Sakai City,
Osaka Prefecture.

On the last day of spring vacation in his third year of elementary school, he was caught in the belt of a machine at his father's woodworking shop and both arms were amputated. Due to an injury, he was two years late and entered a special needs school in his fourth year, where he devoted himself to his studies and life training. In his second year of junior high school, he became the last disciple of the late mouth painter Junkyo Oishi, and worked on Japanese calligraphy with a brush held in his mouth.



In 1967, he exhibited his work for the first time at the Sakai City Exhibition, where it was selected. Since then, he has been selected and awarded at public exhibitions every year. In 1975, he became a member of the World Association of Disabled Artists (now the Association of Mouth and Foot Painters). While continuing his activities as a Japanese painter and as a member of the association, mainly producing paintings and holding solo exhibitions, he also visited juvenile detention centers, temple elementary schools, prisons, etc. around the country, giving lectures, supporting the foster parent system in Thailand, and building an elementary school in Nepal.

He passed away in December 2012. He produced approximately 900 paintings over his lifetime.

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