

Hibiscus Memories

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2015-10-09Z

Important family members have been passing away. My family seems to be getting older. My paternal grandfather, Daddy Pito, died on the 21st of February of 1987, in California. My maternal grandfather, Lolo Mac, died on the 24th of December of 2001, in the Philippines. My maternal grandmother, Lola Bebe, died on the 16th of September of 2002, in the Philippines. My own father, nicknamed Frank in Canada, but nicknamed Jun in the Philippines, died on the 28th of November of 2013, in Canada. My paternal grandmother, Mommy Lydia, died on the 30th of January of 2014, in California.

Where are they now? My mother Belinda likes the Light Bulb Theory, in that when people die, it's just complete extinguishment and there's nothing after. My father Frank believed in rebirth or reincarnation. He told me that when people die, their "mind" transmigrates into a new body on a different planet. He read books by the mystic Tuesday Lobsang Rampa, as well as by the ufologist Erich von Däniken, back in the 1970's.

My father retold many stories of his childhood in the Philippines. I tried to persuade him to take notes, but he didn't unfortunately. My father and Mommy Lydia told of stories during World War II, during the Japanese Occupation. People had to use the ancient method of using wild plant materials to brush their teeth. As there was food rationing, sometimes the Japanese fed people colourful hibiscus flowers. My father didn't write these anecdotes down. He could have written a book. Daddy Pito was a guerrilla general in the 1940's. He became a very political man.

2015-10-10Z

Lola Bebe was a quiet woman. She had an orchid garden in her yard in Ibaan, Batangas. She often had smoke emanate from fire within the greenhouse because she thought smoke was good for the plants. She and

Lolo Mac spent some retirement years at our Rideau House on Lulu Island in BC in Canada. In Canada, Lola Bebe whiled away most of her time in silence and siesta, as she was most often housebound. Lolo Mac liked taking the bus to the main Richmond Public Library to borrow books. He preferred Lulu Island to my uncle Tito Ed's place in the Greater Portland area in Oregon, because it was too mountainous there. Lulu Island was flat.

In his younger days in the Philippines, Lolo Mac was a medical doctor. Later, he practiced electrical acupuncture. Lolo Mac and Lola Bebe's 1950's house was majestic and painted white. The yard was full of tropical fruit trees, like *kamyas* and *makopa* and *mangga*. In the backyard was a tall TV antenna that looked like the Eiffel Tower. In the early 2000's, my uncle Tito Boy had it along with the *makopa* trees torn down, unfortunately. Ibaan was then switching to cable system TV.

After Lolo Mac and Lola Bebe passed away, my aunt Tita Bella moved from her bungalow in Ibaan to their bigger house. There was a fire at her bungalow, and it happened on a vacation in Canada. Tita Bella is a prolific chef, and her favourite activity is making desserts. She really has a sweet tooth. Today, she has diabetes, and she takes injections. She has studied *cupping therapy*, an alternative medical procedure. She had a business, producing clean water by a Japanese filtering mechanism. She has travelled to places like China.

My cousins there in the Batangas province are so lucky, because travel to nearby neighbouring Asian countries has become so popular.

On my father's side, my Auntie Virgie and Auntie Vicky live in California. My Auntie Mila and her husband Uncle Joe live on Kamias Road in Metro Manila. They have an empty lot in Baguio City and another house in Pangasinan. Both Auntie Vicky and Auntie Mila are very artistic and culturally oriented, whilst Auntie Virgie prefers casinos. Uncle Joe is a lawyer and is a very curious fellow. He and I talk about things like Esperanto and terraforming Mars. Meanwhile, Auntie Mila and I talk about art objects, travel, and spirituality. I retell to her my fantasy of car-less living in Makati in Metro Manila, so that I could enjoy a condo, from where I could take an elevator down to eat at the mall. Perhaps, *halo-halo* and *sago't gulaman* are close by.

Auntie Vicky has lived and worked in places like Thailand, where I visited, and India. She worked for Tupperware as a high manager. In my toddler days in Ferry, Batangas, Auntie Virgie and Auntie Vicky used to paint their nails purple; hence, I'm fond of purple up to now. Auntie Vicky used to live a rustic life for sometime at faraway Baler, a town in Aurora province in the

Philippines. She has also lived in Nevada, but now she's in California. She has a nomadic spirit.

In retirement, Uncle Joe and Auntie Mila have been travelling extensively, including to Indochina, like to Myanmar and Vietnam. Their children, my cousins, live in Canada and California. Other cousins from Auntie Vicky and Auntie Virgie are scattered about in the USA, but mostly in California.

My cousin Willy, son of Auntie Virgie, was somewhat like me because he liked *Star Trek*, and he liked geeky things. His brothers Walter and Jimmy didn't like nerds, but later in life have become engineering professionals, Jimmy being in programming and Walter being in environmental engineering. Malou, their sister, looks Hawaiian. They all look like different races from one another. Their father, my Uncle Sonny, has white and black American ancestry, aside from Filipino. Their home is the Los Angeles area.

Jojo, my cousin from Auntie Mila, is a big man. He likes fixing cars. He took law in university. He has diabetes and is taking injections. He likes chocolates. He's also in the Los Angeles area. Chuchi, his younger sister, has moved from there to Toronto, with her family. Eve, their elder sister, lives in Rideau House on Lulu Island.

I have other cousins, Nilo and Lianne, from Auntie Vicky. They grew up close to my paternal grandparents, Daddy Pito and Mommy Lydia. Nilo and Lianne live also in the Los Angeles area. Their father Uncle Boy divorced Auntie Vicky a long time ago.

On my mother's side, I have cousins Eric, Myra, and Eileen, from Tita Bella. I and my brother Gary (Fernando) were closest to them, because they spent lots of time at our Doña María House in Metro Manila, and we spent lots of time in their home in Ibaan, Batangas. Eric is a medical doctor, a urologist, and luckily has travelled around the world for medical conferences, including to Cape Town, South Africa, where he bought me a little native mask. Eileen and her husband Arnel own a food company, making cheese and so on, and they have plenty of cows. Their father, Tita Bella's husband, Tito Lando, passed away early on due to a heart attack.

I have other cousins Carlo, Kathy, Karen, and Christopher, from Tito Boy. They live in Batangas province. We sort of feel sad that we didn't grow up together. They're some years younger. My immediate family was already in Canada. Carlo studied to be a chef. He and his wife now live in the Perth area, in Western Australia. In the Philippines, Christopher is studying medicine. Both their parents, Tito Boy and Tita Carmen, are medical doctors. Tito Boy is an anesthesiologist, and Tita Carmen is an obstetrician.

Tito Ed, an accountant, and his wife Tita Evelyn, a medical doctor, didn't have children, or couldn't have children. They live in Oregon. Tito Ed seems the most financially secure amongst his siblings. His houses often stand on a mountaintop.

Religion varies throughout my family, but most are Roman Catholic. In the early years in Canada, my father Frank encountered Protestant people, Baptists, in the Filipino community. Very active amongst them was Lex San José, who rapidly recruited my father. As soon as my father became fluent in Baptist ideology, he recruited my mother Belinda, my grandmother Mommy Lydia, and my cousin Eve. My parents went to Baptist churches. My younger brother Paolo went to the church's kid care, and so he grew up a Protestant, unlike me and my elder brother Gary, who grew up in a Roman Catholic milieu.

I had a working term in Tokyo for Microsoft from 1992 to 1994, so I was exposed to Eastern ways. As soon as I landed in the Seattle area in the USA, I started researching Hinduism and Buddhism. I learned Zen. I returned to Lulu Island, BC, and practiced Zen. From 1996 to 2006, I lived in East Vancouver, BC. There, at a Thai Buddhist temple, I learned about Theravāda Buddhism. So, I learned Northern and now Southern Buddhism. Later, I also learned about Dào.

My ancestors from both maternal and paternal lineages may have had Jewish adherents. Ancestors from distant Greece, like Lolo Andrés, my great-grandfather, and Lolo Dimitri, my great-great-grandfather, are suspected to be Jews. Hearsay proclaims them to be Greek Orthodox, but they were likely Jews. Some estimates are that about 20% of Spaniards have Jewish ancestry, and I have Spanish ancestry on both sides of my family.

In recent time, my parents go to both Baptist and Pentecostal churches. I sometimes go along, like a Cheshire Cat. Although my father Frank proclaimed himself Christian, he adhered to some non-Christian ideas, like rebirth or reincarnation, even until his death.

2016-01-14Z

My maternal grandfather Lolo Mac went to the United Church of Christ denomination, as there was a small church a few steps from his big white house on Santiago Street in Ibaan, Batangas, Philippines. He was a medical doctor, and in his later years, he practiced electrical acupuncture. In his retirement years in Canada, Lolo Mac came to familiarize himself with my

father's Baptist ideology. He started reading Baptist literature in his late years.

Lolo Mac always ate lunch and dinner with rice. Even with spaghetti and meatballs, he would pile on rice.

Before emigrating to California, my Auntie Virgie's family resided within the factory compound of my paternal grandparents Daddy Pito and Mommy Lydia, on Tangke Street in Valenzuela, Metro Manila. They had a handicrafts factory there. Auntie Virgie's family members, including my cousins Jimmy, Willy, Walter, and Malou, have resided in the Los Angeles area.

My mother's brother, my uncle Tito Ed, has now a big new house in Malarayat in the Philippines. It's near a big golf course, as golf is his hobby. He's a devout Roman Catholic, and he and his wife Tita Evelyn alternate between their homes in Oregon and the Philippines.

When I analyze now my own religious situation, I know I've practiced irreligion most of my life. My true belief system comes from reading and watching speculative fiction. I'm a daydreamer of improbable and impossible scenarios. I find truth in all the irreality. It all started in Grade 1 at my private school of La Salle Green Hills in Metro Manila, when I encountered imaginative Dr. Seuss books. Since then, I've engulfed myself in all sorts of speculative fiction. It's irreligion. I've been exposed to several Christian and non-Christian denominations, as Roman Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Zen Buddhism, Dào, Theravāda Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, and Jehovah's Witness. Buddhism has appealed to me the most, but I still prefer irreligion now.

2016-01-15Z

Star Trek was born in 1966, which is also my birth year. I think it's not a coincidence. It's a sign. I'm a Trekker, which means I'm a real fan of *Star Trek*.

There've been 5 series of *Star Trek*: *The Original Series*, *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine*, *Voyager*, and *Enterprise*. There's been an animated series, also. Several movies have come out. Fan-generated shows have come out. There are many books about *Star Trek*.

Whilst I was in Japan in the 1990's, my *superfat* co-worker Jeff Muzzy, who was really half-Japanese and half-American, and I compared our workplace Microsoft Japan, MSKK, to the Deep Space Nine space station, which was orbiting the spiritual planet Bajor, which we compared to Japan.

The planet Bajor was like Earth's Tibet. It was ransacked by the Cardassian race. There was a wormhole near the space of spiritual Bajor. Bajorans worshipped the Prophets.

The Prophets, also known as "wormhole aliens" mainly by non-Bajorans, were mystical, non-corporeal, extra-dimensional entities that lived in the only stable wormhole known then, in the Bajoran system. The origins of the Prophets remain unknown; however, they said of themselves as being "of Bajor," and were proven to have exceptional abilities, but vulnerable to *chroniton* radiation. (DS9: "Emissary," "Accession," "The Reckoning," "The Assignment")

Star Trek sometimes talks about spiritual matters. *Star Trek* requires much intelligence and education to fully understand.

It's easy to understand why an imaginative personality like mine would be so attracted to *Star Trek*. It's a kind of bizarre travelling. I've learnt a lot from it.

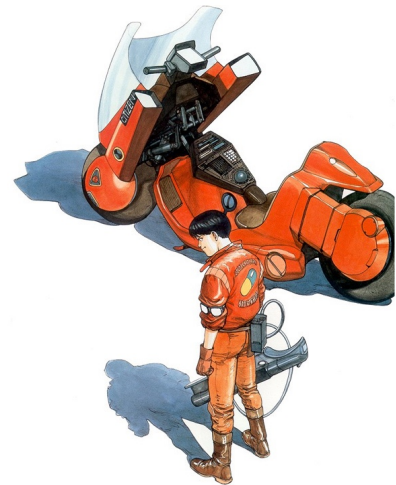




2016-01-16Z

I've been watching a lot of Japanese anime in recent years. My first substantial encounter with postmodern anime was with *Akira* in the 1980's. What struck me amongst its thunderbolt megacity scenarios was the sprinkling of Eastern spirituality.

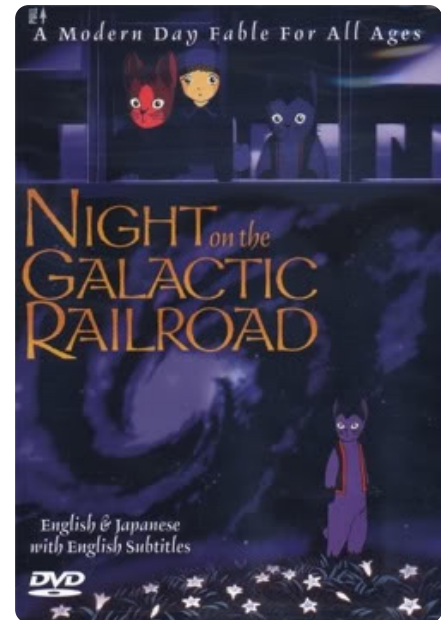
AKIRA



The second striking anime I've seen is actually older than *Akira*. It's *Galaxy Express 999*, wherein a strange young woman travels with a young boy through outer space, on a train!



A favourite anime of mine is *Night on the Galactic Railroad*. It's about the adventures of bipedal cats from an eerily Mediterranean-like town.



No. 6 is a bizarre anime tale of a post-apocalyptic future, wherein a few advanced city-states have survived.



Another very favourite of mine is *Naruto Shippūden*. It's about martial artists from a faraway, surrealistic town.

