

Sunset from Walua

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By : **Juggernaut**

A daily walk on Walua road in Kailua-Kona on the Big Island, Hawaii was more than just a walking experience.



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Subba Rao

Walua road runs south and north connecting Kuakini highway to Alii drive, the popular tourist attraction along the sea wall on the Big Island, Hawaii. Walking south on Walua road could be strenuous since it is uphill but it is a scenic route to watch spectacular sunsets. Living at the bottom of Walua road, Juggernaut made a habit of taking daily walks on Walua.

Listening to Reggae, Calypso, R& B or Bollywood music, a walk from the bottom to the top of Walua takes around 9 minutes uphill and 7 minutes downhill. The evening walk is cooler and offers glorious sunsets to watch over the condo complex towards the west. During one of the walks, Juggernaut found an old Lincoln penny minted in 1940 turned black from decades of oxidation. A search on Google shows its worth around 35 cents to 5 dollars depending on the condition, apparently just over half million Wheat pennies were minted in 1940, those minted in San Francisco mint carries a letter 'S', the Juggernaut's find carried the letter 'S' indicating it was minted in San Francisco in 1940. More than its current market value, just to find a 70 years old coin in Hawaii was exciting. It was ironic that Juggernaut found a gold wedding band with a date in 1940 in the crevices of lava rock in the ocean at the Spencer beach two years earlier on the Big Island. A gold band and a Wheat penny from the same era both were found on the Big Island, any connection? thought Juggernaut placing the penny in the pocket for safe keeping.

The downhill walk on Walua is easy since it demands less energy and pleasurable looking west to catch the last glimpse of the setting sun. Sometimes, the tour buses stop to allow the tourists to take the pictures of the spectacular sunset scenes from the top of the Walua Road

The daily walks along the Walua road reminded Juggernaut of his long walks along the Collins Avenue in Miami Beach or along the beach road in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. During the daily walks on Walua, Juggernaut crisscrossed several other walkers some energized and quick and others walk slowly pushing themselves step by step. Over the last few months, some walkers became familiar faces, one of them, a diminutive woman of oriental origin walking with a characteristic jump in her footing as if she was thrusting forward with energy dwindling with each step. As weeks went by Juggernaut found her steps were getting slower and she was slumbering at each step. And then, her outings became sporadic only sitting at the entrance of hospice facility on Walua road. Soon after she never seen again, perhaps she was too sick and bed ridden to come out or she met the inevitable end. Every time Juggernaut walks past the hospice building, he looks for her in vain. Terminal illness would prepare any person to face the inevitable end of life through a slow process that is less traumatic. The legacy of the hospice residents would certainly last well after their departure like the crimson shades of light that lingers on the horizon well after the sun sets into the ocean every evening.

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