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Chun/No Na Mamo

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Preface
‘Ōlelo Haʻi Mua

Do you believe I’m wearing a kukui lei? It’s Hawaiian in looks—it’s plastic made in Hong Kong. That’s what became of a lot our beliefs.

I wore this on purpose. I wanted you to know this is kukui nut.

It’s not kukui nut, but it’s Hawaiian, but it’s Hawaiian made in Hong Kong of plastic, and that’s the way a lot of our beliefs and customs have become.

attributed to Mary Kawena Pukui

Throughout the Americanization of the Hawaiian Islands, beginning in the nineteenth century and accelerating following statehood, the indigenous population of Native Hawaiians has sought to understand their role in the new society. Cultural revival and identification have gone beyond academic and intellectual arguments to a reality in communities and families and are now part of the political landscape of the islands. In asking the question “Who are we?” people are really asking how they see the world differently from others, and how this affects the way they make decisions. These are questions about a people’s world view—how they see the world around them, and ultimately how they see themselves. A popular term to describe the answers to these questions is “values.”

Values are concepts and ideas that are important to a people in defining who they are, what they are doing here, and where they are going. Values are often expressed through the importance people place on things held in common. In the United States, these may be things such as eating hot dogs, or playing sports like football, baseball, and basketball, or they may be things that bring a diverse group of people together such as freedom of speech or the right to vote.

In the 1960s, social workers at the Queen Liliʻuokalani Children’s Center, funded by a trust created to benefit orphaned and destitute Native Hawaiian children, began to notice behaviors of their children and families that were quite different from the textbook cases they
had been taught in school. A lot of these new situations had to do with Hawaiian cultural behavior and responses and involved dreams, traditional healing practices, and attitudes towards modern trained professionals.

In response, the center initiated a project to identify Hawaiian cultural and social practices and behaviors and to study them as they contrasted with their Western counterparts. The impact and influence of the resulting books, entitled *Nānā I Ke Kumu*, are still felt in Native Hawaiian communities, where the books are now a standard reference.

A decade later, state senator Kenneth F. Brown, a descendant of the nineteenth century historian John Papa ʻĪʻī, became interested in knowing and understanding more about Hawaiian values. Brown had been appointed to chair the bicentennial commemorations for the arrival of Captain James Cook in 1778. George Kanahele described his approach.

[... he [Brown] proposed a number of activities centered around a Bicentennial Conference on Hawaiian Values. The goal of the conference lay in “rediscovering the essence that was here upon the arrival of Cook. Our purpose will be to understand ourselves better by tracing the values of Hawai‘i from the beginning of western influence. [...] This is a large order. A voyage of rediscovery back into the past can be a hazardous undertaking. It could flounder. The essence of that long ago society may elude us or its values prove forever lost. [...] The rewards of success hold such a promise for us that the journey is compelling, [...] The values we seek, then, could have meaning for our survival [...].” (*Kū Kanaka* 7)

The following year Kanahele heard a talk given by Rubellite Kawena Johnson, a professor of Hawaiian language and literature at the University of Hawai‘i, at a humanities conference held in Honolulu wherein she submitted several questions that intrigued him. “Can traditional Hawaiian values be known? Are we able to discover them? Do we know what values motivated the ancient
Hawaiian society and to what extent they are present now in Hawaiian society? Moreover, do we know what values are proper for present-day Hawaiians in a multiethnic society?” Johnson had an impact on Kanahele’s interest. He wrote

She made a strong plea for the need to study traditional Hawaiian values. Not only can such values be uncovered, she said, but they must be. […] She concluded that because now enough material about Hawai‘i’s old culture is available, the time for humanities scholars to really get involved “has arrived.” (Kū Kanaka 9)

Brown and Kanahele were also greatly influenced by a similar movement they saw in Aotearoa ‘New Zealand’ among the Māori people and initiated a new project they called WAIAHA. The name came from a combination of the words wai ‘who’ and aha ‘what’ and represented the question “who and what is a Hawaiian?” Funded by a private corporation, the final result of the project was to be a series of books dealing with traditional and modern Hawaiian values. It had three goals: (1) to fill the gap in our knowledge and understanding of Hawaiian values, particularly in terms of the relevance of traditional values to today’s world; (2) to stimulate wider interest among Hawaiians in learning about and maintaining those values that enhance our individual dignity as a people; and (3) to provide additional material to those parents or teachers who are involved in the teaching of values at home or in the classrooms where so little is taught. (Kanahele, G., Hawaiian Values, n. pag.)

Although the series did not materialize, the idea of the project was finally realized in a book called Kū Kanaka in which Kanahele attempted to answer those questions in depth through a study of Hawaiian values. He also recognized the limitations of this personal search and study.

Yet our search is not ended. We have made a genuine start, but much more needs to be explored. We have not fully examined the whole scope of Hawaiian aesthetic values which, while they may have been perceived in early times as being more functional and technical than artistic, are viewed today primarily in aesthetic terms.
Nor have we adequately considered the important ideas and values connected with the human body, either in terms of its health or as a means to knowing pleasure, recreation, and art. Nor have we devoted enough attention to the social customs and attitudes of Hawaiians, especially in ancient times [. . .]

Perhaps a search of this kind is never over, in that each generation must launch its own quest. (*Kū Kanaka* 497–498)

As a young researcher and writer I had been involved in the early stages of the WAIAHA project and submitted one of the few articles to Dr. Kanahele. Mine was on the ‘ohana, or extended family system. Later, as the cultural officer for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, I hoped to advance the idea of a published series on culturally important things for Hawaiians to know today. We were able to publish two books from a dream list of thirteen, *Ho’okipa* on traditional protocols and *Mo’okū‘auhau* on genealogies.

Later, as the cultural specialist for the Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center, I had the chance to revive this idea through the need to update the now classic work of *Nānā I Ke Kumu*. This was in 1992, and it was, by then, considered historical information. With greater economic, political, and social pressures on Hawaiian children and their families, we were seeing cases that involved Hawaiian cultural practices and behaviors foreign to both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian workers. It was clear that these cultural issues needed to be considered in any programs designed to help Native Hawaiians deal with these stresses. We were having to re-adapt traditional healing practices like ho‘oponopono to accommodate changes such as family schedules, misunderstanding or not knowing Hawaiian language and concepts, and having non-Hawaiian family members. Although there was once again a great need for a series that would examine, in depth, key concepts and values for Native Hawaiians to understand and practice today, the trustees of the Center chose not to fund the publication.

By that time I had met the Rev. Dr. Martin Brokenleg, a Lakota, Episcopalian priest and practicing clinical psychologist, who had
co-authored a small book entitled *Reclaiming Youth at Risk, Our Hope for the Future*. Martin proposed that by understanding and using traditional indigenous forms of behavioral development and practices, indigenous communities could help their young people overcome such influences as drugs and gangs through greater self-esteem and cultural awareness. He has been able to redefine values from individual, and sometimes disconnected words, to an interconnected concept more in tune with the ideas of extended family and peoplehood. Instead of having long lists of individual values, we are able to see, through four guide words, how those individual values are interconnected and interrelated with each other. Simply put, Martin proposes that a native young person needs a sense of belonging or grounding in his or her people or community. A native people are a people because they have an identity and culture that distinguishes them from others. By belonging to and identifying with this group they are able to receive, contribute, and be valued. For them to be able to contribute, they must be able to have mastery in a skill or knowledge. That mastery allows them to become independent by producing something of their own, and through that production and sharing, contribute to the group. Finally, in practicing generosity by contributing the products of their skill or knowledge, and by teaching the next generation, all the important individual values like compassion, patience, humbleness, and so on are brought into the process.

When I became the scholar-in-residence for the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s special education project called Pihana Nā Mamo, I was given the opportunity to put all of those ideas into practice by creating a series of publications for the teachers, parents, and children of Hawai‘i. The Ka Wana series of books applied Martin’s four guidelines of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity in the context of Hawaiian culture and the Native Hawaiian people. The series included each of the chapters found in this book as a separate title, with the exception of “Aloha.” As we completed the books it was obvious to me that the topic of aloha ‘love’ could not be left out of this series, and so we belatedly added it on.

The English subtitles are my translations of the Hawaiian and refer more to what is written than how those Hawaiian words
are used in everyday speech. They represent what I believe is fundamental to seeing the world around us through Hawaiian vision, thought, and feelings, and how these influence how decisions and ideas are formed by Hawaiians. Each title is supported by historical and cultural examples taken from our oral and written literature, in most cases directly from primary sources. In the body of Hawaiian literature these are the writings of nineteenth century writers Davida Malo, Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, Ioane (John) Papa ʻĪʻī, and others who contributed to volumes of Hawaiian newspapers, books, manuscripts, and oral accounts recorded by explorers, adventurers, beachcombers, missionaries, and foreign visitors. They recorded the stories of how Hawaiians acted, reacted, responded, and behaved in different situations. It is a record that is available to each one of us to research—to check, double check, and review for ourselves.

Researching these accounts has, itself, been a rediscovery of how we see the world, and how we see it differently from others, much as Kenneth Brown envisioned in 1978. Careful examination of the words, written in Hawaiian and English, revealed what kind of example the events represented. For instance, the Pahikaua war is a noteworthy event as it appears to be a pivotal event in the life of the kingdom. The ‘Ai Puaʻa war on Kauaʻi is less well-known in Hawaiian history. But both were important because had the outcomes of these civil wars been different, the development of the kingdom under the rule of the Kamehamehas might not have occurred. By reexamining carefully accounts of the Pahikaua war, I was able to find one of the earliest examples of the concept and practice of hoʻoponopono, although no mention of the term was used in the accounts. By examining what had been said and the reactions of those involved, a perfect match was revealed with the practice of hoʻoponopono used today, which shows us how, to our ancestors, this practice was as natural as breathing. This method of comparative analysis with a deep understanding of the cultural base is a unique way to use the combined disciplines of history and anthropology now championed by many scholars outside of these islands—Marshall Sahlins and Valerio Valeri of the University of Chicago, New Zealand Anthropologist Anne Salmond, and Australian historian Inga Clendinnen to name just a few. These methods have demonstrated
that cultural reconstruction of lost, forgotten, or misinterpreted events and behaviors can be understood once again from the world view of the indigenous culture. A good example of this methodology is the descriptions and analysis of a series of ceremonial welcomes that all involve circuit-like action in the chapter on Welina.

Since the Bishop Museum’s publications of the writings of Samuel M. Kamakau, John Papa ʻĪi, and Z. P. Kepelino, and the reprinting of Malo, we have more resource materials than ever before. In recent years further primary materials translated from Hawaiian newspapers have been published: *Huakai Makaikai a Kaupo, Maui, A Visit to Kaupō, Maui* by Thomas K. Maunupau, originally published in *Nupepa Kuokoa* in 1922 and 1923 (1998); *Keaomelemele* by Moses Manu, originally published in *Nupepa Kuokoa* in 1884 and 1885 (2000) (the translation first appeared in 1979 in *Ke Alahou* edited by Marjorie Sinclair); *Kamehameha and His Warrior Kekūhaupiʻo* by the Rev. Stephen L. Desha, originally published in *Ka Hoku o Hawaii* from 1920 to 1924 (2000); *The History of Kanalu, Moʻokūʻauhau ‘Elua* by Benjamin K. Nāmakaokeahi concerning the priesthood and star-lore of Kanalu, originally published in *Nupepa Kuokoa* in 1900 and 1901 (2004) and *Ka ‘Oihana Lawai‘a, Hawaiian Fishing Traditions* by Daniel Kahāʻulelio, originally published in *Nupepa Kuokoa* from 1902 (2006). In addition, the availability of online resources such as www.ulukau.org for quick access to the Hawaiian newspapers and other websites for unprecedented access to the journals of the explorers allows us to confidently agree with Rubellite Johnson that the time to uncover Hawaiian values has indeed arrived.

Years ago that was not the case, for Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck) commented to his dear friend Sir Apirana Ngata, in a letter dated November 4, 1930, that there was a need for a good study and publication about Hawaiian culture: “A comprehensive work on Hawaiian culture has never been done in spite of the huge quantity of printed material that deals with these islands” (Sorrenson III: 74). What he meant by culture was material culture, the arts and crafts especially found in the Bernice Pauahi Museum where he was the new director. He completed such a study, and it was published as *Arts and Crafts of Hawaii*. It was first published as a large single book with
each chapter emphasizing a broad topic. Those who wanted to use the book to replicate the arts and crafts found the large book cumbersome to take to the workshop or out into the field, so the chapters were reprinted as small booklets. Each booklet was a different bright color so it could be easily identified on the shelf. What Johnson, and then Brown and Kanahele, realized is that this generation needs to understand and appreciate another important aspect of culture: our worldview, both of everything around us and of ourselves, and it was this idea that has been developed into the Ka Wana series.

Our series was inspired by *Arts and Crafts of Hawaii*. It was also printed in small booklets with different colored covers. I had asked our graphic artist Robin Clark to look at kapa samples in Dr. William Brigham’s extensive study on Hawaiian kapa ‘barkcloth’ so we could show what the Hawaiian color palette looked like. We called it the Ka Wana series after the kapa stamp of the wana or sea urchin, but there is no symbolism or double meaning in the use of this name for the series. It just is a beautiful graphic image and demonstrates the Native Hawaiian artist’s ingenuity and creativeness.

As a younger reader I was always afraid of the massive books we had to read for English literature classes, like Dickens’ *David Copperfield*. I never thought I would be able to finish them. I thought if we had the titles in smaller chapter-booklets like *Arts and Crafts of Hawaii*, our targeted readers would be more likely to finish them. However, both readers and libraries began to ask if we would put all of the booklets into one large book, just the opposite of what happened with *Arts and Crafts of Hawaii*.

Producing a large book after the series was finished gave us the rare opportunity to correct mistakes and to add new information that we are continuing to find. Ongoing research has led to the discovery of previously unknown material and to new insights that often come from connecting bits and pieces of information together that may originally have seemed unrelated. I am also very pleased that we were able to add a special color section so readers can see the details found in some of the earliest recorded images of Hawai‘i. Many have been published before, but after examining the original watercolors and pencil sketches at the British Library, the British Museum Archives, and the Dixson Library of the State Library of New South Wales, I
realized how much we have been missing, visually and culturally, by not looking at these originals. Most of the time we see engravings made from the original drawings so they could be mass-produced in print. But they are not the same, especially if they were not printed with the original hand-coloring. In addition to early images of life in Hawai‘i, we have included Webber’s drawings of fishes and birds made during Captain Cook’s voyage. Although researchers have long known of their existence, they are rarely published. Equally important to the readers and researchers are detailed citations of each of images so that readers will not have difficulty in finding them to use in their own work. By compiling these early accounts and images from our ancestors and earliest visitors, it is our hope that they will become more accessible, not only to researchers and scholars, but to everyone. They are cultural and historical treasures given to all of us by our ancestors, Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian.

Knowing how our ancestors behaved begs the question of whether we are doing the same. If we are practicing our culture in a way similar to how they did, then we know that Hawaiian culture is very much alive today. If we do things differently than they did, we have to ask if those changes have been to our benefit, and whether we can reclaim what has been forgotten, lost, or suppressed. The touching of noses, or honi ihu, is a good example of this rediscovery. Today many Hawaiians do not recognize this as a traditional practice that has been replaced by a hug or a kiss. In fact, most English translations of primary sources call it kissing, hence implying lip-to-lip or lip-to-cheek. Some see the touching of noses as undue influence of the cultural exchanges with our Māori cousins from Aotearoa ‘New Zealand,’ but the historical and traditional record is very clear. This is a traditional Hawaiian practice. Should it be made the practice today? The answer is still uncertain, as there are an increasing number of Hawaiians invoking the traditional honi ihu, while many others retain hugs and kisses as a greeting.

How will these stories affect you? It is our hope that you may discover some new insights into how you see the world and interact with it. If you are a teacher working with Native Hawaiian families, this knowledge may help you to understand reactions and responses to your teaching. It is our hope that it can also provide you with tools
and opportunities to use our cultural history to help these ‘ōhana learn from the traditions.

If you are a parent you may discover new ways to help your children develop a true and deep sense of belonging based on the cultural and historical treasures left to them by our ancestors. If you are a school administrator you may discover new ways of working with Native Hawaiian communities to overcome the many so-called obstacles to learning and retention, and to build a community on your campus.

If you are not Native Hawaiian you may begin a new journey to deeply understanding our people and our ways of living. You may find new cultural tools that could help your own family situations.

I have a vivid memory of myself as a very little boy in my grandfather’s backyard on Makalapua Street, in what were then the outskirts of downtown Honolulu. From the wooden bench where I sat, the house was to my right and there was a tiny garden to the left with a little grassy mound. I was sitting there watching things because my grandfather had gone into a tall shed next to the house, and while he was in there he yelled out to me to keep still and to wait for him. I heard the sound of water hitting a bucket, and then he came out zipping up his pants and holding the bucket. He then went to a water faucet and began to fill the bucket with water, and then he took it to a plant and dumped everything around the plant. By that time I was at his side hanging on to his blue jeans. He looked down and said, pointing to the plant, “Baby, this is medicine that can make you well. Let’s go back inside.” Many years later I would learn that plant, which most people consider a weed, was the pōpolo, one of the first medicinal plants given to us by the god Kamakanuiahaʻilono. My grandfather did not teach me how to make medicines; instead, he gave me the greater gift of seeing the world through different eyes. It is this gift that, after such a long journey, is now made real in this book. E ola!