13  Ka Huaka'i O Nā 'Ōiwi: the Journey Home

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AND TY KĀWIKA TENGAN

HO'OOMAKA – TO BEGIN

For generations, Native Hawaiian ancestors traversed the Pacific Ocean in double-hulled canoes known as wa'a kaulua. Navigational techniques were based on keen observations of the stars, the formations of waves, winds and clouds and the presence or absence of birds - and always coupled with pule (prayer). Understanding these natural tools helped navigators locate destinations and return safely to their kūlīwi (homeland). The long seafaring journeys caused immense hardships and challenges to the crew. At times these trips resulted in reaching desired destinations. At other times, the results were tragic.

Contemporary Native Hawaiians seeking to repatriate iwi kūpuna (ancestral human skeletal remains) and moe pū (funerary objects) liken our efforts to the seafaring legacy left by our ancestors. Repatriation journeys were long and filled with what seem like insurmountable obstacles. Nonetheless, we navigated through these challenges using cultural values and practices as a guide. These efforts led to the successful return of many iwi kūpuna and moe pū. By undertaking these journeys and overcoming the numerous challenges, we gained in-depth insight into our cultural values and ourselves. In addition, we came to realize certain difficult truths about the devastating toll that colonization has taken on our cultural identity.

The following is an ulana (weaving) of portions of journeys taken by members of Hui Mālama Nā Kūpuna O Hawai'i Nei (Hui Mālama), a Native Hawaiian organization established to care for iwi kūpuna and moe pū through repatriation and reburial. It is told as a mo'olelo (story) that centres around a journey taken in November 1997 whereby members of Hui Mālama sailed approximately 1,200 nautical kilometers to the remote Northwestern Hawaiian islands of Nihoa and Moku Manamana to rebury iwi kūpuna and moe pū removed from these places.

Ke 'aui nei ka lā, welo, welo. The sun is setting, fluttering, fluttering.

The wind is blowing briskly and the kāhea (calling) of the ocean is unmistakable. It is the end of the day, the time to remember the kūpuna (ancestors), to honour their
journey to Pō (darkness). It is also the beginning of the journey home for the iwi kūpuna of Nihoa and Moku Manamana with unknown challenges awaiting the ship's crew.

Ka manu kāhe'a i ka wa'a e holo. The bird that calls to the canoe to sail.

HO'O MĀKAUKAU – PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

The food menu is carefully planned, and the gear is checked and loaded. Containers of precious water are stowed; twice the amount necessary in case of emergency. There is no wa'a kaulua available for the journey. The vessel that will be used instead is a fully equipped 51-foot French built motorized sailboat complete with satellite phone link and global positioning system. In addition, an inflatable zodiac and outboard motor are loaded for accessing the two remote islands.

The carefully selected crew of men include members of Hui Mālama and the Protect Kaho'olawe Ohana (PKO), a representative of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and two experienced ship captains. Hui Mālama will be responsible for the conduct of all cultural protocols and PKO for all decisions relating to ocean safety once the zodiac is launched. The government representative will determine whether ocean conditions will allow safe access onto each island and his word will be final. Finally, the precious cargo of pilo'olo moe (burial bundles) is loaded aboard for the ride home. Family and friends come to the harbor to wish the crew well. Several prayers are offered for a safe and successful journey. The mooring lines are untied and the pu (conch shell) is blown announcing our departure. The crew is now completely in the realm of Kanaloa.

As with any long journey, preparation is a key element. For members of Hui Mālama, preparation began in 1989 with training in Hawaiian cultural values and practices relating to the care and protection of iwi kūpuna and moepū. The kumu (cultural teachers) are Edward Kanaha and Puulani Kanaka'ole Kanaha. Before work with the iwi kūpuna could take place, traditional pule (prayers) and oli (chants) had to be learned and perfected.

For many Hui Mālama members, the efforts required to learn the cultural protocols were difficult, intimidating, and humbling due to our weakness in speaking our native language and understanding traditional values and practices as a result of our Western upbringing. For some, difficulty also centred on reconciling this training with already established Christian values. Despite these obstacles, we worked hard and remained focused. When the initial training was completed, Hui Mālama members were prepared to enter the realm of the kūpuna and 'aumāküa.

Another event that helped pave the way for repatriation journeys was the passage in 1990 of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (see McKeown Chapter 9). In addition to cultural protocols, Hui Mālama members implemented the provisions of NAGPRA and successfully repatriated iwi kūpuna and moepū from institutions in the continental United States and Hawai'i.6 Lacking NAGPRA jurisdiction abroad, Hui Mālama had to rely on assertion of its international human right to care for ancestral remains, favourable museum repatriation policies, and good faith as the basis for returning iwi kūpuna from institutions in Canada, Australia, Switzerland, and Scotland.

HOLO KA WA'A: UNCHARTED WATERS

For those of us unsure about being at sea, the growing stress is unnerving. Given the kaumaka (heaviness) of the trip's purpose, my anxiety is increased exponentially. The boat sails west toward the setting sun with only a few hours of daylight remaining. Dinner is being served, but I cannot eat because my stomach is in knots. The wind is at our backs as we pass the leeward coast of O'ahu. Fears run wild through the empty compartments of my mind. Have we prepared adequately? What unforeseen obstacles lie out there? Will we hit rough weather, especially this late into the north swell season? Was it right to ignore the warnings not to go in mid-November? Was our faith misplaced in the rush to return the iwi home? Are the 'aumāküa pleased with our efforts? Will I be able to handle the challenges presented during this trip?

There is so much that is unknown. Did I make the right decision to come along? Darkness begins to set in. The wind noticeably picks up and the sails have to be trimmed. The bow is hitting the waves harder, constantly pounding, again and again. I'm not sure how much of this I can take. Windbreakers are put on as sea spray comes flying over the bow. The darkness exacerbates my fears as the moon begins to rise and we settle in for a long night.

Under the cover of darkness, Hui Mālama members arrive at the Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC in July 1990. It is the first repatriation effort, the first time we will work hands on with the iwi kūpuna and conduct the protocols in the presence of the ancestors. Are we ready? Have we each prepared ourselves properly? The level of anxiety is naturally high, but there also seems to be a calm familiarity that begins to set in as the protocols are conducted.

The inventory is reviewed and matched against the actual human remains present, and the unforeseen happens. The inventory list and one of the iwi kūpuna, a skull, do not match. Which is wrong? Should we ignore it and just take the iwi home? What if it belongs to an ancestor from another tribe? But our na'au (guts) tell us that this skull is that of a Native Hawaiian. Or what if it is Native Hawaiian and we mistakenly leave it behind? Isn't it best to err on the side of our families and take the iwi home at the risk of offending someone unrelated to us? What is the pono (correct) thing to do here? If we make the mistake of taking the wrong iwi, have we not committed the same hēwa (wrong) as those who collected it? We need insight as to how best to proceed. The protocols provide the necessary mechanism to request assistance:

E hō mai ka 'ike mai luna mai e Grant us knowledge (insight) from above
O nā mea hūnū noʻeau o nā mele Grant us, grant us, grant us.
The things of knowledge hidden in
E hō mai, e hō mai, e hō mai e the chants
Grant us, grant us, grant us.
With unmistakable comfort, a sense of calmness and familiarity begins to take over. The correct path reveals itself. Assistance from museum staff is requested, the problem explained and immediately addressed. It is clarified that the inventory list is incorrect, and the skull is in fact Native Hawaiian. Other discrepancies are clarified and the storm passes without harm. Yet despite these events occurring after we conduct our pule (prayers), the source of this confidence is unclear. What should otherwise be apparent is nonetheless difficult for us to recognize and understand.

It is 4:00 a.m. and six hours pass since the work began. What was initially a nervous, inexperienced group is now a focused body acting in concert and bound together in prayer. Connections to the 'amākua have been made; for what else could explain our high level of performance? All the tools necessary to prepare the iwi kūpuna are collectively requested and granted. Our 'ike (insight) grows from this first experience.

KE AO HOU: THE NEW DAY COMES INNOCENTLY ENOUGH

An uneasy first night at sea comes to an end. Sleeping one hour at a time, I am mindful of the ship’s motion. Unable to sleep in the cabin, I opt for fresh air on deck. It is wa'a'o, the time when the sun’s rays first show. My fears begin to dissipate. We pass the majestic sand dunes of Mānā and Poilhale on the leeward coast of Kaua‘i. These dunes contain sacred burial grounds. A base now occupies the dunes, an incessant reminder of the US military presence and the negative impacts on the iwi kūpuna. Next we pass the proud island of Ni‘ihau rising high above the sea. Lehua, the westernmost point of the principal Hawaiian islands is seen up close. This is where the ‘uhane (spirit) goes following death, just prior to the jump to Pē,

Nāpō‘o ana i lalo, ka moku ‘o Lehua.

I am not quite acclimated to the movements of the ship, as my so-called ‘sea legs’ have not yet taken root. Nonetheless, the main benefit of the new day is that the speedy but rough crossing of the Kaua‘i Channel is now complete. The ride is much smoother, the wind breezy but not too strong. My confidence begins to return, slowly. First, I need to have my appetite restored. I still cannot eat. It is strange how one can be on a ship with others and still be alone in the vast realm that is Kanaloa. The open ocean has a way of isolating one’s mind and humbling one’s thoughts to the realization that we are but a small, insignificant part of the greater world. I have but my thoughts to comfort and scare me. The skies are overcast with heavy rain clouds looming in the distance. The ocean starts to churn. It is time to be maka‘ala (alert). We sail on.

The second chest is loaded onto a United Airlines flight bound for Honolulu from O‘Hare Airport. The cargo is iwi kūpuna repatriated from the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. It is June 1991 and two Hui Mālama members, weary from the long hours of travel, now find a newly realized strength in knowing that iwi kūpuna representing sixty ancestral Native Hawaiians are on their way home for reburial. Two months later, we are successful in repatriating a mummified child9 from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and a skull from Brigham Young University.

The following year, seven additional repatriation efforts are successfully undertaken involving six institutions and approximately one hundred iwi kūpuna. Much effort is directed at organizing families and community organizations to help with reburial.

All remains are ceremonially reburied, including 47 iwi kūpuna removed from the island of Molokai10 that were repatriated from the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Bishop Museum). For this effort, a pair of twelve-seater passenger planes is rented to transport the iwi kūpuna and participants home and to do a flyby of the Keoneele sand dunes where many of the iwi originated. After we arrive an oli kāhea, a chant requesting permission to enter the proud and famous lands of Molokai is offered. An oli komo is chanted in response to welcome us to the island and to welcome the kūpuna back home.

Through what can only be described as a relentless approach, Hui Mālama is able to combine its protocol training and understanding of NAGPRA to effectively identify institutions with collections of iwi kūpuna and moepū, participate in the NAGPRA consultation process, and successfully complete repatriation and reburial. The number of iwi being returned and reburied is growing as is the list of cooperative institutions. The original anxieties associated with the conduct of the cultural protocols have blossomed into strong expressions of Native Hawaiian pride and a renewed sense of cultural identity.

An important lesson is learned. The protocols not only serve to respect the iwi kūpuna but also to guide the living as long as we remain open to the communication that flows back to us on the spiritual level. It is the ancestors who direct and inspire us by providing the requisite knowledge, strength, and confidence.

Na mākou e mālama i nā iwi o ko mākou kūpuna
Na nā mo‘o e mālama i ko mākou iwi
A ho‘omau ka lākahi o kākou.

We will protect the bones of our ancestors
And our children will protect our bones
As we continue this interdependency.

LELE KA ‘IWA: WE ARRIVE AT NIHOA

It is day three at sea. The night was kinder as sleep comes in bunches. My sea legs are half-way here. We are greeted in the new day by a royal air force of ‘iwa (frigate) birds soaring majestically above. Off the bow we can see Nihoa in the distance. One ‘iwa hovers just about the main mast and turns its head to look at me for an instant. At that very moment, I see the face of Parley Kana‘ka‘ole, the deceased brother of our kumu and an original founding member of Hui Mālama. I am comforted by this ‘ike pāpālua (vision; spiritual communication). I know then that no matter what challenges await
us today, all will go well for we are being guided. Preparations begin for the launching of the inflatable zodiac. We also begin to prepare ourselves. From a distance the news is not good for a ring of white water can be seen circling the island. This means the waves are breaking along the shoreline as there are no reefs to provide protection. A major obstacle clearly presents itself. The representative from the US Fish and Wildlife Service expresses reservations regarding present ocean conditions.

As the ship sails closer to the island, the deep echoes of large waves hitting the rocky shoreline is unmistakably heard. Anxieties are up. There appear to be large hands waving slowly from atop a hill. These are loulu, native fan palms moving rhythmically in the wind as if to welcome us. We've come so far, we have to try to land. Discussion between the PKO crew and the representative are positive. The plan is to launch the zodiac, study the shoreline conditions up close, and report back for a final decision.

After a half hour, the PKO crew returns and explains the proposed plan. A landing site is located, the sets of waves are counted, timed, and sized. A rope will be secured to the rocky shoreline and anchored off shore allowing the zodiac to be hand guided in to land safely. However, the waves are steadily increasing. The representative agrees to the plan but allows only an hour to conduct rebuial. He is concerned that the waves will get larger and make departure too dangerous. The PKO crew agrees. Safety first. The pū'olo moe (burial bundles) are carefully loaded into the zodiac and we pull (pray) again.

The approach to the island is indescribable. I am filled with pride. We are able to safely access the island, but the ground is rocking back and forth so it seems. It takes a while to acclimate. We are standing on the island just as our ancestors did generations earlier. Uninhabited by humans for years, Niihoa was invaded by Dr. Kenneth Emory from the Bishop Museum in 1923 and 1924 who removed so-called 'archaeological resources' for study (Cleghorn 1987), including iwi kiipuna. We have now returned the iwi in order to help undo this hewa (wrong).

The zodiac returns to sea but stays in contact. 'You have one hour to complete rebuial. Be careful, but be quick,' is the message we hear over the radio. We again join together in prayer, humbled by our safe landing. Finding a trail leading to the upland, we scale the steep incline and find an appropriate site overlooking the bay. The sailboat bobs up and down in the rough ocean and the zodiac cruises just off shore. The rebuial site is constructed from stone and the iwi kiipuna ceremonially returned to the bosom of the Earth Mother Haumea. The watchful iwa birds soaring above are given the kuleana (responsibility) to protect the pū'olo moe (sleeping bundles):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ho'okahi wale ka maka kia'i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is only one watchful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nā 'iwa e 'iolana nei i ka lewa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Iwa birds are soaring quietly above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho'olewa ho'omalu i nā pū'olo moe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating above to protect the sleeping bundles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho'omoe ho'ohohonu i ka poli o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put to rest deep within the bosom of Haumea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We quickly return to the shoreline and the pū is blown to announce our departure. The PKO crew is ready, as it has been just over an hour. The waves are larger now, but it is still deemed safe. The departure goes smoothly and we are back on the sailboat. Despite the numerous challenges posed by the ocean conditions, we are able to complete our mission. The practice of the protocols grants us intelligence, strength, and confidence to make the right decisions and carry them out. My sea legs have arrived. Starving now, I am finally able to satisfy the god that resides within me. The sunset is picturesque with red and black colors streaking across the sky in a large 'V'. A victory sign perhaps, certainly another 'ike pāpala. The ancestors are pleased and we are blessed. It is an appropriate time for in-depth reflection.

It is through personal and collective struggles and journeys that we have come to understand who we are, not only as Native Hawaiians but as Kanaka 'Ōiwi, one of the traditional ways of identifying ourselves as the indigenous people. While Kanaka is a generic term for people, 'Ōiwi metaphorically means 'Native' but literally translates as 'of the bone.' This identification is a result of the belief that iwi contain our personal mana (spiritual essence) even after death. Likewise, our homeland is referred to as kūlūwi (literally, 'bone plain') indicating a connection between the land and the people, as our homeland is defined as the place in which the bones of our ancestors and eventually ourselves and our descendants are buried.

The deeper understanding of who we are is further enhanced each time we kanu. The word 'kanu' means both 'to bury/a burial' and a 'to plant/a planting.' The first
kanu in the mo'olelo (oral traditions) of our people was the burial of Hāloaanka, the stillborn child of the akua (gods) Wākea and Ho'ohōkūkalani. From that spot grew the first kalo (taro), our staple food. Their next son was also named Hāloa and it is from he that the Hawaiian people descend (Mallo 1987: 159; Pukui 1983: 241). This mo'olelo (history) establishes the interconnection between the gods, the land, and the people. The burial of iwi results in the physical growth of plants and the spiritual growth of mana. The living descendants feed off the foods of the land and are nourished spiritually by the knowledge that the iwi kūpuna are well cared for, and in their rightful place (Ayau 1995: 24-7).

The po'oe kahiko (people of old) understood well the importance of protecting and caring for the iwi kūpuna. Each family identified those who carried the kuleana (responsibility) of ensuring that all iwi received kanu pono — a proper and righteous burial. This meant that the iwi were buried with a great deal of ceremony, and treasured possessions needed in the spiritual realm were ho'omoepū'ia (laid to rest) with the iwi. Secrecy went into the hiding of the iwi and moepū for those who sought a person's mana would seek the bones to appropriate its spiritual power (Mallo 1987: 68-70; Kamakau 1987: 1). The tranquility of a person's spirit depends on the level of protection provided to his/her iwi.

Conducting proper burials was especially important for Kanaka 'Oiwi because of the belief that ancestors became 'aumākua (guardians) of living descendants and that these 'aumākua must be cared for in order to maintain the pono (balance and unity) of the family. The kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna was the same as the responsibility to maintain harmony between the living, the dead, and the land. At the level of the ali'i nui (ruling chief), the ability to maintain the tranquility of the kingdom was dependent upon the degree to which the ali'i cared for the akua (gods) and 'aumākua. This was evidenced in part by the condition of gravesites throughout the islands. When there was peace in the kingdom, the people were buried properly; when there were treacherous rulers, the bones were dug up (Kamakau 1987: 1). These revelations lend themselves to an understanding of how the disturbance of our burials is intimately tied to colonialism — the complicated processes by which Euro-Americans appropriated our lands, exploited our resources, disenfranchised our people and transformed the very way we think about who we are.

For the Kanaka 'Oiwi, repatriation is intimately tied to the struggle to reclaim our collective mana as a people. Colonialism alienated us from our ʻaina (lands), moʻolelo (histories), ʻōlelo (language) and akua (gods) and included the desecration of gravesites. As a part of these larger processes, colonizers 'collected' iwi kūpuna and moepū for:

1. scientific studies which often posited a racial superiority of Europeans and Americans over primitive natives;
2. sale in the curios market or to educational institutions;
3. use in anthropological studies of a 'disappearing race'; and
4. eviction as part of the urban sprawl transforming the landscape (Mihesuah 1996: 153–63).

However in recent years our people have voiced opposition to the taking of our iwi kūpuna, lands, and sovereignty. As Kanaka 'Oiwi nationalist and recording artist Keliʻi Skippy Ioane (1999) states:

We still recovering, colonial discovering
Steal the soul of the man, you steal the life of the land
American sugar, pilgrim descendants
Broke the tribal laws of their own Ten Commandments
Thou shalt not lie, thou shall not steal
From peaceful, friendly nations who's gods are real — touch that!
Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana, o ka po'e i aloha i ka 'aina — touch that!

In recent years, some Kanaka 'Oiwi have attempted to articulate strategies for decolonization and have found that the care and protection of iwi kūpuna is an important element in this effort (Cachola-Abad and Ayau 1999: 74–82). At least for the moment, the ability to reclaim our cultural identity is reaffirmed by the 'ike pāpahā revealed in the skies at Nioha. Onward to Moku Manamana.

It is May 1992 and Hui Mālama initiates NAGPRA consultation with the Museum at the University of California, Berkeley following confirmation that four sets of 'Hawaiian remains' are identified in the Museum's collections (Norick 1992: 1; Ayau 1992: 1). Following a request for immediate repatriation, the museum responds that
it is unable to comply, citing concerns with an unclear Federal process that prevents it from addressing the matter in a timely fashion. Hui Mālama continues to request repatriation citing the applicable provisions of NAGPRA. This is the first case in which we encounter strong resistance to repatriation. Prayers are offered requesting the assistance of the ‘aumākua for guidance. The University administration is now handling the matter. Officials clarify that the list identifying 'Hawaiian remains' was intended only as an assessment and not the formal determination required by NAGPRA. Both parties then agree to follow a process that would expedite the determination of the cultural affiliation (25 U.S.C. 3002(2)) of four sets of human remains from the Hawaiian islands (Cerny 1992: 1). 13

Following review, the university determines that two sets of remains meet the NAGPRA reasonable belief standard and are culturally affiliated with Native Hawaiians. However, it is unable to reach conclusions as to the cultural affiliation of the two others 14 (Fabbri 1992: 5). Hui Mālama is able to convince the university to repatriate the first two iwi kūpuna which takes place on 11 September 1992. The preparation ceremony is difficult knowing that we would be leaving iwi behind. A mihi (remorse) ceremony is conducted whereby apologies are offered to the ‘uhane (spirit) of the two kūpuna being left behind, and a commitment is made to return for them. At our direction, a university official explains to the ‘uhane that he is responsible for preventing their return which grants us some peace. Nonetheless, it is with happiness and heaviness in our na’au (guts) that we return home:

E ke Akua mau loa ki'eki'e a me nā kūpuna o mākou E aloha mai ‘oukou i nā mea i kaumaha ‘ia E nā mai ko ‘oukou inaina me ko mākou ha’a ha’a E malu mai ‘oukou E ho‘ōla iā mākou i nā mea Hawai‘i kūpuno E ho‘ōla iā mākou i ka na‘au pono no kēia hana.

To the God of the most high and also to our ancestors Be kind to us who are burdened. Let your anger be appeased by our humility this day. Look with favor upon us. Grant life to us in the true Hawaiian sense. Awaken within us the true depth of this work.

The point of contention continues to be a disagreement over whether the evidence satisfies the applicable NAGPRA cultural affiliation standards (25 U.S.C. 3005(a)(4); Black 1979: 1064). The university maintains it is unable to reach any such conclusions. Hui Mālama contends that the reasonable belief and preponderance standards are satisfied. The parties submit the dispute to the NAGPRA Review Committee to make formal findings and non-binding recommendations toward resolution. The strain of not knowing if the iwi kūpuna will return home weighs heavily on us as the months drag on. The committee holds a hearing and Hui Mālama asserts that the iwi kūpuna left behind are Native Hawaiian based on documentary evidence (Ayau 1992: 1–14) and ceremonial connections. Characterizing the latter testimony as

‘spiritual evidence,’ the committee gives it appropriate weight and finds cultural affiliation for the iwi from Waimānalo but rejects the documentary evidence for the second iwi, a fragmented skull, despite recognition of the spiritual evidence. The recommendation is to repatriate the first and transfer the second ‘to a museum in Hawai‘i for further consideration of cultural affiliation’ (NAGPRA Review Committee 1993: 1988–9).

Hui Mālama returns to Berkeley to repatriate and transfers the fragmented skull to the Bishop Museum (Transfer and Acknowledgment of Human Remains 1993). On 29 September 1993, an archaeologist calls with good news. Following examination, the skull is determined to be culturally affiliated with Native Hawaiians. "You folks were right," she happily exclaims. But a sadness comes over author Halealohe, for all of our efforts could not prevent this last indignity. Nonetheless, we are able to connect with the 'aumākua and rebury of all the iwi kūpuna is completed. We have overcome the challenges of the first NAGPRA dispute by placing our faith in cultural practice and relying on insights gained as the basis for our arguments.

KAI KO'O: THE CHALLENGE OF LANDING ON MOKU MANAMANA

I greet day four with confident enthusiasm given our success at Nihoa, my acclamation to being at sea, and my newly found appetite. We should reach the island by 1:30 p.m. The winds are blowing particularly hard. Then we see Moku Manamana as the 'iwa and other birds greet us. The white ring of water surrounding the island looks far worse than Nihoa. We can hear and feel the pounding from a greater distance. The US Fish and Wildlife Service representative studies the conditions intently and is visibly concerned.

We are now up close to the island, carefully studying the situation. The representative determines that the conditions are too dangerous and refuses to authorize access. The PKO crew request to launch to study the conditions more closely before a final decision is made. They return with a plan and are able to gain authorization to attempt a landing. However, only one person will be allowed to go. The conditions are so intense that there is only a twelve-second window of opportunity for the zodiac to get in, off load, and get out safely. The Hui Mālama member from Kaau‘i is selected to go. He is the strongest and best skilled person to try. We pray together for his safety and success.

E hō mai ka 'ike
E hō mai ka ikaika
E hō mai ka akamai
E hō mai ka maopopo pono
E hō mai ka 'ike pāpāa
E hō mai ka mana.

Grant us knowledge
Grant us strength
Grant us intelligence
Grant us true understanding
Grant us a vision, an avenue of communication
Grant us spiritual essence, power.
The PKO crew wait patiently for an opening. Then the inflatable zodiac speeds to the coral-faced shoreline and the Hui Mālama member leaps onto a large coral head and scrambles up just as a large wave hits.

Numerous attempts are then made to toss him a rope. This is finally done and the container with the pū'ōlo moe hoisted safely in. Unexpectedly, another member of Hui Mālama leaps off the zodiac and onto the island. The pounding by the sailboat eases and is reduced to a rocking as the wind dies down. The two ascend the cliff reaching the top of the island where they build the burial site as the iwi provide protection. The ceremonial protocols are conducted and the iwi kūpuna replanted. The waves subside in the time that passes, making for a safe departure. All return to the sailboat triumphantly:

I kū mau mau! Stand up in couples!
I kū wā! Stand at intervals!
I kū mau mau! Stand up in couples!
I kū hulu hulu! Haul with all your might!
I ka lanawao! Under the mighty forest trees!
I kū wā! Stand at intervals!
I kū lanawao! Stand up among the tall forest trees!
I kū wā! Stand at intervals!
I kū wā huki! Stand at intervals at pull!
I kū wā kō! Stand at intervals and haul!
I kū wā a mau! Stand in place and haul!
A mau ka ʻulu! Haul branches and all!
E huki e! Haul now!
Kūlia! Stand up my hearties!

That evening, we share a satisfying meal and humbly give thanks for another successful effort. Despite the harsh conditions, our faith remains focused. The captain warns that the return trip will require us to head into the wind and the ride would be the roughest yet. We tell him we aren’t worried for the kūpuna will do their part to take care of us.

The next day we catch two ʻahi (tuna) and have fish steaks and poke (raw diced fish) for dinner—a gift from the kūpuna. For the rest of the days, the wind blows softly and the water is glassy flat—a gift from Kanaloa. The captain turns the motor and steers straight home. After each day he promises that the great conditions will worsen, as he has never experienced consecutive days like this in twenty-five years. As the last day dawns and we are just off the coast of O‘ahu, the captain explains he is a believer. Tanned and excited we set foot back on land and give thanks for a safe return:

I nā kūpuna o mākou To our ancestors
I noho ai i kēia pae ʻāina Who lived on these islands
I hoʻokū ai ko ʻoukou ʻumākua Who established your gods
A me pulapula i kēia pae ʻāina And your progeny upon these islands

It is the year 2000 and it has been seven years since we began working on the repatriation of iwi kūpuna and moepū from Kawaihae, Hawai‘i. In 1905, a district judge and two other haole (white) ‘discoverers’ (D. Forbes to W. Brigham 7.11.1905, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives) looted a burial cave in this area. A number of ancestral remains and funerary objects including ki‘i ʻumākua (images of ancestor deities) and other personal possessions of an ali‘i nui (ruling chief) soon ended up in the collections of the Bishop Museum. Former Museum Director William Brigham knew when he acquired these iwi kūpuna and moepū that they had been stolen from a burial cave (W. Brigham to D. Forbes 11.11.1905, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives), yet he still appraised their value and acquired the items for the museum (W. Brigham to D. Forbes 21.11.1905, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives).

As part of the NAGPRA process, four Native Hawaiian organizations take formal positions requesting the Bishop Museum to expeditiously repatriate all iwi kūpuna and their moepū based in part on a report prepared by Hui Mālama (Kanahele and Ayau 1999: 1–14). As a result of these positions and our expertise, Hui Mālama is allowed to transport the iwi kūpuna and moepū home. In seeking to return the cultural items to a state of pono, we reburied them securely in the area they originated from.

News of the repatriation draws immediate and often intense criticism. Factors of the Native Hawaiian community are outraged, not because the iwi kūpuna were reburied but because the moepū (which they considered to be ‘artefacts’) were. These people feel that Hui Mālama has buried a part of their past which can serve as a valuable symbol and icon of Hawaiian identity, as well as an important educational tool. Some even question the funerary nature of these so-called ‘artefacts,’ citing speculations that the ki‘i were placed in the caves for temporary storage at a time when ki‘i were being destroyed due to the advent of Christianity. Others go as far as to deny the very fact that these images were even placed together with the iwi. The criticisms reach an
apex when Hui Mālama is accused of thievery through reburial of the 'artefacts.' In the months that follow, we come to learn that criticisms by our people are far worse than any challenge a museum could present.

A number of issues arise. One is that there is an enormous discrepancy between the ways in which these items are viewed: either as masterpieces of indigenous craftsmanship and knowledge (i.e. works of art) meant for all to see or as the inalienable possessions of the deceased (i.e. funerary objects) meant to be put away. This disparity reflects a difference between the Western way of objectifying the objects as artefacts and the ‘Ōiwi way of understanding them as kapu (sacred), possessing mana (spiritual essence, power) and vital to the pono (well-being) of our ancestors and us, their living descendants.

In an attempt to educate our people and the general community, Hui Mālama issues a public statement which asserts that the existing evidence clearly indicates that the items are moepū. Moreover, the real issue is that the moepū belong to the iwi kūpuna and both belong to the kūlāwi (homeland) where they were originally placed. We are mindful that our ancestors left us with the kuleana (responsibility) to care for their well-being. While they also left us cultural items upon which we maintain our cultural identity and through which we continue to be educated and inspired, this does not include their iwi and moepū, for those belong to them. Finally, that no one has any right to the iwi and moepū, no matter how significant the items are deemed to be.

Mai lawe wale i nā mea i ho’omoepū ‘ia. Don’t wantonly take things placed with the dead.

Instead, the iwi kūpuna and moepū belong to pō‘ele‘ele, the darkest of darkness and to the Earth Mother Haumea. We must respect our kūpuna and the items they reserved to themselves, and this should be the main point that guides us as we strive to restore pono. Once information about this case is shared publicly, many come to support our actions.

Nonetheless, the case strikes an extraordinarily sensitive nerve for some who demand that Bishop Museum recall the ‘artefacts’ it loaned to us despite the fact that this would result in redisturbance. In addition, others call for Bishop Museum and Hui Mālama to be sanctioned. As with Moku Manamana, we are embroiled in the worst conditions.

Reflecting upon the various arguments put forth by those who want the ‘artefacts’ to be returned and those that want the ‘moepū’ to remain buried, it is the authors’ opinion that the emotionally and politically charged nature of the debate speaks to the various struggles we face as a colonized people seeking to reclaim our cultural identity. What were once fundamental values and beliefs to our ancestors regarding burial practices are now foreign to many in our current generation. Many Native Hawaiians now look to books and artefacts to learn about their past and forge an identity today.

The problem here is that Western institutions such as the school and the museum are primary sites for the colonization of our people (Smith 1999). For the last
cultural values that seek to return the pono of our people. Hui Mālama is humbled by the knowledge and insights gained during our decade-long efforts to repatriate and rebury our ancestors and their possessions. Many of these journeys are challenging and do not always turn out as planned. Nonetheless, we maintain that an appropriate means by which to navigate through the harsh, often tragic realities of colonization underlining our cultural identity is to practice the teachings of our kūpuna and follow the guidance of our ‘amākua:

E iho ana o luna That which is above shall be brought down
E pī‘ana o lalo That which is below shall be lifted up
E hui ana nā moku The islands shall be united
E kū ana ka pāia. The walls shall stand upright.

This chant represents a prophecy that foretells of the loss and the return of the Hawaiian government through the unification of the people to form the walls of the restored nation. The efforts of Hui Mālama serve to restore the ancestral foundation in hopes of unifying our people both past and present, to form the walls of the Hawaiian nation. Imua kākou! Forward together!

NOTES

1 This mo‘olelo (story) is dedicated to our Kumu Edward Lavon Huihui Kanahaele and the legacy of contemporary Hawaiian spiritual practitioners he trained, including the authors. E moe, e moe, e moe me ka maluhia (Rest, rest, rest in peace).

2 The intended Hawaiian text and translations utilized throughout this writing represent portions of prayers, traditional sayings, chants, and a prophecy. None are the original thoughts of the authors. Due to the sensitive nature of these words and our desire to be able to best convey these experiences, we have decided not to cite any source.

3 A Native Hawaiian organization established in the 1970s to end the US military bombing of Kaho‘olawe and restore the island to health through planting and cultural use.

4 Kana koa is the Hawaiian deity of the ocean and one of four principal Hawaiian gods.

5 Family or personal gods including deified ancestors who might take the form of animals, plants, or other natural phenomena.

6 Iwi kūpuna and moepū were repatriated from many institutions including the following (an asterisk denotes cases where Hui Mālama supported the efforts of other organizations; information in brackets supplies date of repatriation and the minimum number of individuals and funerary objects): American Museum of Natural History (June 1991, 32); Field Museum of Natural History (June 1991, 28); University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology (Aug. 1991, 1); (Nov. 1996, 62); (Oct. 1997, 8); and (Sept. 1999, 3); Brigham Young University Museum of People and Cultures (Aug. 1991, 1); Milwaukee Public Museum (Feb. 1992, 1); (Jan. 1999, moepū); San Diego Museum of Man (Feb. 1992, 1); Sacramento Science Center (Feb. 1992, 1); Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Molokai (Apr. 1992, 47 and moepū); Waikamalolo (Aug. 1992, 46 and moepū); Kaho‘olawe* (July 1993, 7 and moepū); Ft. DeRussy (July 1995, 25); Lāwai‘a* (Oct. 1995, 212 and moepū); Mau‘u (June 1997, 65 and moepū); Kaua‘i (July 1997, 89 and moepū); Ft. Kamehameha (July 1997, 97 and moepū); Hawai‘i (Sept. 1997, 118 and moepū); Nihoa (Nov. 1997, 7); Moku Manamana (Nov. 1997, 2); Mau‘u (Feb. 1998, 20 and moepū); O‘ahu (Nov. 1998, 1,026 and moepū); Origin unknown (Nov. 1998, 95); Hawai‘i (Dec. 1998, 35 and moepū); Kaho‘olawe* (Jan. 1999, 10 and moepū);

7 These institutions include the University of Zurich (Mar. 1992, 1), Royal Ontario Museum (Aug. 1992, 1), South Australian Museum (Aug. 1992, 2), and the University of Edinburgh (Oct. 2000, 49).

8 All instances in which the singular pronouns are used in reference to the journey to Nihoa and Moku Manamana are the reflections of author Halealoha.

9 The child is from Hanapepe, Kaua‘i, as are the Holi family who escort her home. After her return, the child is claimed by another family based on her ‘ehu (reddish tinge) hair, a distinct family trait. She is given the name Tausomeha and ceremonially buried.

10 Author Halealoha’s family is from Molokai and this effort was undertaken following a request from his tūtī wahine (grandmother), the Rev Harriet Ahiona Ayau Ne. Although Mrs. Ne entered the Kingdom of God before reburial was completed, she did help assure the safe return of the iwi kūpuna. Aloha ke Akua i nā mea apau (God loves all things).

11 Some Hawaiian language scholars have recently (Kalani Makekau-Whitaker, pers. comm. 3/17/01) conceived of colonization through the word ‘koloniao,’ the very apt metaphor for ‘worm in your reticulum’ (kolei).”

12 Defined to mean ‘that there is a relationship of shared group identity which can be reasonably traced historically or prehistorically between a present day Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and an identifiable earlier group’ 25 U.S.C. 3002(2).

13 ‘[W]e are accelerating the second phase of the inventory for these particular remains and have begun an investigation of cultural affiliation’ (I. Cerny to Hui Mālama, 20.5.1992).

14 ‘Our assessment has established that specimens 12-7488 and 12-5255 may reasonably be determined to be affiliated with Native Hawaiian peoples. In good faith, the University of California at Berkeley is prepared to repatriate these remains to your organization. We are unable to reach any conclusions regarding specimens 12-5456 and 12-10738-39’ (L. Fabbr to Hui Mālama 13.8.1992).

15 NAGPRA specifically provides that where cultural affiliation of Native American human remains and funerary objects has not been established clearly or by a reasonable belief, ‘such Native American human remains and funerary objects shall be expeditiously returned, where the requesting Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization can show cultural affiliation by a preponderance of the evidence based upon geographical, kinship, biological, archaeological, anthropological, linguistic, folkloric, oral tradition, historical, or other relevant information or expert opinion’ (25 U.S.C. 3001(a)(4)). ‘Preponderance of evidence’ is defined as, ‘evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence as a whole shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.’ (Black 1979: 1064).
This chant talks about dragging a large tree trunk from the forest to make a canoe. It recognizes that great feats can be accomplished when everyone works (pu'ula) together.

Enclosed you will find a print of some Hawaiian relics which two friends and myself have been fortunate enough to uncover a few days ago from a cave in this neighborhood (D. Forbes to W. Brigham 7.11.1905, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives). More accurately, David Forbes, William Wagner, and Friedrich Haenschlo looted the iwi kōpūma and moepū from their intended final resting-place.

Further looting of this cave and a second burial cave in this area was conducted by J. Everett Brumaghim in 1935 and Keith Jones and Kenneth Emory in 1939. The stolen items were sold, exchanged, and donated to the Museum and Volcanoes National Park.

Your find is of great interest and importance, but is impossible to put a price upon the articles without a careful inspection ... In the meantime, keep the matter quiet for there are severe laws here concerning burial caves, and I shall not make the matter public, of course, until you say so. If you should wish to keep the collection or part of it, the coming from this place [Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum] would throw any suspicious persons off the scent. (W. Brigham to D. Forbes 11.11.1905, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives).

By letter dated 21 November 1905 (house at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives), Brigham provides Forbes with appraisals for each stolen item.

Hui Mālama submitted a report to each organization documenting the evidence and demonstrating that all of the identified cultural items clearly satisfy the NAGPRA definitions of 'human remains' and 'funerary objects' (Kanahele and Ayau 1999: 1-14).

The most compelling evidence of the funerary nature of the objects is a sketch plan of the interior drawn by David Forbes of what is called 'Forbes Cave' which depicts a cavern where iwi kōpūma and moepū including all four kī (images) are placed together and sealed. The sketch plan appears in a 1906 Bishop Museum publication (Brigham 1906: 3).

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THE DEAD AND THEIR POSSESSIONS

Repatriation in principle, policy and practice

Edited by

Cressida Fforde, Jane Hubert and Paul Turnbull
As this book was going to press we received the news that Jan Hammil had passed on. Jan (a Mescalero-Apache, and for many years the Director of American Indians Against Desecration) fought to change the belief held by many archaeologists and anthropologists that they had an automatic right to collect, store, and study people’s mortal remains. Through her beliefs and actions, and her work with WAC, she was in many ways the inspiration and instigator of an archaeology which now recognizes that living communities also have significant and legitimate rights in the past. Her view that indigenous people could be ‘the best friends or worst enemies’ of those who study the past is a legacy that we all need to learn, and we dedicate this book to Jan’s memory.

Jan’s views can be found in a statement she co-authored with Robert Cruz reproduced as Chapter 14 in volume 8 of the One World Archaeology series, Conflict in the Archaeology of Living Traditions (pp. 195–200) R. Layton (ed) 1989, London: Unwin Hyman; 1994, London: Routledge.
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