

AHUWALE KA PAEKI'I: HE LEI MOANA NŌ IA

Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu and Ka'imina'auao Kahikina

This oral history explores the life, work, and legacy of Hinalimoana Wong-Kalu, a renowned Kanaka Maoli educator, storyteller, haku mele, and leader. Framed by the metaphor of the paeki'i cloud formation, the narrative presents Hina as a living embodiment of her kūpuna (ancestors), kumu a'o (teachers), and haumāna (students). Through a series of recorded personal conversations, this work examines (1) the intersections of Kanaka and māhū modes of being as experienced by Hina, and (2) the ways her journey continues to be shaped by both those who nurture and are nurtured by her. By minimizing the editor's voice within the typed script, this mo'o'ōlelo (oral history) honors traditional Hawaiian pedagogical practices, allowing silence and reflection to guide the transmission of wisdom. This project offers a tribute to the resilience and kuleana (responsibility) of Kānaka Maoli in a challenging world, highlighting the importance of ancestral connections in shaping contemporary leadership and identity.

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Hālili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being Vol. 12 (2026)

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Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu is an educator, storyteller, haku mele, aloha ‘āina leader, and an international icon. Her creative and political works continue to feed the next generation of Kanaka Maoli leaders who carry the heavy kuleana of navigating our lāhui to new horizons. But who is Hina beyond her physical presence? Because Kānaka Maoli are animated spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually by our mo‘okū‘auhau, Hina is, therefore, a manifestation of her multiple intersecting and magnificent kūpuna, kumu a‘o, and haumāna. Thus, this oral history will beg the questions: (1) Who has (and continues to) hānai Hina, and (2) how is she a reflection of their hi‘ohi‘ona na‘auao¹ (intellectual attributes)?

This oral history, titled “Ahuwale ka Paeki‘i: He Lei Moana nō Ia,” looks toward the horizon and the paeki‘i cloud formation. As this paeki‘i—a row of clouds—makes its way toward land, it embraces and forms a lei around the pali laumania, a majestic and immaculate cliff. Each adorning cloud represents a hi‘ona of Hinaleimoana—her kūpuna, kumu a‘o, and haumāna. With this metaphor in mind, each section of this mo‘o‘ōlelo will hold the name of a pae ‘ōpua or cloud formation, featuring the ao paemāhū, an ode to Hina’s work around Nā Pōhaku Ola Kapaemāhū a Kapuni and a tribute to our pae māhū who made their way from Tahiti, bringing with them the legacy of their kūpuna to hānai our kūpuna.

These cloud formations hold intrinsic meaning and will pua from the horizon—each ao ‘ōpua a definitive element of Hina’s lei. Clouds often carry multiple meanings, both positive and negative, depending on their shape, color, and position in the sky. Honoring the complexity of our clouds and their divine messages, I have chosen to draw on specific cloud interpretations to illustrate the intricate layers of Hina’s own mo‘o‘ōlelo (oral history).

Mo‘o‘ōlelo is more than a methodology; it is a living entity—an extension of our kinship connection to the cosmos. Hawaiians understand that once something is said, it carries with it a life of its own. For example, both a prayer for life and a prayer for death are designed to reach their destination; it quite literally leaps—lele wale—toward something, human or other-than-human. Therefore, words must be spoken with care, even in their reduction through writing, as they still carry mana both seen and unseen. As Nēpia Mahuika (2019) shares:

Understanding oral history as complex in their form and not just the products of interview methods is critical to an accurate rendering of the indigenous past. In the creation of oral history sources there is an expectation in some native communities to value the relationship between spaces, stories, and generations, and to pay proper attention to contextualizing narratives within the nest of these relationships and their power dynamics. (pp. 168–169)

Therefore, mo'ō'ōlelo are embodied retellings nested within multiple converging pilina (relationships), which are accountable to each other in emergent ways. Hina is a product of her 'āina, her 'ohana, her community, and her intellectual descendants. Her mo'ō'ōlelo, then, is accountable to each of these layers and to you, the audience. Like a prayer, her words fly through these pages to be felt by you, oh reader, wherever you may be holding space.

From this conceptual frame, Hina and I discuss—through a series of discussions recorded on April 29, June 13, June 14, and July 6, 2024—the relationship between being Kanaka and māhū, as informed by her experience in conversation with those who came before her and those who continue to hānai her. Our interviews were recorded over the phone, while having tea and toast at Zippy's, or cruising around the island in the middle of the night. The interviews were transcribed by hand and left in their original order, starting where we left off last. Once the interviews were transcribed and set, Hina received a copy of the mo'ō'ōlelo for review. Final edits were made and were sent to Hina for a final review.

Furthermore, this mo'ō'ōlelo oscillates between English, Pidgin, and Hawaiian, which honors Hina's multilingual abilities. For conventional Hawaiian terms and phrases, I include diacritics. For olelo Kanaka (the Ni'ihau dialect), I omit diacritics altogether—a precedent laid out by Annette Kuuipolani Kanahēle Wong in her seminal work, *Mai Pukaiki Kula Maniania a Puuwai Aloha o ka Ohana*. Cited text from the archival source detailing cloud names and formations, *He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opua*, will also be left without diacritics to keep the source material as it was originally written.

As the editor of this oral history, I sought to minimize my voice throughout the typed script of the mo'ō'ōlelo. I chose this practice to honor the pedagogical traditions of our ancestors. Sometimes, silence is the clearest indicator of one's ability to absorb 'ike and learn the many nuances of being in the presence of someone who holds wisdom.

As this is a story of belonging in the face of a vicious world, we hope that you, oh reader, will glean from this mo'ō'ōlelo the courage to be as our ancestors were and as we are today: a people with great kuleana.

AO AKUA MA KA AKAU

The Ao Akua is a rainbow that comes in many shapes and colors. Sometimes this cloud presents itself as an Ao Luakalai (a rainbow around the sun with seven rings) or an Ao Onohi (a ring around the sun that resembles the coloring of a pearl). The Ao Akua, also called an Ao Makole, presents as a ring with a reddish hue. Separate from its manifestations around the sun, the Ao Akua also presents itself as a rainbow. If seen in the north, this was a good omen, one of prosperity.²

Hina: I cannot stress how important it is for me to specify: My identity is not māhū. That is not my identity; I am Kanaka. Māhū is an adjective that tells you just a wee little bit about my life. It helps to give shape and context to how I live this life. But it does not determine my life; it does not define my life. It is simply an adjective that is rather matter of fact, you know?

And, on one hand, yes, māhū is a very prominent placeholder because...I have learned to harness the mana of kāne and the mana of wāhine in one body. And I will call upon one or the other—or both, depending. And I'll move in and out—not physically—but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Because, depending on what I need to achieve, that's what I'm going to call out.

So anyway, I'm born on this island of O'ahu, moku 'o Kona, awāwa o Nu'uānu, ma Pu'unui. Noho au ma Pu'unui, pēlā ku'u 'āina hānau. So, as I always say, Pu'ulanihuli is at the top of Nu'uānu, and there are three bodies of water that flow to the sea of Māmala. They are Waikahalulu, Pūehuehu, and Nu'uānu—the three streams. So, I not only acknowledge the island, the moku, the valley, and the area of Pu'unui. Actually, the very specific name of where my house is right in the shadow of—well, not the shadow—but I can walk right up to the end of the road. It's a place called Mauiola.

So, the rains of Nu'uānu include the ua Līhau and ua Pōpōkapa. One of the names of the winds is Hālaulua, makani Hālaulua. And then the other makani is Pūla'ikanaka. Those are the rain and wind names of Nu'uānu. So, these all contribute to my identity.

Other prominent place names in my 'āina hānau are Ma'ema'e and Mauna'ala, which is right around the corner of Nu'uānu. Mauna'ala is my backyard; it's like my neighborhood. The cemeteries in my neighborhood are some of the oldest, like O'ahu Cemetery. O'ahu Cemetery has got all of the fricken worst colonizers. Get others, too, like James 'Aala Harbottle Boyde, who documented Ka Pae Māhū; they all over there.

And I'm a stone's throw from where I went to school, at the hill of Kapālama. So, another prominent place name where I grew up is 'Ālewa. From the heights of 'Ālewa—my father's sister still lives in 'Ālewa—I used to ride my bicycle all the way to the top of 'Ālewa. As a little kid, I rode my bicycle every day until the sunset, in Pu'unui all the way to 'Ālewa, on the daily.

Yeah, I was a holoholo child. Holoholo back! Mary, holoholo back! Every day, I would holoholo. I'd have to do my homework, and then I could go ride my bicycle. And then I would go meet my friend, and we would just hit it—up and down the road—all day—all times. My childhood friend, Sean Morris.

Anyway, I have my 'āina kūpuna. I believe, on my (Hawaiian) grandmother's side—my grandmother's family is originally from different parts of Hawai'i. From Kohala to Kona, to Hāna, Maui. I have family from all over. But by the time my grandmother's family is in Honolulu, they live right down the road from my dad's family. Back in the day before there was a freeway. You know the freeway that goes through town? Never have before. Never have because my grandma them's

land was condemned for the city to build the road of the freeway. But both my mom's side and my dad's side have roots to over there all in that same region, like Lanakila. My grandmother frequented Lanakila as a little girl.

Lanakila is down the road from KTS by Liliha Bakery. That's Lanakila. There's Lanakila Park but it was the name of the area, Lanakila. Lanakila is where Lanakila seniors meet. It's where they get the low-income offices. It's before you get to Kapālama. It's all called Lanakila.

And then there is Pu'ukamali'i where—when I think about my grandma's parents and at least my Hawaiian grandma—her parents are at Pu'ukamali'i in 'Ālewa. Otherwise known by another name, Kālaipōhaku. Because Kalaepōhaku is at Saint Louis, but Kālaipōhaku was also another name for Pu'ukamali'i. Yeah, where Natsunoya Tea House is. Over there. My Hawaiian grandma's parents and family are all over there buried. We have a whole plot. And then my dad's mom's parents (Chinese side) are on Nu'uānu Avenue at the cemetery over there below Mauna'ala, Nu'uānu Cemetery. So, O'ahu Cemetery has white walls around it, and Nu'uānu Cemetery no more walls, but they get hedges. And then, there's Mauna'ala. A famous place in songs, 'Aleloki, stay over there. Anyways, that's my 'āina hānau.

I do have family that spans the islands because my mom's dad's side of the family—the major root is Honokōhau, on Maui. My great-grandma's side is also Moloka'i from Honouliwai. And then, of course, I have my Kaua'i family. I literally have family all over.

Do you know the name Keawe'ōpala, a descendant of Alapa'inui? So, I trace to Alapa'inui as well. Well, there was more than one Alapa'i. So, the chief, known as Alapa'inui, is who I come from. Where and who I come from, this all defines my identity.

I was raised by my grandparents, all four of them. They all raised me. My *kung kung*—well actually proper reference to them in Chinese culture, *ah mah* and *ah pah*—is my dad's parents. I supposed to call them *ah mah* and *ah pah*. If it was my mom's parents, then they get the term *popo* and *kung kung*. *Popo* and *kung kung* are for your mother's side, not for your father's side. But my father is Chinese, but they decided to make it easy for us. But Chinese get all kine terms, like *kau kung*. My sister's side would call my dad *kau kung*. And then, I would call my grandfather's

brothers, *suk kung*, and his wife, *suk po*. I knew that much. They would always say, “We going go to *suk kung*’s house.” Yeah, you would have to know how to address them. Family relationships were very important. You had to know your place in the pecking order. Well, for me, it is because I grew up in the house of the matriarch.

So, as I was saying, on my dad’s parent’s side, my Chinese grandfather, Henry Hunlin Wong, was the one who named me Kwai-Kong. Both my grandparents knew their language. They were Chinese but born here, but they went back to the homeland. Yeah, because my great-grandpa—my grandmother’s father—had a second family in China. Not uncommon in those days. And, so, I told you that my Chinese grandmother’s parents are in Nu’uanu. My Chinese grandfather’s parents are in the Chinese cemetery in Mānoa. All the way up at the top. And then my mom’s mom’s parents are at Pu’ukamali’i in Ālewa. And then my mom’s dad’s parents—great-grandma—is in Honokōhau, and my great-grandpa is in Wailuku. Don’t ask me why.

I told my mother: When it was time for her to go, I going take her ashes, I going scatter her, half at Ālewa with my great-grandparents over there, and the other half with my great-grandmother in Honokōhau. I going make two portals.

My parents were a part of my life, too, as a kid. Yeah, but my dad was always working, and my mom was always working. If anyone, my father was more of a... he showed more civility. He was the one consistently who showed up for my school things: piano recitals, hula performances, Concert Glee Club, canoe paddling; my father would come. My mother, not too much. My mother was the one to take me doctors when I got sick; she tended to me when I was sick, she taught me how to tend to myself. My mom forced me to be independent.

So, my parents were there for me, but they were there for me in different ways. My mom would be the one to pick me up from my grandma’s house and bring me to her parents’ house and then bring me back to my dad’s parents’ house. On occasions, like on weekends, I would go stay with my mom, until...oh, I forgot what year in my elementary school, and then I would go visit my mom occasionally. Because I think by the fifth grade, my mom remarried again. And she married a haole guy, and I didn’t like him. I used to *loathe* him. Just because he was your stereotypical haole: all loud and obnoxious. Anyway, I would see my mom. I did spend time with my mother, and my father too. But the more profound life lessons

and grooming, nurturing, and guiding were all my grandparents. All four of them were born between 1900 and 1920. So, what can I say? That's why I think the way I do; that's why I feel the way I do, you know? I literally see the world through their eyes.

All the things they taught me are what make me who I am today. Although my mother and father have their own influence on my life; they have their own mark, and I acknowledge it. My grandparents are my foundation. My grandparents are my everything.

So, on my dad's side, I was the youngest of my dad's children and the youngest grandchild; the youngest of my dad's four *acknowledged* children and the youngest of seven grandchildren. Therefore, I ended up growing up in the house of the matriarch on my Chinese side because my grandmother was the oldest of all her siblings. So, whenever it came to kowtowing and bowing down to the oldest in the family, my grandmother was it. In that regard, my Chinese grandmother, I did call her *popo*—even though I came to know later in life I was supposed to call her *ah mah*. You know, like if you talk to Chinese speakers, they would expect me to call her *ah mah* because that's my father's mom. But anyway, she becomes my pu'uhonua.

KE AO ONOHI

The Ao Onohi presents itself as a brilliant ring around the moon or sun that resembles the coloring of a pearl. This is a good omen, one predicting a calm and easygoing day. This cloud falls into the Ao Akua category.³

Hina: So, my grandfather, my *kung kung*, dies in 1977. He was the one who gave me my name, which I hated for the longest time because kids were evil to me, and they used to tease me. They used to tease me, “Kwai-Kong-Dingalong,” “King Kong-Dingalong,” blah, blah, blah. They would say all kinds of dumb shit. I didn't realize how powerful the name he gave me was. He definitely gave me a strong

boy name. Cuz when I tell it to Chinese speakers, they go, “Oh, Kwai-Kong, Kwai-Kong, very strong name. You have boy name, but you a girl.” And I laugh and say, “Because I was born boy, I’m girl now.” And they go, “Oh, okay, okay.”

Kwai-Kong means precious brilliance or precious light, as in the luminescence of the moon. Bright, bright, bright like a light. And that’s how I got Hina. Because my Hawaiian grandparents, they figured since my Chinese side of the family—since *they* gave me a name at birth—they didn’t have to give me a Hawaiian name because that was enough. And I was boo-hoo about it for a long time; I lamented that they didn’t give me a name. Even when I was in high school, I asked my Hawaiian grandparents, but they said, “No, your Chinese name is enough.” And I was like, “No, I am supposed to have a Hawaiian name, too!” But little did I know that Kwai-Kong would be the utmost empowering name, and I am forever grateful to my grandfather for giving me that name.

And so, I chose Hina, goddess of the moon. My *popo* always would tell me, “Your name means precious brilliance, like the light of the moon.” So, I took that, and I said, well, the goddess of the moon is Hina. And that name goes two ways: That name has to lift me up, strengthen me, protect me, and push me forward. And I, too, have the responsibility to live up to the name, honor the name, and carry the name. It’s not just one way. It cannot be one way. I have to *mālama* the name and uphold it, and the name going take care of me and carry me. So Hinailemoana came to be. Moana is my mother’s name. My mother’s name is Georgette Moana Mathias. My father’s name is Henry Dai Yau Wong. I told you my Chinese grandfather’s name is Henry Koon Lim Wong, and my grandmother’s name is Edith Kam Que Luke (Look). They went with all the English orthography. Then, my mom’s parents: Mona Kananiokalani Kealoha, and her father is John Furtado Mathias.

On my father’s side, being the youngest, I was my grandmother’s tail and my grandmother’s shadow. And from a young age, I was taught to do whatever she needed. So, I was the one who became her helper. I would cook and clean. My grandmother had a stroke earlier on in years, I think between the ages of forty and fifty. And she recovered enough such that she could be mostly independent. And you know, she just had some residual aphasia, but it was minor. So, my grandmother would take the bus, go downtown, do her hair, and go shopping in Chinatown. And when we would go places with her lady friends, I was always the one to go with her and help her.

When her sibling would come pick her up, I was always the one to go with her and be with her. As she grew older, I was charged with the responsibility, as I always had from small time. I did the laundry and sweeping in the house. I was expected to do the household duties. And as my grandmother needed care, I became her caregiver. I eventually became the one to bathe her, do her hair, massage her legs every day, and make her food.

At the age when sometimes she couldn't make it to the bathroom from her bed at night—number one, number two, there she was, you know—I was the one to have to clean it up. Not my dad, but me. And I was responsible for the house. So, my father was very liberal with me. I had great, great freedom to just be me. When I learned how to drive, my mom bought me my first car after freshman-year summer. And then, by sophomore-year start, my dad bought me my second car, and I took myself to school. I would have to get ready and be responsible to get there on time. You know, fifteen, sixteen years old, get my happy ass to school and do what I was supposed to do, come home in time. Life was really great because I was raised to be a young adult from early on.

So, I don't remember ever having a western childhood, you know, like "age appropriate." There was no such thing as age appropriate; I really have a great disdain for age appropriate because I think that it's very western American-European kine style—age appropriate. Whereas in a Chinese household and a Hawaiian household, I hear everything, and I see everything, and my place is not to *say* anything—unless I'm spoken to. But I was the one who was responsible to do everything, so when it came time to do things like booking my grandmother's appointments, eventually, I had to do it. You know? And I was young. If I thought I was going someplace, ain't going nowhere unless that shit was done. My dad would say, "Well, if you think you going someplace, you better work it out with your grandmother, and you better make sure that she is taken care of first before you going anywhere, brah." That's what he used to tell me: "brah." But as soon as I done, I can go. So, when I would waltz in at sixteen years old at two, three o'clock in the morning, my father no tell me shit. One time, he just looked at me and said, "What? You don't know what time to come home, damnit?" But I not doing nothing, I just going holoholo and spend time with my friend.

You know, my father...my father no like talk about his parents I think because *he* know he old and you know, it's sobering to think that he going go, ah? He will eventually go; my father is not one to show emotions at funerals. He never got to say goodbye to my grandmother, and so it was hard on him. I was the one there

with my grandmother when she died, not my dad. It was a very hard thing for my father. So, he doesn't handle certain stuff. My dad is not one to like confrontation. Keeping the Chinese peace of the house means when it comes to an elder, shut your mouth. Even if I don't agree, shut it. My dad would tell me real blunt, like, "You will not say anything to cause friction, you got that?" and then he would walk away. Yep. When I was hurt or mad, suck it up. There is no such thing as going "squawk, squawk, squawk."

KE AO MANU

The Ao Manu is a cloud formation that is shaped like a bird possessing all the attributes of the avian: a head, tail, and wings. This cloud formation is a good omen, a sign of calming days to come. If the tail spreads out and rests over an accumulation of many clouds, this is a sign that the lives of a chief, lesser chiefs and the common people are peaceful and just. If the mouth of the Ao Manu is facing either the east or the west, this is a sign of prosperity; that one could waste their food because of the riches that will follow.⁴

Hina: I was given much duty and much responsibility on my dad's side, the Chinese side. And on my Hawaiian grandma's side, I was the kapu child—not the punahele, not the pailani—the kapu child.⁵ From as far back as I can remember, my Hawaiian grandmother—I think I was in preschool—and she would come behind me, and I'd sit in front of her on her lap, and she would read to me whatever book was in front of us. And then she would get those traceable writing books, and she would help me to trace my hand over the alphabet, and letters, and writing. She put her 'ōlelo over me; she set my path.

She said, "You have to study hard because one day you are going to become a teacher like my sister." And so, lo and behold, years later, that was the lot of me. That became my calling. My grandmother put that 'ōlelo on top of me, and that was it. And you know she instilled within me the passion. She gave me that pilot light for all things Hawaiian. She would always say, "That's not Hawaiian way;

this is Hawaiian way.” You know, in a world that was ever-changing, she would always point out that certain things was very haole style, and she would teach me that Hawaiian way was *this* and Hawaiian way was *that*. So, it was all about these compass pointers pointing me in the way of what was what, you know? My grandmother lit that fire.

My grandmother was staunch; my grandmother was afraid of no one; my grandmother was invincible to me; and my grandmother was a true superwoman. She had a bedroom, and she never slept in it. And she would always have me sleep on her bed. My grandmother always slept in the living room. I was always the one to sleep on her bed, and her bed was three mattresses high, not two. So, she would always go to bed, she made sure that I had plenty pillows and blankets, and I was always warm because Mililani is always cold, yeah? She would sit on the ground and talk to me until I fell asleep. She would just mo’olelo, mo’olelo, mo’olelo about all kinds until I fell asleep.

Strange, yeah? Because at my Chinese house I would prefer to sleep in the living room, but at my grandma’s house—my Hawaiian grandma’s house—my grandfather had the master bedroom, my grandmother slept in the living room, and I slept in her bedroom. And in the morning, I would hear her get up because I could hear her wherever she was in the house. And I know she was sweeping up leaves around the house. She picked up the rubbish every day, and then she would cycle round in the yard and then she would go outside in the street, sweep the street, sweep the garage, sweep the sidewalks. And then she would come do all the yard work on a daily. And I would hear her, and I would say, “Grandma,” and then she’d say, “Oh, wake up? Okay, I’m coming,” and then she made breakfast. My breakfast was made, table-set tea was hot, oatmeal was served or whatever else. And it was like that for every meal. Everything was set for me, and I had to do nothing. I was the kapu child. And then when I was done, she would send me to go sit down on the couch, and she would say, “Okay, you go sit down.” But I don’t sit down and play around; I just sit nicely on the couch and watch TV.

And then when my grandma was ready, sometimes she would do laundry, and I would walk around with her, and she would talk to me and tell me how to do laundry, and how to hang it up, what to do and everything. I have vivid memories of hanging on to her pants while walking outside and just standing there, and she didn’t even make me hold clothes. She just had me watch as she would talk to me.

And then we would come inside, she would go get ready, and I would watch her get ready, and then while she was walking around in the house, she says, “Okay, now we’re going to go over here, and we’re gonna do this and do that, and when we go over here remember we have to do this and do that and this and that.”

So, she was always preparing me. Whenever we went someplace, I already knew what was going to happen, and I knew what I was supposed to do because she explained it. And when we were around other people, my job was to be seen and not heard unless they talk to me, you know? And she would always introduce me—you know Hawaiians in those days, they didn’t know proper Chinese words, right? So, they thought *ham sup* meant *māhū*. When it really was supposed to be pronounced *han sau*; it means itchy hand. You know how some *māhū* can be really touchy? They like to touch. That’s why they would call *ham sup*. She would introduce me as her little *ham sup* grandchild, “Oh, this is my *ham sup*.” Clocking my tea all over the place.⁶ She would take me with her to the hairdresser; she take me everywhere. And I would sit next to her in the car while she was driving, and she would say, “Okay, if you like go over here, you take this road, and you go over here, you take this road.” She was just always talking to me, always. So, by the time I could drive, honey, I knew where to go. I was fifteen years old, driving around on my own, and I knew where to go. So, you know. Lessons in life not taught in school. But yeah, I miss my grandma. I miss all of them.

The legacy of my grandfather in my life, my Hawaiian grandfather, is he was a staunch man of prayer—pule. So, the fact that I get asked to do *pule* all the time...it’s no surprise to me. It’s not a surprise to me that it’s the path that my life has taken. People don’t ask me to hula as much, but they ask me to come and pray. Whenever my grandfather would pray—even though he would pray in the Mormon Church style—but he prayed long time, ah? You know he had to bless everybody and everything. That’s my earliest understanding of prayer. By the time I get to the Ni‘ihau church and the Tongan church, easy, yeah? If you ever hear me pray in English, I sound like my grandfather. I would pray like my grandfather. You know when people say, “Our most kind and gracious heavenly Father, we bow our heads humbly before Thee this evening, and we offer our gratitude and appreciation for the gift of Thy bounty and all that Thou bestoweth upon us.” I know how to talk like that because of my grandfather.

My Hawaiian grandmother is the source of my passion and my commitment and dedication to things Hawaiian and also being staunch about things. Don't go to certain places with my grandmother because she wouldn't back down for a thing. My grandmother taught me what it was like to raise her family in prejudicial America through the time of segregation. My grandmother knew that life and despised it, and it scarred her. And so, every time we would go someplace...she felt that people took too long because we were too brown in serving us or in helping us. Or you know, if she felt any sort of way because we was brown and, like, other people was getting served before us or we had to wait longer, or the treatment was not equal...oh, my grandmother was nasty, she was hostile. She wouldn't hesitate to call somebody out, either.

I remember somebody was driving the wrong way down the road. We were at the commissary, and my grandma was driving the way the arrows said, and somebody came driving the wrong way, and my grandmother just stopped right in the middle, put the car in park, and threw up her hands like, "What!?" She made with her head, "What!?" and I was like, "Oh, Grandma," and she was like, "Nah, nah, nah, nah, this dummy, he not even going the right way." And she refused to pull on the side because she could have. She refused to move on the side. It was some American, and she didn't back up; she didn't say nothing. The guy kept beeping and beeping. So, we finally got to the line going into the commissary, and my grandmother go look at him and said, "What!?"

My grandmother was afraid of no one. My grandmother was the one saying "dumb haole," and my grandfather would cringe. My grandfather would cringe, and he would say, "I hate when your grandmother does that." Because my grandfather got along with haole people. My grandmother hated them. She did not like foreigners. In fact, my mom's ex-husband was not allowed in her house. My auntie's husband was not allowed in her house for many years. Only when my grandmother got old did my auntie's husband come in the house. And my auntie's husband was a nice man. Yeah, haole people was not allowed in my grandmother's house. Don't even think about it.

Haole neighbors would move in next door and then come by, "Oh, Mrs. Mathias, can we borrow a cup of sugar or a cup of flour?" Grandma would say, "What do I look like, the store? No! Get outta here!" And then the neighbor, they get dogs,

yeah, the haole people. They get dogs, and the dog come in our yard and shit in our yard; my grandmother fly it back at their door. And then one time, somebody came to the door and dared to talk to my grandmother about something. And my grandmother was going at it, yelling at him, "Get outta here, goddamn haole, what the fuck you think this is, ah? You know you people, you know your people move here, and you think that you own the goddamn world. We Hawaiian, this is our island." Oh, my grandmother, I can feel her. That's why, where you think people think I got that from? Oh, and my grandfather would cringe. And he dared not to say anything to my grandmother about it. "You shut your mouth, John, get outta here too. You, you like go live with them, live with them!" One time, she wen throw the brick at him, barely missed his head. Boom, he wen duck.

My grandmother knew how to fix a car. My grandmother would lift all the furniture when my grandfather was gone. My grandfather would run away. I think he wen piss off my grandmother, so he would run home to Maui and go stay with his father until my grandmother was good and ready. For three weeks—he would go three weeks, one month—and then he would come back. And my grandmother was over there, she go paint the house while he was gone. I'll never forget. Yeah, my grandmother, she put the plastic down, she go get the paint, move all the furniture, paint. My grandmother, she hit it. You could eat off her floors; was always clean. She would mop the floors every day with Mr. Clean. And you know the kind where she go over multiple times? You know when the bathroom is dry and there is not one evidence of soapy grime, body grime, not one evidence of mold or mildew or anything like that? Yeah, no evidence of toothpaste in the sink; there was nothing. Honey, that house was spotless. My mother had the same kine style, too. That's why I irritate my mother with my ways. I'm like my father; I am low maintenance. You know, the kind "leave 'em over there, it's not bothering anyone, leave 'em there."



Hinaleimoana Portrait
ILLUSTRATION BY KAIMINAAUAO KAHIIKINA

KE AO PAEMAHU I HOOWILI IA

The Ao Paemahu is a very long cloud which resembles the Ao Opua—the only difference being that this cloud is not accompanied by many other clouds. It is accompanied by only two to five other clouds of a similar shape. If this cloud formation is entangled with another cloud while another cloud rests below, this is a sign of problems within the family and home. Similarly, if the Ao Paemahu oscillates and turns, this is a sign that it is a day to ask for forgiveness to the god and 'aumakua for past wrongdoings and problems, lest fatal consequences befall.⁷

I took care of my dad's mom until she died. I was there until she took her last breath. I was the only one there; I was the only one. And...I remember, she asked me...I read her scripture. By this time, she was in the hospital for two days, and I didn't know what was going on with her. And I called my father, he was in Vegas, and I told him, "I don't care what you have to do, get a flight home now. I know there are flights leaving there every day; get home now. I need you. I want you home." And then my brother gets on the phone afterward and says, "Oh no worry, Dad, we get 'em." I was so angry at my brother for doing that. I thought to myself: *Don't go against me. I am the one who lives with him, not you.* If my dad had listened to me and not my brother, my dad would have been able to say goodbye to my grandmother. Literally, my father came home on a Monday afternoon, or mid-morning, like eleven o'clock. My grandmother passed between six or seven in the morning.

I remember that she couldn't have anything to drink. I gave her ice, and then I read her scripture, and I massaged her feet. And then she said, "Take Paluka home," my boyfriend at the time. His name is David, but she called him Paluka; "bloke" in Hawaiian. She said, "Take him home, tell him go rest." And when I came back—it wasn't long—and then my grandmother went into cardiac arrest and she passed. She was eighty-six. And I was there by myself.

I told her, I said, "You have to get well because you got to come home," and she said, "Yeah, I go home with you." I used to—every time my grandmother would go on a trip and later on in life—I would gather the tiare flowers and I would just put it all around her. I would put it by the phone, by her chair, just the place where

she would see it. I did it all the time. But when my grandmother took ill the week that she died, it was cold; there were no flowers anymore. But the day after she passed—Tuesday—I went outside and there were all tiare on the tree. And then, the hala keys, they had not sprouted for ages. But when I went into the yard, the hala was sprouted, and it's a hīnano tree; it's a hala hīnano.

I know my grandmother saved me from domestic violence from my boyfriend. Literally, she saved me spiritually; she got in between me and him. Because we were arguing in the car and he tried to hit me, but he's right next to me, how can he miss? But my grandmother stepped between me and it's like his hand went into the veil. His hand went into the veil and did not connect with my face. And then he got out and he tried to rip the car door off the car. I could barely close the door after that. And then I had to go home and tell my father that *that's* what happened. But she had passed already, and I was struggling. I used to leave a plate of food for her every day for a year. And I used to light a candle for her every day. I remember now.

And, how do I say? Six months prior, my Hawaiian grandfather passed, and six months later, my Chinese grandmother passed. And then, I was full swing. My Hawaiian grandfather passed, and my Hawaiian grandmother already had Alzheimer's. In fact, he had passed—he had got stuck in the shower trying to come out of the shower. My Hawaiian grandmother had dementia, so she couldn't help him. My mother was the one who had to go find my grandfather and, you know, putting him on the bed and all this kine stuff. So, I was going back and forth helping my mom and coming back to my Chinese grandmother. Six months later, my Chinese grandmother passed, so I would go much more often to help my mom take care of my grandma, my Hawaiian grandma. And I ended up moving up there full-time by 2000 because my dad moved out, and we were going to renovate the house. He was going to sell the house, and me and him go our separate ways. I guess he knew that I wanted to move back to the house, so he didn't sell it. And so, the house went under renovation for a long time. So, long time we weren't there. I moved to Mililani to help my mom take care of my grandma—who passed in 2005, I think. My grandmother waited until I left, and she passed. And I flew to Kaua'i to go—I was helping to run the Ni'ihau school, Ke Kula Aupuni Niihau a Kahelelani Aloha. I was helping to run it at that time. And the day I flew...she died the next day. I was the first one my grandmother forgot in her dementia state.

But...I was given my name, which empowered me and determined my fate. It was written in the stars. My grandfather named me and my other grandfather gave me the power of prayer and to understand that. My Hawaiian grandmother taught me to be staunch and fierce and to fight and stand up for things Hawaiian. And my *popo*, my Chinese grandmother, was the kindest soul you ever met. Spoke not a bad word about anyone and always gave to people. My *popo* always forgave people. She was a true Christian woman. She grew up Buddhist, but she embraced Christianity over the course of her years. You know all the ideal Christian ways of being loving? That was my *popo*. She would never carry over insignificant foolish things. Her spiritual life also served as a great beacon and an example for me to follow. My *popo* was devout in her ritual of prayer, morning and night, without fail. I was not to bother her until her prayer finished, and her prayer was always silent, unwavering, and of staunch faith and devotion.

KE AO HUAKAI

The Ao Huakai is a sign of traveling chiefs. If the cloud formation appears as rows of clouds moving from east to west, it is a sign that the chiefs from the east are preparing to tour around on that day. The same goes from the west. If the cloud formation is moving from west to east, leeward chiefs are touring the island. If this cloud formation takes the shape of a person wielding something in their hand, this is a sign that war travels are underway.⁸

Anyway, that was my childhood. My grandparents were my pu'uhonua; they were my everything. They were the ones through whom I was acculturated. That's why I struggled when I went to Kamehameha. When I went to Kamehameha, I remember taking seventh-grade Hawaiian Culture class. And I struggled. I couldn't even count to ten. Because I didn't understand it. I was not comfortable. Kids bullied me because I was shy and I was very Asian. Now, when I look back, I

figured out I was more Asian than Hawaiian. I was acculturated to a different vibe. I wasn't able to rely on an excessive amount of Hawaiian because it was more of an internal thing than knowing how to demonstratively be Hawaiian. And I didn't like things they liked.

Then, it all changed when I got up to freshman year. My two friends—one who was a junior and one who was a senior—were standing in front of the Lili'uokalani dance room, which at the time was our Concert Glee choral room, and it was by Bishop Hall. They were speaking Hawaiian to each other, and I was amazed; I was floored. And I wondered, *why wasn't I speaking this language?* I said, "Wow, this is Hawaiian; I want to speak like that!" So, I signed up for class my sophomore year. I signed up for the Concert Glee Club, and I tried out for dance. You know, I was just being called to it all in one year. It was the Concert Glee Club, performing arts, canoe paddling, and football that really gave me something to want. So, on the cultural side, in the Concert Glee Club, we sang mostly Hawaiian songs but other music, too. And we wore aloha attire and we wore lei. We'd go out and present it to the public. And it allowed me to bond with a smaller group of people while singing. By my junior, senior year, there was a more definitive and more marked pronunciation on the case of the performing arts and we traveled.

So, sophomore year was my stupid year because I wanted to belong. It was Mr. Jan Becket's class, English. I cheated with my classmate, and we sat next to each other. I didn't study for the test, I just copied the answers off of her. We got all the same wrong. The teacher caught us because he looked at our test scores and analyzed it and was like, "These two are cheating." So he turned us in. I cut class that same day, as he left the class. He went to the teacher's room for a minute. Then, I was caught driving on campus during school hours because I cut his class.

How was I caught? Because I waved to the unit administrator going by. Real dumb. Trying to be Auntie Aloha, going, "Bye!" So, I got called into the principal's office, unit 9–10 administrative office. Both my parents were there. Ended up going home with my father. My father shook his head and said, "Don't you think if you going to lie and do this kind of shit, that you should be able to get away with it? Damn, what the hell is wrong with you?" My father just shook his head because I put myself on conduct probation. But it meant that I couldn't go perform with the Concert Glee Club, and it meant that they were going to pass me over for the trip to Australia that year. But because I was their 'opihi, they felt bad for me. So, they let me learn on the sly. And then the trip was going to be after all of it had passed. We went to Australia for the fifth Festival of the Pacific Arts.

So, Concert Glee Club, we had Mr. Dale Noble, and Les Ceballos, and then sometimes we would have Kalua Leong. We had a man named Arnold Peneueta, and we had Kyle Mory. Sometimes, Randie Fong taught us choral numbers. For chant and dance, it was Randie Fong, Holoua Stender, Wayne Chang, and Nu'ulani Atkins. They were the Fantastic Four because of their collaborations. They all brought something to the table. They took us all over the world. During my time in school, I went to the fifth Festival of the Pacific Arts; I went to Fukuoka, Japan; I went to Madison, Wisconsin; and Aotearoa—all in my high-school time, including outer islands. We were treated very independently. We had to be there. It was a gig. Life was different back then. You could be sixteen and get yourself to a gig at five o'clock in the morning.

When I graduated, I became an assistant to my teachers. They took me to Tahiti and Rarotonga. I was relied on to teach the incoming underclassmen so that Randie and Holo could do other things. I trained them: Snowbird, Kaleo Trinidad—I taught them the main dances that they needed to do as they were coming up. At the same time, I had gotten into Robert Cazimero's hālau, Hālau Nā Kamalei o Līlīehua. It caused a bit of controversy and conflict because I was told that I took on the air of the hālau and that I was carrying myself like I was better than everyone else. The (Kamehameha) kumu never like me go. They had to rip me a new one before I was allowed to go. Again, they were benevolent and kind. Because Randie had to take me down, but I deserved it; I thought I was too good and better than everyone else—nothing like a good ass-whipping to humble you. But then again, he was the one who always did it.

When we went to Aotearoa my senior year, it was my brilliant idea to get all of us alaka'i to go ride mopeds on a high-school trip—a motorized vehicle in a foreign country. One of our alaka'i ate it. Her knees, she was all scrape up, all bleeding, blood oozing. And they forced her to get out there and perform. Randie ripped me a new one! I just thought, *why not rent a moped?* I was always independent. When I was in eighth grade, I was catching bus to Hale'iwa all by myself. When I was in fifth grade, I'd ride my bike all the way to Waikīkī.

And then eventually, when I got to be seventeen, at the same time, I was brought into two families, Ni'ihau and Tonga. Because of the Festival of Pacific Arts, yeah? At the Festival of Pacific Arts, they showed me that Polynesian was where it was at. Being Hawaiian was being Polynesian. Being Polynesian was everything. And so, during the fifth festival, I was a sophomore and going to be a junior. And the sixth

festival, I was graduated two years. So, I participated in both. And I remember that I cut my hair for the last time. I had to cut my hair to go on the trip with the Hawaiian delegation because it was with Kamehameha. I met my Ni‘ihau ‘ohana at the same time.

Well, here on O‘ahu, when I would finish my kuleana, I would go with my Tongan ‘ohana. My Tongan’s mom’s name is Mele Kaipā ‘Ofa Maka. Through her, I have my sister Liyakilelei‘aehā‘elekitonga Maka. Through them, I experienced Tongan life here in Hawai‘i and in Tonga over many years and many adventures—through birthdays, funerals, weddings, and other celebrations, along with a life in the Siasi o Tonga Tauataina (The Free Church of Tonga). Like my Ni‘ihau family expects of me, so too did my Tongan family expect of me to think and behave in a manner commensurate with being Tongan. Through my Tongan life, I learned the understanding of ‘ofa fonua: the equivalent to the Hawaiian term, aloha ‘āina. In my life, there is no greater Pacific Island nation that does national pride like Tonga, and it is Tonga that inspires me to be an aloha ‘āina patriot and Hawaiian nationalist in the way that I understand it. Through my Tongan life, the mele “Kū Ha‘aheo E Ku‘u Hawai‘i” and other compositions are born. And through my countless visits to the South Pacific, my understanding of how to be Kanaka was enhanced and reinforced—as it is the fundamental culture of all Pacific Island society.

Then, when I wasn’t here on O‘ahu, I would fly to Kaua‘i and spend time with my Ni‘ihau ‘ohana for birthdays, funerals, you name it. Both sides: birthdays, funerals, weddings, all family things, I was there. So, I was expected to speak, and think, and do as Ni‘ihau and as Tongan. So, I was a ho‘okama of two sides. He keiki ho‘okama. I used to say hānai, but now I know it’s more appropriate to say ho‘okama. To adopt and care for, but hānai is from when you were baby, like my grandparents. Ua hānai ‘ia, ua mālama ‘ia. But there was no words ever said. I was taken back and forth between my grandparents. It was never formalized through speech. It was just the way of life.

My Ni‘ihau parents: Lete and Samuela. Linda Kawahine Kaulana Kanahale; ‘o Mariet Samuela Kaaumoana. They were my Ni‘ihau parents. And my Ni‘ihau grandparents are Tuulei Kaaumoana and Tuhina Kaaumoana. And then Kaulana Kanahale and Misiala Kanahale—Misiala or Mikiala Kanahale. All of them were born on Ni‘ihau. I was still as kāne when I met them. Remember, I was seventeen. I transitioned in front of them. Papa was okay; Mama was not. In both instances, my Ni‘ihau mom and my real mom were not having it. My mother was not receptive. And my Ni‘ihau mom was “eww.” They both were “eww.” Cause they both was

feeling very Christian. My mother eventually came to terms: my real mom, my birth mom. Yeah, my Ni'ihau mom, over the years, mellowed out about it. But at the onset, she was like, "I-u, pehea keia ano keiki? O oe ea, o oe no kena, oe he mahu, he mahu, i-u." And it was her husband that liked me. He was the one who was like, "Tahea ia Puni, hele mai," because he always wanted me to dance hula. My nickname was Puni from high school. I had different names. When I was a sophomore in Hawaiian language class, I never know I never have one Hawaiian name. So, I was like, what name I going use? There was this Hawaiian guy I thought was handsome. He was a senior at the time. His name was Ku'iokalani. So, I took his name. I never ask him. I said, *okay, my name is Ku'iokalani*. That was my name in sophomore year, my name in Hawaiian language class.

Junior year, I had speech class, and we had to come up with a speech. I was using Hawaiian language as the basis of one speech. I said, "Okay, the Hawaiian word of the day is puni. Don't puni me." And so, my classmate heard it, and the word stuck with him, so every time he would call, he would go, "Puni!" And they would all do that, "Puni." Even the football boys. When I was in school and because I was on the football team; I was the manager of the football team. And so, I used to take care of everybody else. You know the dummies, the sleds? Like the big heavy iron sled with the two-man, three-man, five-man sled, and was heavy iron and had the stuffed dummies on 'em. I used to push them all over the field by myself. I'd fucking run dat ting. Then, I would run with them, train with them, and set up the field for the practices.

KE AO POLOKEA

The Ao Polokea appears as a long black cloud that rests in the embrace of a hollowed-out, long, white cloud. If the cloud is hollowed out in the middle, it is a sign that the roads to the lands Ulunui, Melemele, and Hakalauai are open. This cloud formation tells of a time of a chief's great generosity toward their people. It is a time where negative thoughts are dissolved.⁹

I used to be the right hand to the head coach. His name is Blaine Gaison from the Atlanta Falcons. Wonderful man. He's a very dedicated and driven man. He was my role model for leadership—him and my canoe coaches, especially Wallace Wong. He ended up doing navigation and voyaging for Hōkūle'a. He's one of the captains, too. In football, Coach Blaine Gaison taught me by example and gave me unconditional acceptance.

They all called me Collin back then: "Collin! Collin!" And then I'd have to come running into the field. I'd have to come with his plays. He would do all his plays on the flip cards. And then he would tell me, "Collin!" and I'd have to blast the horn or blow the whistle. Every time they do different drills, and they shift, and different exercises and they shift, that's me on the horn. And then I'd run in, and I'd be there with them for all of his pep talks. I was on the field for all of his games. I was there with him. I heard the things he said, and I heard how he lifted up the men of the team. He would instruct on character education. He would say, "The sport is about many things, and you have to conduct yourself as a winner. Whether you win or lose the game is irrelevant, but you must conduct yourself as a winner. And you walk head high and head tall. Don't put your head down. Think about the way you treat each other and the way you speak. You don't speak disparagingly. You always come back right after the game. Come back the next day and work harder. If you didn't win, work harder." He would never let anyone down. He would always say, "One knee, one knee, gentleman, one knee." Then, everyone would sit and listen to him, and nobody talked when he was talking. He commanded the space. I took that, and I used it for my upbringing.

My father showed me what it was like to be a different kind of man. But male role models—like forward, deliberate, machismo role models—were Blaine Gaison and Wallace Wong. And, of course, my father was more of an example of how to be a father and how to be a parent—and how to care as a father because my father was a provider. So, my expectation of what is a good man, I can look at my dad, I can look at my grandfathers, I can look at those two men. If I had to choose my one hand, it's those five.

Like I said, my most prominent (who) stand out above the rest is Blaine Gaison and Wallace Wong. I can still hear them in my ear as an adult today. When I am tired, and I don't want to walk upstairs or walk the hill and keep going, and gotta persevere and stick it out...and when I gotta tough it out, I hear them. Like they literally come ringing in my ears. Blaine was always driven. He would push, he

would run, he was like a machine on the field. And he taught us what it meant to work hard and to work for what you wanted. And he taught everybody that success didn't come without hard work. And Wallace Wong, he would always be on top of me. I always sat four or five. He would pull up his kayak next to the canoe and be like "Come on, Wong! Come on, Wong! Head up, Wong! Arm up, Wong! Chin up! Eyes in the boat! Let's go, Wong! Come on, Wong! Push it, Wong!" He would call me Wong. Because I was Wong and he was Wong. Oh my god! He pushed me to no end, "Push it! Push it! Push it! Let's go! Push it some more! You not tired, don't be tired. Nobody tired in the boat!" When I'm exhausted and tired and can't go anymore, I hear them. They echo in my head like no other. On a daily, when I feel that way and when I am tired, I feel 'em. Their influence is etched into me forever. That's why when my kâne side kicks in for certain things, it's *that kine* kâne. You know? Like, suck it up!

KE AO KAKAULA

The Ao Kakaula has both positive and negative meanings. If the clouds in this formation slant to one side, then this is a sign of a good day to travel. One will be greeted by guests and blessings without trouble. If the cloud oscillates slanting from one side to the other, this is a sign of misfortune should one wish to travel. One might be forgotten on their travel, left behind for dead.¹⁰

After I graduated, I went straight to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I became a TA for the Ethnic Studies Hawaiian program, and that's where I met my mentor and best friend Kaua'i Iki Olores, Dana Kaua'i Iki Olores. Dana was the one who gave me the courage to transition. She'd say, "Oh yeah, ti, no cut dat hea, you going be beautiful, I can see it already." So, I let my hair grow. Kaua'i Iki taught me how to be me and embrace māhū. Kaua'i Iki was the one who introduced me to the world of marches, protests, rallies, you name it—all the activism in the Hawaiian

community—it was because she would take me. And we would be present to offer the pule. Kaua‘i Iki would always tell me, “Oh girl, we gotta go pule; we have to chant and invoke Kū, Kāne, and Kanaloa.” So, we would go gather the kino lau. Eighteen years old, going into the forest, gotta gather ‘ie‘ie, gotta gather lā‘ī, gotta gather ‘ōhi‘a. She taught me everything, including how to gather kauna‘oa and make lei. Kaua‘i Iki could make any lei, any kine style, any kine flower. She would walk out there and turn rubbish into a lush adornment for your body. Just like that! Literally just like that! Weeds! You know the cat tail-looking weeds? Just boom, boom, boom, boom. Iconic. She paid her way through college by making and selling lei. She was from Kekaha, Kaua‘i. She was a kumu hula. We both graduated from kumu hula Kimo Keaulana Alama’s first graduating class. She set up the first mähū hālau for us to dance.

So, we hadn’t seen each other in years, and our relationship fell on rough times. When I got the word that she wasn’t doing too good health-wise, my other tita said, “Come on girl, we gotta go, we gotta see her.” So, I said, “Okay, you know what, I got this mana‘o that I had to go make these lei.” Kaua‘i Iki taught me how to make tiare, laua‘e, and bird of paradise, so I wen go make. I went to go gather it all myself, and string it all myself, and then I went over there. And then she said, “Oh, tita, you heard me. I wanted to have these lei, and I kept seeing you. I put it out to the world that I would have these lei.” And there it was; I showed up with it. We was crying, crying, crying. Then she told me, “I will always love you, my sister. Through the hula, because hula is about life and hula is about things that give life; through the hula, we learn how to forgive others, too. Because to not forgive is to not honor life itself.” She taught me that lesson. She taught me how to sew clothes and make lei, and it was always her on the ipu heke and me dancing. She was also famous for making a lei ‘ōlapa—it’s the lei of the hula dancer. So, you hīpu‘u it, and they dance in the wind. She made my costumes for Miss Tonga Galaxy in 1998. Auntie Harmony did the hair, and then Kaua‘i Iki put it on my head. I took them to Tonga with me.

KE AO PAEMAHU

The Ao Paemahu is a very long cloud similar to the Ao Opua. As stated previously regarding the Ao Paemahu i Hoowili ia, this cloud formation comprises of only two to five clouds. Should the cloud billow above and taper into wisps below, this is a good sign for the day ahead. Should the cloud grow tall and straight drawing upward, this is a sign that a ruling chief is wrathful against someone below him. This is a sign of war. If the Ao Paemahu formation topples over to one side, this is a sign that a ruling chief will perform a great and famous feat. It is a day that the god will grant the chief's wishes.¹¹

In Hawaiian studies, I had Haunani-Kay Trask and Kumu Lilikalā. Haunani was a force. She was an absolute force, and you don't challenge her unless you are ready, honey. She would read you. You had to have an analysis that could go toe-to-toe. And in the end, unless you contributed to the larger scope of analysis that was pro-Hawaiian, you never won. You couldn't win with her. There was no chance. Just forget about it. I didn't get to know her on a personal basis as much as I preferred, but she knew me. She knew me as one of her former students. And the last time I saw her right before her illness, she acknowledged me, and I acknowledged her. Because I acknowledged her, she acknowledged me back. It was really wonderful.

Lilikalā is still someone who is a mentor to me. Being in both of their classes was uplifting and invigorating; it was liberating and enlivening. Sometimes, it made you so angry, like you can't unsee, you can't unhear, and you can't unlearn. Once you went through their classes, you only had one choice, and that was to fight for our people. Only one choice, and that was to dedicate and devote your time if you were going to be a student that was going to do something for the cause. Some people just took the course, and that's it. Some others of us took the course and took more courses. And if we made Hawaiian studies, and culture, and history our calling, you come through their class, you have absolutely no other recourse but to eventually find yourself somewhere in the schematic of Hawaiian knowledge.

How could you learn about the plight of our people; how could you learn the brevity on the details of our existence—and then not avail yourself? They contributed to the pilot light that was already lit by my grandmother. They helped to

shape it, mold it. Haunani-Kay said it the best, “Cultural people must be political.” Especially the hula people. You cannot just get away with it. Because at the core of the politics, what’s going to sustain it or break (it) is culture and the language. I learned that from early on, so I like to think of myself as a blend of two mothers of the university. Like any and all of my political perspectives, (they) are clearly supported by the cultural knowledge that supports it.

For example, in 2004 or somewhere around then, I was asked, “Kumu Hina, do you support same-sex marriage?” It was an event at the law school. And I responded, “No, why should I?” You have to understand that my “no” is predicated upon the understanding that I’m in Hawai’i and Hawai’i is my mainland, Hawai’i is my homeland, Hawai’i is my center, it is my piko. So, if I am grounded, centered, and oriented to this world as my mainland, my culture tells me I do not require any such paper to designate whoever I wish in whatever capacity, especially a relationship. If I am going to be seeing somebody, that’s who I am going to be seeing.

I think this is one of the greatest faults of the western construct of gender and sexuality: that, in and of itself, it is considered an identity. You are you, and I am Hina. You are a product of your parents and your grandparents. You descend from the lands that you come from. That is who we are as our identity: we are of this land; we are of our ancestry and our genealogy.

If we want to be evaluated, analyzed, and assessed as to our value, then you look at kūlana and kuleana. Penis or vagina—or lack thereof—is irrelevant. Does it matter if you have a penis or vagina? No. I think that’s what fucks up the world. An obscene obsession.

For you to succeed in the world as a Kanaka, a Pacific Islander, you didn’t need to predicate your life’s success and ascension based on your genitalia and sexual preferences. Why is that an identity? I do not comprehend. What LGBTQIA does nothing for is the spiritual place of existence, the emotional seat of existence, and the mental-psychological place of that person’s world. Mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Everything is always focused on the physical, but nothing is said about all the rest. But you know as well as I do: In the world of being Kanaka, you may present as being a cis-gendered male, but if I get to know you and I see your mannerisms and I hear you, I can feel that there is a duality to you, and your duality is what makes you who you are.

One may ask, what is a Kanaka worldview? If you stick to mo'okū'auhau and 'āina, and kūlana and kuleana, you are fine. And that is how I found acceptance. Because people will be asking me these things, and I have to stay absolutely rooted to what does it mean for me to be Kanaka and to have a designation of mähū, if you have to ask the question. Mähū is only relevant to tell you that there is more to me. That I come with duality of insight; I come with duality of emotion; I come with duality of intellectual processing and perspectives; I come to you with a duality of heart. I understand the feminine, the masculine, the female, and the male in different ways. And people will say there is no way that you can.

Back in 2000, myself and Ashlyana were talking with our other coworker, Roxanne, and Ashlyana coined the term “mähū wahine.” So, twenty years, we used mähū wahine. After 2020, I started to give it a whole lot more thought. Just as I, in my own head, worked it out by telling myself: *If I had to explain the transgender experience, but synthesize it through a Hawaiian lens and utilize appropriate language, what would I say and how would I say it?* There is only one word: mähū. *But how do I introduce concepts that take us beyond—at least in terms of the level of nuance and complexity? How do I take us to a place that can explain this?* So therefore, I looked at our 'āina moana vocabulary. I distinguished internal factors and external factors to help you frame your life experiences. That is evidenced in “mähū ha'awahine” and “mähū ha'akāne.” So, for the internal, I used the older form “ha'a,” so mähū ha'awahine. To be a mähū who actually pushes their manner to be more wahine. And likewise, ha'akāne. But ho'owahine and ho'okāne, I use it for the external factors, not the internal—mähū in modernity who transform.

As I said, at one time, to describe ourselves, we used the term mähū wahine and mähū kāne, but it was confusing to native speakers. I, as the one who had interface with native speakers, thought long and hard about explaining this completely in our language. So, I would say, “O–e, ke ano mahu, he mahu haawahine. O ta mahu haawahine, ua hanau ia o ia, o ia he keiti kane paha, hoolilo ana o ia ia ia iho he wahine. No laila, pela no.”

[Ka'imina'auao]: Pēlā nō ho'i.

KE AO MAUNA

The Ao Mauna embraces the summit of a mountain without budging. This is a sign that the rule of a chief is peaceful. With the coming of this cloud, there are no secret plots or insurrection. The management of the ahupua'a by the konohiki and haku 'āina is peaceful and abundant.¹²

It is so that we have reached the end of our journey, oh reader. Through this mo'ō'ōlelo, we have turned to face Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu's life. Together, we ki'ei and hālō the kahua that transformed Hina into the student, the educator, and the leader we have come to know. We have accompanied her through the complexity of life—the pain, the joy, the sorrow, and the hope. We watched as each cloud formation appeared over the horizon, bringing lessons of life not taught in school. These lessons firmly grasp the mauna pali laumania, a symbol of Hinaleimoana, who stands apart like Lanihuli, the famous summit of her 'āina hānau. As is often the case, the most beautiful peaks stand alone in the mists and battering rains and winds. This solitude is not a bad thing in Hawaiian thinking—rather, it is a symbol of a wahine who, against the tumult of cosmic relations, stands firmly in her nature, her power, her hina, and her kū.

As the paeki'i approaches land, these rows of clouds have revealed themselves over the horizon, growing newenewe. The atmospheric pressures, the warmth of the sea and land, and the direction of the wind, coupled with the will of the gods and ancestors, produce powerful cloudy displays that adorn our majestic cliffs—divine, sacred signs that warn, protect, and teach us of the many positive and negative consequences embedded in the relations we care for.

Like all mauna, Hina teaches us how to be oriented to Hawai'i. As Kanaka Hawai'i, we know where we are on land in relation to our mauna. We are visually familiar with their peaks, valleys, winds, and waters, but can we name them? Do we nourish them in the same way they nourish us? Can we articulate our belonging through them? These are questions that Hina always asks us to ponder.

Yet, the answer is clear in Hina's mo'ō'ōlelo: Like her pilina to her ancestors and mentors, only when we know—and sustain a relationship with—our 'āina and kūpuna, only then will we truly belong to them in seen and unseen ways. As Hina

has often expressed, Hawai'i is our piko and, therefore, our energy center and foundation. The clouds will come with their omens and visions of what will be, and as long as we stay rooted and poised for their embrace, we will be able to receive their messages for a better future and a stronger lāhui.

Ke aloha nui iā 'oukou pākahi a pau. And with this farewell, I offer a mele to you, Hina:

NANI KA LEI HINA

1. Kaulana nō 'oe, nani ka lei Hina
I ka uka o Lanihuli me ka 'āhihi
Ho'ohihi, ho'olono Waikahalulu
I ke ehu kakahiaka a ke awāwa

2. Anuanu Nu'uanu me Pūehuehu
I ka wai ola o nā hulu kūpuna
Kupu a'e ka hala, hone ka hīnano
I ka ua Līhau me ka Pōpōkapa

3. Kuku iho i ke kapa, ngatu no Tonga
'Ahu 'ia maila e ka wahine
E walea ka nohona o ka Ni'ihau
Kui pa'a i nā lei o Kahelelani

4. A he lani ka pua manu o Kekaha
Wili 'ia ka lau'a'e no Kaua'i Iki
Hiki mai i Mauiola, malu ahiahi
Pe'ahi ka makani 'o Hālaulua

5. Loloa ke ao pili ko'olau
Pipi'o mai ka lani me he ānuenuē
'Anu'u a'e ana nā kua palipali
Lamalama ka moana i ke alo mahina

6. Hinuhinu ka lauoho, hili ke kiele
Māewaewa mau i ka 'Ōlauniu
Ha'ina 'ia mai, nani ka lei Hina
I ka uka o Lanihuli me ka 'āhihi

He inoa no Lanihuli, he pali laumania

He wahi mahalo kēia iā 'oe e Hina i kou aloha palena 'ole no kēia lāhui Hawai'i. I loko nō o ka pohihihi a me ka pa'akikī o kou ola, eia nō 'oe ke kū nei i ka hanohano me ka nani lua 'ole. Kohu 'oe me he mea lā he kumu lā'au koa lālā nui e ulu pa'a ana i ka honua. Eia nō kāu mau mamo ke inu nei i ka wai momona a ke kēhau, ka wai ho'i e kulu nei mai kou lau luliluli mai. Ua haku 'ia kēia mele me ka mana'o no kou mau kūpuna aloha a me nā kumu a pau nāna i 'onou aku ma luna ou he kuleana nui. Aloha.

[A'ole i pau.]

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu is the current ambassador of culture for the Hawaiian Council and engages both the Kanaka and larger communities as an educator and spokesperson for matters of Hawaiian language, history, and culture. She is a staunch advocate and leader for her people and has engaged the community at many levels. Her teachings include Kanaka philosophy and worldview, cultural sensitivity, and awareness sessions that are inclusive of Hawaiian history and perspectives from a distinctly Kanaka-centric focus.



Hina is also a composer of Hawaiian chant, dance, and song, credited for “Kū Ha‘aheo E Ku‘u Hawai‘i,” a mele lāhui that unites her people in the pursuit of justice for land struggles in Hawai‘i. Her work in film has garnered an American Oscar Award Top 10 Nomination for Best Animated Short Film for *Kapaemāhū*. She has also featured, produced, and directed other award-winning films and documentaries such as *Kumu Hina*, *A Place in the Middle*, *Leitis in Waiting*, and *Lady Eva*.

Hinaleimoana is a caregiver for her mother and remains active in Hawaiian circles and the Tongan community as a member of the Siasi o Tonga Tauataina (Free Church of Tonga). She is also a founding member and board president for Kūlia Nā Mamo NGO, serving māhū / LGBTQIA+ and people of color in Hawai‘i.



Ka'imina'auao Kahikina is a Kanaka Maoli PhD student of political science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Kahikina's research analyzes the signs and symbols observed during political upheaval within historical-political formations in the Hawaiian archipelago. Through the intimate spaces of the 'ōlelo Hawai'i archives, Kahikina's work articulates a particular genealogy of power that links the ancestral, the living, and the descendant through a language of symbols imbued in concepts like wānana (prophecy), hō'ailona (signs), 'ōuli (portents), aouli (portents/firmament), and kāhoaka (premonition). His most recent publications include "No ka Māhūi Aloha: Unsettling Homo/Hetero-Nationalist Logics of Belonging" in *American Quarterly* and "Ka Po'e 'Aiā o ka Honua: The Tabooless People of the Earth" in *Lei Pua 'Ala: Queer Histories of Hawai'i Project*. He is also the host of *Kūkā Kīkī*, a podcast dedicated to the exploration of Kanaka sexuality, gender, erotics, and intimacy.

NOTES

1 The term "hi'ohi'ona" is used to honor HRH Kalākaua's composition "Ua Noho Au a Kupa," in which he speaks of becoming a native of a beloved's "hi'ona o ka mana'o"—the landscape of their mind—through prolonged intimacy. When considered alongside "na'auao," the term expands to encompass the intellectual features of one's kūpuna: the inherited traits of mind and spirit passed through generations of both nature and nurture, which continue to shape the landscapes of our own minds today.

2 All English interpretations of the original 'ōlelo Hawai'i text provided by Ka'imina'auao Kahikina (co-author). Transcription by Noenoe K. Silva, August 2006. "Ai [aia] i ku ke Ao Akua i ka Akau, he la maikai keia no na hana apau a ke kanaka e manao ai no na pomaikai e loa mai ai." See "He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opua," 3 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).

3 “[A] o kahi ano poepoe uuku ula poni melelele lelo me he momi ala e pili ana ma ka lihilihi o ka pipi o Ewa, ua kapaia kona inoa, ‘He Onohi.’ A ina no i ikeia keia mau ano ao e kau ana ma ka po mahina ka la malie hookahi no ia ano ma ka inoa.” See “He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opuā,” 3 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).

4 “Ina e ikeia kekahi Ao a e kau ana elike no me ke ano o ka manu ke nana [a]ku, he Ao Manu ia. He Ao maikai keia ke ike ia e kau ana i ka la malie. Ina e hohola ana kona mau eheu a nonoho ia e na ao e ae he nui malalo o na eheu. He oi keia o ka noho ana maluhia o na’lii aimoku me nalii malalo aku ona a me na makaainana. A ina e hamama ana ka waha o ke Ao Manu i ka Hikina a me ke Komohana, he waiwai keia e lawe ia mai ana. E ai a hoomaunauna—me na waiwai e ae.” See “He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opuā,” 105–6 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).

5 This description points to traditional upbringings of certain keiki designated to be raised under strict protocols and certain restrictions for socio-spiritual contexts.

6 Hina later reflects that her grandmother was proud to have—and celebrate—a māhū grandchild. Little did Hina know at the time that her grandmother already recognized and publicly claimed her grandchild’s kūlana, and how raising Hina as the kapu child reflects this ancestral understanding of kūlana and kuleana.

7 “A ina e huli aku a huli mai ke Ao Paemahu, he la mihi keia no na pino a me na pilikia. A ina e hoowiliwili ana kahi ao a noho wale mai no kahi ao, he ao hoike mai keia i ka pilikia o ka ohana a me ka mea nona ka hale. A eia wale no ka pono, e hoomalu i ka ohana ma na hana lawelawe apau ma kahi mamao mai ka hale noho aku, e mihi ka pono i ke Akua, a ina e hookuli ia keia olelo me ka hoomalau alaila, he pepeiao ka mea hoolohe o mea ua lele maila i ka pali a pau paha i ka mano a me na ano like e ae, he make mainoino.” See “He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opuā,” 125 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).

8 “Ina e kau lalani ana ke ao [ke] ike aku e kau mai ana, He Ao Huakai keia. Ina i kau keia ao ma ka hikina – a hele i ke komohana me ka maikai o na ao apau mai mua – ahope, he ao keia e liuliu mai ana ke alii nui o ka hikina me kona mau alii me na kanaka e hele mai ana i ka makaikai a pela no hoi ke ‘lii o ka la komo, a ina e kauliilii ana ke Ao Huakai i o a i anei me he ano kanaka maoli ala, e paa ana i kahi mea ma na lima, he huakai kaua keia e hele mai nei, no laila, e hoomakaukau mua ka pono o kahi aoao, no ka hiki mai o ka enemi.” See “He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opuā,” 56 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).

9 “Ina e kauai e ke ao eleele loloa a moe ia e ke ao keokeo loloa hakahaka a moe pololei mawaena ano moolio, he Ao Polokea ia, ina e ike ia he hakahaka ma waena, alaila he alanui ia o Ulunui o Melemele ame Hakalauai, he la maikai no ka manao o ke alii e hooahuoli ai i ka manao o kona mau makaainana, ma na mea e pono ai ka noho ana lahui, a o na manao ino a kuko no ka waiwai a me na manao kaua a mau manao e ae no ka pono ole o ka noho ana, aole he hoike o keia ao ia mau mea. O na hana pomaikai wale no ka keia ao e hoike ai.” See “He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opuu,” 128 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).

10 “Ina i momoe like a hi-o ma ka aoao hookahi ke ano o ke ao, he ao Kakaula ia. He la maikai keia no ka huakaihele kaapuni. He nui ka poe nana e hookipa mai a he nui na pomaikai e loa mai ana me ka pilikia ole. He ai i ka loa hoomaunauna. Aka hoi, i hi-o ke kau ana o ke ao Kakaula ma o a ma anei, he oi keia o ka la ino o ka hele ana o ka huakai, e poina ana ka mea nana ka huakai a i ole ia o kekahi kanaka e hele pu ana ke make.” See “He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opuu,” 75 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).

11 “He Ao Loloe keia elike me ke Ao Opuu. Eia nae ka like ole. Aole he lehulehu o keia ao. Elua a elima wale no e kau ai kahi hookahi. He Ao Paemahu ia, ina e punohunohu ana o luna o keia ano ao—a muoiki o lalo, he la maikai keia no na hana apau ame ka noho ana aohe i namu. Ina e oheohe maikai ke ao a huhuluii [sic] he la inaina keia no ke alii aimoku i kekahi alii a kanaka ponoi e noho ana ma lalo akua ona, a he la kaua no hoi. A ina e hina like ana ke ao Paemahu i kahi hookahi, he hoike ana mai ia, he hana nui a kaulana ke ana iana [ia ana] ia la e ke aimoku he la ia na ke Akua i ae mai ai i ke alii e hana e like me kona manao.” See “He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opuu,” 124 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).

12 “Ina e uhi ana ke Ao a paa na kuahiwi a me na awaawa a me ka poko o na mauna me ka neeu ole, alaila he Ao Mauna ia. He Ao keia e hoike ana i ka noho malie o na ‘lii me na makaainana me ka maluhia. Aole he mau ano i namunamu ohumu kipi, aole he hookaumaha wale o na konohiki a me na haku aina i ka noho ana o na kanaka maluna o na ahupuaa.” See “He Buke Kilokilo Ao Opuu,” 113 (Poepoe Collection, n.d.).