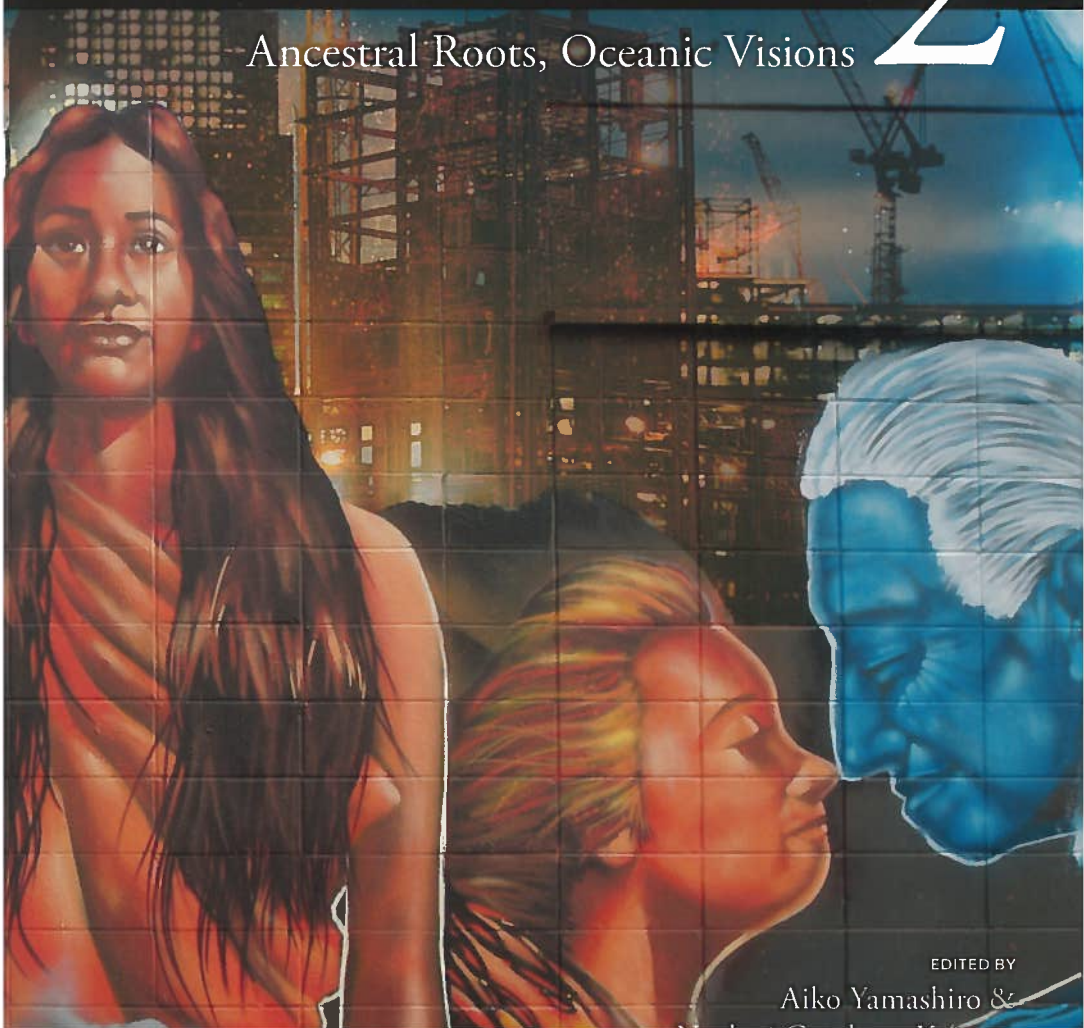


The Value of Hawai‘i 2

Ancestral Roots, Oceanic Visions



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The Value of Hawai'i
2

*Ancestral Roots,
Oceanic Visions*

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HE WELO

HĀWANE RIOS

Thriving

Temple

Unwavering

Boundless

Energy

Essence

Clarity

Unity

Frequency

Vibration

Highest

Upmost

Sacred

Brilliant

Majestic

Birthright

KA WEHENA / THE RISING

As I step out into the darkness, a peaceful calm comes over my being. Shades of blue paint the expansive sky, getting lighter as I journey to the top. A cloudbank comes to greet the summit with a gift of lei for an old friend. The cool mist of Lilinoe dances playfully with the breeze of Lihau. A gust of wind awakens my spirit and sends an electric chill through my feet, landing at my

very core. The first rays of sun touch the great realm of Kanaloa and shine ever so slightly, like the dew on the wings of an 'iwa bird in the morning. Kūkahau'ula spreads his warm red kapa cloak over the majestic mountain and embraces cherished Poli'ahu with a kind of love that is both rare and true. As I lift my arms to the mighty Wākea in silent prayer, while grounding deep into the great Papawali'inu'u, a divine energy trembles on the earth and reflects in the sky. My eyes wander to the last of the gleaming stars above that whisper the stories of creation, and I am forever changed. E ala e ke 'āpapalani e. 'O Mauna a Wākea ke 'āiwaiwa la'a kapa o Hawai'inuiākea.

KA PILINA / THE CONNECTION

The profound connection I feel to Mauna a Wākea is so deep, so clear and unwavering, that it is almost indescribable. My childhood memories are filled with moments of looking to this sacred mountain in awe of its incredible vastness and unprecedented beauty. I was raised to honor the mother earth and her marvelous bounty; to know the powerful relationship between human, earth, sky, sea, and creature; and to understand that we are not separate but one with the universe. These teachings allowed me to open myself to the wonder of the spirit world and to tap into the pure and all-encompassing interconnectedness of which my ancestors were masters. Like all of us, my spiritual journey began long before my soul came back and manifested in this body form. I am humbled to have come down bringing the gift of sight with me, a gift that many in my family line have carried with them for generations. I am no longer afraid to talk about what I see and hear in the spirit world, for this is a part of my history, my culture, and genealogy. However, when I speak about this, I do so in trust and with the utmost respect and gratitude to the realm that has shaped me in every way.

KA HO'INA / THE RETURN

The first time that I can recall an encounter with the spirit in full detail was when I traveled to Kaua'i at the age of ten. I can still remember sitting up in my bed and looking around me with elements of confusion and fear. When I finally settled into the magic happening around me, I realized the magnitude of the moment and chose to accept it with gratitude. As time passed and I grew older and more influenced by the weight of society, I became fearful, and asked that this gift be taken from me. I was told that only when I was ready, open, and clear of the fear and doubt would I be able to see again. Years passed, and I grew further away from my center and true self. I allowed myself to get so enraptured by the human experience and drama of it all that

I almost forgot the teachings I was brought up with. I am grateful for that time of my life for it allowed me to explore and venture down paths that led to many of my most intense and insightful life lessons. Each of these experiences has taught me great things about perseverance, forgiveness, and courage. The path back to the center, to the maui, began when I planted my feet on the summit and bowed down to the power of the elements. A promise and commitment to the mountain was made and has since then guided my every step as a kanaka Hawai'i of this land.

KA HO'OHIKI / THE PROMISE

In 2011, my family became petitioners in the contested case hearing for the proposed Thirty-Meter Telescope to be built on the Northern Plateau of Mauna a Wākea. My younger sister, a seer of the Mo'o realm, was asked by the great Mo'oinānea of Waiālu if we as family could try one more time to protect and save the mountain. There were specific and clear instructions as to how we should proceed. We were to do this with the highest frequency of love and compassion. As a passionate young woman, this instruction was difficult to grasp at times, especially when standing in the face of adversity and criticism. However, my family kept strong in what was just, true, and in complete alignment with our spiritual guides and ancestors. Our growth as individuals, as a family, and as a community is deeply transcendental and rooted in sacred ceremony.

This ceremony has brought boundless gifts of insight to many, and created connections to native people around the world. I am humbled to have been given the chance to stand next to healers of different nations, histories, and beliefs; seers from the forests of Brazil to the cold peaks of Mount Shasta; and mediums of all ages, sizes, and colors. To gather in a circle with people that know the relationship of oneness is to elevate to a higher understanding of life.

Learning the art of coming back to center, I slowly began to open myself up to my own spirit, in turn lifting the fear to which I once held so tightly. Standing upon Pu'u Kūkahau'ula at sunset, looking to its immeasurable shadow in the distance, I witnessed the opening of a portal of crystal energy that descended from the sky and rose from the earth. The prophecy of Kapihe—"E iho ana 'o luna, e pi'i ana 'o lalo, e hui ana nā moku e kū ana ka paia"—took on a new depth of meaning for me at that moment.

I was led to a place on the mountain not far from the main road going up to the summit. In mid-ceremony, I hiked across the sharp and uneven rocks to find a platform with large stones standing erect surrounding the area. There was a hole in one of the largest stones and in an instant I felt the urge

to kneel down and exchange hā, breath. When I opened my eyes, I saw seven men of the spirit world standing beside the stones, each one holding a staff, each one ancient and wise. I asked who they were and they told me that they were of the highest star counsel of Kāne, what I like to call the Kāne Repairers or Ke Ao o Kāne. They gifted messages of the star realm and shed light on the great power of the temple Mauna a Wākea and her connection to all things. They took me to explore the brilliance of the cosmos, the expanse of the universe, and the many incandescent worlds. There are no words that can begin to express my ample gratitude and respect for these beings. Ke Ao o Kāne have given me one of the greatest gifts, a glimpse into the relationship my ancestors once had with the sky, earth, and spirit.

KE HO'ĀLA / THE AWAKENING

These experiences on the Mauna led me to the most pivotal time in my life thus far: my journey to the eldest atoll in our island chain, Hōlanikū (known as Kure Atoll). Upon graduating from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo with my Bachelors Degree in Hawaiian Language with an emphasis in Performing Arts, I took a trip with the Ola Nā Iwi course to Pihemanu (also known as Kuaihelani and Midway Atoll) in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, or Papahānaumokuākea. During the week we were there, I finetuned some of the "tools" in my spiritual toolbox, recentering and grounding my piko, calling in my spirit guides with purpose, and closing myself off to possible incorporations or mediumship. Pihemanu allowed me the time and space to surrender to the enchantment of mother earth and her many children. The energy of the beings of the sky realm that manifested in bird form renewed old perspectives of wildlife and taught me of our inherent connection to all living beings. I was able to see their cycle of life within the week I spent there; life, death, and birth. I was able to see the path of the sun standing on one place of the atoll and was there to feel the vibration of the sun and the moon on the horizon at the same time. Each moment gifted new truths of life that I had only sparsely given myself the opportunity and freedom to experience. My short time on Pihemanu opened a new path, and I was ready and willing to follow it wherever it chose to go.

I remember quite distinctively creating an affirmation while on Pihe-manu that I would one day return to Papahānaumokuākea. I didn't know how, only that I would somehow, some way. Upon returning to Hilo, I felt an incredible yearning in my very core to set my eyes on the atolls of the Northwest and to learn from these ancient lands. A few months went by, and I once again became accustomed to the hustle and bustle of life and its many turns. Then one day I received an email from a dear friend and fellow traveler

to Pihemanu about the need for an emergency hire out on Kure Atoll, the eldest island in our archipelago. I had some conversations with a few people who had made it out all the way to Kure and I was moved by their stories. As I read the email, I felt a jolt in my na'au strongly pulling me out of all that was familiar and comfortable into an unforeseen, seven-month journey.

I had only three days to give my final decision and then a few weeks to gather myself and all the gear and necessities that I needed. I was headed into a winter field camp with little or no experience about real hard labor or working with wildlife. And there would only be five of us on the team for the whole time! I never knew if I would even have the strength, courage, or perseverance to endure such an adventure. While the anxiety, fear, and doubt coursed through my body, the underlining, clear voice of wisdom within carried me through.

My family asked me where I wanted to go for ceremony before I left, and the first place that called to me was the great Mauna a Wākea. A few of us made the familiar journey up the mountain and headed to the Ke Ao o Kāne site. We made our way across the uneven terrain and unstable rocks to that place where, for the first time, I had experienced such a strong connection to the spirit world. I could feel the presence of the ancient ones surround me and trusted their guidance to move forward on this journey, with no question. I felt something that I had only felt a few times before: total and complete certainty. When we finished our ceremony, we hiked to Lake Waiau to collect water to take on the journey. We chanted, sang, and gave ho'okupu to set the foundation and call in the guardians of protection. I stood and secured my roots deep into the earth, then lifted my hands up to the sky to gather in the clarity that rested above. The vibrations healed any of the fears and doubts I once had. I carried my constant and true love for the tallest mountain of our land to connect to the lowest of our islands, which was once a mountain itself. This was the physical form of my path inward then outward, a path that carried a kind of balance for which I had always searched.

KA HULIHIA / THE CHANGE

The time spent on our eldest of lands gifted me with the most profound lessons and experiences. Like most long journeys, the beginning transitions were not always easy and often were very uncomfortable. This place was like a mirror; it showed and reflected some things that I was ready to see, and many things that I was not ready to see. I was given the opportunity to face some very real and harsh realities about the person I had become through my decisions and actions. I replayed in my head many different scenarios of situations

I had no control over; I found myself reliving conversations and quarrels I once had. Eventually I decided to make a positive shift, and much of my time alone went into concentrating on the beauty of forgiveness and the power of release. As each full moon washed me clean of past attachments to habits that no longer served me, my connection to nature and spirit grew so strong that they were inseparable. I was in a place where there was a balance and reverence for the wildlife and the land, and where money and fortune held no real power. It was the first time in my life that I truly understood what solitude really meant, and it was not loneliness. It was oneness.

Lessons came with the tide, and surged as the moon waxed and waned. When the winter birds started coming in to mate and nest, the whole island was filled with dance and song. The amount of healing that occurred just by watching and listening to them was such a great gift. I could sit for hours and be continually filled with the sound of the resonant tone of the earth mother that was reflected in the elements. Each moment there led me to understand better the connection our ancestors once had with the earth. It simultaneously gave me hope because I now know such connection is still possible. The more time passed, the more I opened myself to the gifts of sight and hearing in both the physical and spiritual worlds. The most beautiful sound became the sound of my own inner voice, my na'au, my unique intuition. There came a time when this voice was so strong and so loud that I had no other choice but to follow the agreements of the soul with complete trust. And yet I was and will continue to be deeply humbled in the gratitude I feel for our eldest land. Kau kehakeha Hōlanikū i ka makani Hāli'imālō. Ola i ka wewe kapu o ka moana nui ākea.

KE KUMU / THE SOURCE

In writing this piece, I chose to open and share parts of my very deep and personal journey inward and my experiences of the spirit world. I consciously make this choice to be vulnerable because it is not just the right time to do so but the most imperative time. We are living in an era when the health and well-being of our entire planet and all of its inhabitants are threatened daily by our decisions and actions as human beings. Many of our young ones are growing up looking down at tiny screens for entertainment instead of exploring the greatness of the outdoors. There are many times that I myself am completely distracted by our new technologies and various ways of communication. I find myself rushing through tasks and thinking ahead about what I have to do next. In those moments I tell myself to take a breath, ground, go outside, look up to our great mountain, and remember the sacred union once again.

I have learned that to rekindle the relationship with the earth is to simply go to the earth. It is gifting yourself a moment to lay down on the land and communicate with the sky. It is going outside to plant a seed and make a vow to nurture and watch it grow. It is savoring the sweetness and the brilliance of a starry night. It is taking your children or relatives to the mountains or the beaches that shaped you. It is lifting your arms up to the sun and letting the rays reflect your own inner light. It is knowing, really knowing, that you come from generations of ancient gifts, of strength, of love, and of divine connection. One of the most beautiful lessons I learned in this wonderful journey is that you need not travel far to return to center, for you possess within your spirit all of the wisdom needed to guide you. The earth mother, Papahānau-moku, the great healer and teacher, is all around us and resides within us. She is a living and breathing source that connects everything within to everything without. Let us all ignite that source within, ke kumu ola, heal together as a people, and forward in unity. Ola.

KA WELONA / THE SETTING

Standing with my feet on the most ancient sands of all of Hawai‘i, I watch as the sun reaches the end of its path, leaving glimmering truths on the lagoon. A flash of green illuminates my eyes for just a moment as the last tones of a chant leave my lips. Thousands of wings decorate the purple expanse and slowly transform into gleaming stars. Oceans of wisdom wash over me like a prayer, and just like the tide I breathe in my power, then release my strength onto the shore, to find that with every wave a new truth is born. Then I see her in the distance, what seems to be the magnificent Mauna a Wākea nestled in the clouds. With arms extended she becomes a sail navigating through the realms of the cosmos, her body the vessel that carries the eternal song. She begins to hum gently with the eastern winds, beckoning me to sing the refrain I was created for. With grace she waits for the last sound to walk its path. Glancing to the sea of reflections, she becomes a mirror of all. I turn to dance in the brilliance of her shadow to find that I was always her and she is forever me. Ua ao, ua ola, ua noa, noa hōnua. ‘Amama ua noa a lele wale ē.

To all of my relations,
 na Hāwane Rios
 no Pu‘ukapu, Waimea, Moku o Hawai‘i

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

On Mauna a WāKea:

1. “Issues: Sacred Summits,” *Kahea.org*. You can find this online at <http://kahea.org/issues/sacred-summits>.
2. The film *Mauna Kea Temple Under Siege*, Nā Maka o ka ‘Āina, 2006.
3. *Pōhakuloa*, a short film by Ruben Carrillo for Kamakako‘i (OHA), 2013. You can watch this online at <http://vimeo.com/63867248>.
4. Hawaiians on both sides of the Mauna a Wākea debate:
 - Kealoha Pisciotta, “Not the Whole Story about TMT,” OpEd piece from *Hawaii Tribune-Herald*, May 9, 2013. You can read this online at <http://kahea.org/blog/not-the-whole-story-about-tmt>.
 - E. Kalani Flores and B. Pua Case, “Mauna a Wākea is our Piko,” *Ka Wai Ola o OHA* 30.7 (July 2013): 27.
 - Chad Kālepa Baybayan, “Modern exploration is consistent with past practices,” *Ka Wai Ola o OHA* 30.7 (July 2013): 27. These are two parts of a “Room for Debate” op-ed page in *Ka Wai Ola o OHA*.

On Papahānaumokuākea, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands:

1. *Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument* website, at <http://www.papahanau.mokuakea.gov>.
2. Kekuewa Kikiloi, “Rebirth of an Archipelago: Sustaining a Hawaiian Cultural Identity for People and Homeland,” *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being* 6 (2010): 73–115. You can read this online at http://www.ksbe.edu/spi/Hulili/Hulili_vol_6/5_Rebirth_of_an_Archipelago.pdf.