

An Introduction to Some Hawaiian Perspectives on the Environment

**Collected & Presented
By Poka Laenui
Director**

**Institute for the Advancement
of Hawaiian Affairs
86-641 Puuhulu Road
Wai`anae, Hawaii 96792-2723
(via U.S.A.)
tel: 1-808-696-5157 fax: 1-808-696-7774**

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**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP
TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

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Perspectives in this paper were contributed by many people, some through specific instructions on Hawaiian philosophy, others through their conduct, some through their writings and still others through kukakuka (discussions) over the years. Special mention should be made of some contributors. They are Pilahi Pak, Carl Imiola Young, Julian Hoffsnieder, Eric Enos, Roman Bedor, Walter Keli'iokekai Paulo, Eddie Kaanan_, Daniel Hanakahi, Rubelitte Kawena Johnson, Martha Beckwith, Queen Lili'uokalani, and especially Puanani Burgess and our ancestors who composed the Kumulipo. Most of the paper was first prepared for a conference on Freedom for the High Seas, A New Look at Ocean Governance and Stewardship, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1990.

This paper is not meant to be merely a historical recordation but is a record of present relationships and practices in Hawaii as well.

The most appropriate way to begin a discussion of Hawaiian perspectives is to begin with a creation chant, the Kumulipo. This chant describes not only our perspectives on the environment but our relationship to that environment. The Kumulipo illustrates the deep and enduring differences between western and traditional Hawaiian ways of relating to and respecting the environment, more specifically, the ocean. More than just an "environment" or a "resource", to us, the ocean is a living being - a home for other living beings and of living gods.

The first division of the Kumulipo corresponds with the text of the Wharewananga belonging to the east coast of New Zealand as well as to creation chants found in Tahiti, the Marquesas and the Tuamotus. (Hawaiian Mythology, Martha Beckwith, U.H. Press 1970 at 311-312) The full chant is over 2,000 lines and only portions are recited in this paper.

KUMULIPO

Kawa Akahi

O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua

O ke au i kahuli lole ka lani

O ke au i kuka`iaka ka la

E ho`omalamalama i ka malama

O ke au o Makali`i ka po

O ka walewale ho`okumu honua ia

O ke kumu o ka lipo, i lipo ai

O ke kumu o ka po, i po ai

O ka lipolipo, o ka lipolipo

O ka lipo o ka la, o ka lipo o ka po

Po wale ho'i

The First Stage

When space turned around, the earth heated
When space turned over, the sky reversed
When the sun appeared standing in shadows
To cause light to make bright the moon
When the Pleiades are small eyes in the
night,

From the source in the slime was the earth
formed

From the source in the dark was darkness
formed

From the source in the night was night
formed

From the depths of the darkness, darkness so
deep

Darkness of day, darkness of night
Of night alone

Did night give birth

Born was Kumulipo in the night, a male

Born was Po`ele in the night, a female

<i>Hanau ka po</i>
<i>Hanau Kumulipo i ka po, he kane</i>
<i>Hanau Po`ele i ka po, he wahine</i>	Born the coral polyp
.....	Born of him a coral colony emerged
.....	Born the burrowing worm,
<i>Hanau ka 'Uku-ko`ako`a</i>	hilling the soil
<i>Hanau kana, he Ako`ako`a, puka</i>	Born of him a worm emerged
<i>Hanau ke Ko`e-enuhe eli ho`opu`u honua</i>	Born the starfish
<i>Hanau kana he Ko`e, puka</i>	The small starfish his child emerged
<i>Hanau ke Pe`a</i>
<i>Ka Pe`ape`a kana keiki, puka</i>
.....	Born male for the narrow waters
.....	Female for the broad waters
<i>Hanau kane ia Wai`ololi</i>	Born the coralline seaweed
<i>O ka wahine ia Wai`olola</i>	living in the sea
<i>Hanau ka `Ekaha noho i kai</i>	Kept by the bird's nest fern
<i>Kia`i ia e ka `Ekahakaha noho i uka</i>	living on land
<i>He po uhe`e i ka wawa</i>	It is a night gliding through the passage
<i>He nuku, he wai ka `ai a ka la`au</i>	Of an opening; a stream of water
<i>O ke Akua ke komo, `a`oe komo kanaka</i>	is the food of plants
<i>O kane ia Wai`ololi</i>	It is the god who enters; not as a human
<i>O ka wahine ia Wai`olola</i>	does he enter
<i>Hanau ka `Aki`Aki noho i kai</i>	Male for the narrow waters
<i>Kia`i ia e ka Manienie-`aki`aki noho i uka</i>	Female for the broad waters
<i>He po uhe`e i ka wawa</i>	Born the `aki`aki seaweed
<i>He nuku, he wai ka `ai a ka la`au</i>	living in the sea
	Kept by the manienie shore grass living on
	land
	It is a night gliding through the passage
	Of an opening; a stream of water
	is the food of plants
	It is the god who enters; not as a
	human does he enter

O ke Akua ke komo, `a`oe komo kanaka

Male for the narrow waters
Female for the broad waters

O kane ia Wai`ololi

.....

O ka wahine ia Wai`olola

.....

.....

Born the hairy seaweed
living in the sea

.....

Kept by the hairy pandanus vine
living on land

Hanau ka Huluwaena, noho i kai

Kia`i ia e ka Huluhulu-`ei`ea noho i uka

It is a night gliding through the
passage

He po uhe`e i ka wawa

Of an opening, a stream of water is the food
of plants

He nuku, he wai ka `ai a ka la`au

It is the god who enters; not as a
human does he enter

O ke Akua ke komo, `a`oe komo kanaka

The male gourd of water, that is the
god

O ke kane huawai, Akua kena

From whose flow the vines are made
vigorous;

O kalina a ka wai i ho`oulu ai

The plant top sprouts from the earth
made flourishing

O ka huli ho`okawowo honua

To frame the forest bower in the flow
of time,

O paia(`a) i ke auau ka manawa

The flow of time gliding through the
long night

O he`e au loloa ka po

Filling, filling full
Filling, filling out
Filling, filling up

O piha, o pihapiha

O piha-u, o piha-a

O piha-e, o piha-o

Until the earth is a brace holding
firm the sky

O ke ko`o honua pa`a ka lani

When space lifts through time
in the night of Kumulipo

O lewa ke au, ia Kumulipo ka po

It is yet night.

Po no.

(The Second Stage)

Kawa Alua

Hanau kama a ka Powehiwehi

Born the child of Powehiwehi
To grace the stature of Pouliuli
with a wreath
Of Mahiuma, of Ma`apuia

Ho`oleilei ka lana a ka Pouliuli

*O Mahiua, o Ma`apuia
O noho i ka `aina o Pohomiluamea
Kukala mai ka Haipuaalamea
O naha wilu ke au o Uliuli*

*O ho`ohewahewa a kumalamala
O pohouli a poho`ele`ele
O na wai ehiku e lana wale
Hanau kama a hilu a holo*

*O ka hilu ia pewa lala kau
O kau(l)ana a Pouliuli
O kuemiemi a Powehiwehi*

*O Pouliuli ke kane
O Powehiwehi ka wahine*

*Hanau ka i`a, hanau ka Nai`a i ke kai la
holo
Hanau ka mano, hanau ka Moano i ke kai la
holo
Hanau ka Mau, hanau ka Maumau i ke kai
la holo
Hanau ka Nana, hanau ka Mana i ke kai la
holo*

.....
.....

*O kane ia Wai`ololi, o ka wahine ia
Wai`olola
Hanau ka Palaoa noho i kai
Kia`i ia e ka Aoa noho i uka
He po uhe`e i ka wawa
He nuku, he kai ka `ai a ka i`a*

O ke Akua ke komo, `a`oe komo kanaka

Dwelling in the land of Pohomiluamea,
Proclaiming the fragrant stem of Mea,
The split elegance of the branch of Uliuli,
Unrecognized and splintered;
In the night that darkens and blackens
Through seven currents he floats;
Born child of the gentle wrasse he swims,
The hilu whose tail fin marks
The renown of Pouliuli;
Powehiwehi shrinks away in respect
(from the presence of a chief),
Pouliuli the male
Powehiwehi the female

Born the fish, born the porpoise
swimming there in the sea
Born the shark, born the goatfish
swimming there in the sea
Born the mau fish, born the maumau
swimming there in the sea
Born the spawn of yellowfin tuna
Born the small threadfin
swimming there in the sea

.....
.....

Male for the narrow waters, female for the
broad waters
Born the sperm whale living in the sea
Kept by the sandalwood living on land
It is a night gliding through the passage
Of an opening; sea water is the food of fish
It is the god who enters, not as a human does
he enter

In the lead the whales proceed,
Mingling and submerging beneath the sea;
The opule advance in the distance;
The deep ocean is filled with them;
Like kumini crabs clustered on the reef
They swallow on the way
Along the path of Kolomio, swiftly darting;
Pimoe is found at the bosom of the horizon

*O ke ka`ina a palaoa e ka`i nei
E kuwili o ha`aha`a i ka moana*

*O ka `opule ka`i loloa
Manoa wale ke kai ia lakou
O kumimi o ka lohelohe a pa`a
O ka`a monimoni i ke ala
O ke ala o Kolomio o miomio i hele ai*

Loa'a Pimoe i ke polikua

O Hikawainui, o Hikawaina

*O pulehulehu hako`ako`a
Ka mene `a`ahu wa`awa`a
O holi ka poki`i ke au ia Uliuli*

*Po`ele wale ka moana powehiwehi
He kai ko`ako`a no ka uli o Paliuli
O he`e wale ka `aina ia lakou
O kaha uliuli wale i ka po--la
Po-no*

Of Hikawainui, the strong current,
Of Hikawaina, the calm current,
Where spire myriad corals
From the hollows of blunted reef;
The youngest is carried by the current into
darkness.
Black as night the opaque sea,
Coral sea in the dark cliffs of Paliuli,
Land that slid away from them,
Dark shore passing into night--
It is yet night.

(Kumulipo Hawaiian Hymn of Creation, Vol. I, by Rubellite Kawena Johnson, 1981,
Topgallant Publishing Co., Ltd, Honolulu, Hawaii at pp 3 et seq)

In reading Hawaiian chants, it is important to understand basics of the social structure and its underlying philosophy of language in order to move from a non-Hawaiian analytical interpretation to a Hawaiian interpretation.

Within ancient Hawaiian society, there were people who specialized in disciplines. These specialists were generally called kahuna. Among the most revered were those trained in the oral tradition. Such a specialist was trained in keeping Hawaii's history, in using the power of words to heal individuals and communities, to cause sickness and death, in predicting and creating future events, in planning for generations to come, and many other tasks.

Within that oral specialty was an understanding that the native language contained three levels of comprehension. The first was called the ho`opukaku or the conversational level. Thus in hearing a chant, one would understand it in its literal sense. The second level was called the kaona or hidden meaning in which the literal translation of the chant was accurate in and of itself but there was a second and independent message being transferred, a message usually shared only by those "in the know" based on specific knowledge of a history, a cultural practice, a family relationship, etc. The third level was called the noa hūnā or the spiritual level. Here, words were treated and understood for their creative and destructive power, words were prayers,

words were prophecies, words were religious instructions.

The Kumulipo is a traditional chant containing each of the three levels of comprehension when uttered and heard by those appropriately trained.

Understanding the chant strictly at its first level, the order of evolutionary progression for fauna proceeds from the invertebrates of the first age to marine invertebrates in the second. Thereafter the egg-bearing vertebrates branch off into insects and birds (Chant Three) and reptiles (Chant Four). As these constitute the cold-blooded segment of the fauna, proceeding out of a marine habitat to freedom of survival out of water on the land and in the air, the species move ultimately through Chants Five, Six, Seven, and Eight to warm-blooded mammals. (Kumulipo, Hawaiian Hymn of Creation, Rubellite Kawena Johnson (hereafter Johnson) at p. 111)

The next part of the chant opens with the breaking of light, the appearance of the woman La`ila`i and the coming of Kane the god, Ki`i the man, and others. There follow over a thousand lines of genealogical pairs, husband and wife. (Beckwith at pp. 310 - 311)

It was not the intention of the Hawaiian priests who composed the Kumulipo for the chief, Ka `I-i-mamao, at the turn of the eighteenth century, to explain the universe in Western terms. Dictated by centuries of established Polynesian custom, their intent was simply to relate a new-born chief of high social rank to his ultimate origins in earth's very beginnings, at the point where all prehuman forms of nature and human life are but common kindred. (Johnson at p. *i*)

In terms of its second (kaona) level of comprehension, Kumu (teacher) Kawena Johnson describes the Kumulipo thus:

[T]he chant ascribes to the chief at the moment of his birth the recapitulation in his embryonic beginnings of the whole of the universe from its cosmic conception. In the conception and birth of the chief is the analogy of the conception of and birth of the universe. As man is born into the universe, so is the universe reborn in him; he is the intelligent survivor of cosmic creation in the highest form of organic life on earth. All that the universe has formed has preceded him so that he is the culmination of all forms. (ibid at p. 26)

This creation chant is distinguished from the mystical notion of Divine Cause as the source of all life upon the earth. The Kumulipo sets forth not only that life evolved but that human life evolved upon the same creational plane, that the spiritual forces giving impetus to the evolution are intricately intertwined in the evolution process. Thus, while we are connected biologically to all of the creatures and plants of the earth, we are also spiritually bonded. Our relationship with ocean life, for example, is not merely the sharing of the same physical make-up. It is the sharing of a spiritual interrelationship as well. This is comprehension at the third level, noa hūnā.

The most enlightened institutions and organizations such as the World Commission on Environment and Development, the International Union on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), share the presumption of the superiority of humankind above all of nature's other components, essentially a presumption based upon a Divine Cause concept from which much of the environmental and property laws are based. The core of this presumption is the belief that the environment has no other purpose but to support, sustain and be a resource for humankind - to be dominated, mastered, controlled for that singular purpose. This presumption sees people as distinct, separate, and above the rest of the creatures of the world.

That domination approach is essentially a two step approach asking:

1. How much environmental degradation should we tolerate?
2. How do we maintain that level of tolerance without overstepping that boundary?

Some people urge that we need only plan for having a safe and habitable environment for the next three, five or seven generations, leaving to future generations beyond that the burden of resolving the problems of pollution and degradation we have thus created.

Others say that we must maintain our present lifestyle but not increase any further the rate of environmental degradation. More recently, the concept of sustainable development has been formulated, a term apparently meaning an interaction between man with the environment that will permit the environment to recreate itself at the same rate as the amount of degradation being caused to it. People, however, are still in search for a widely accepted, practical-implementable definition.

Whatever one determines to be the acceptable level of environmental degradation, the second question then comes to the forefront: How do we maintain that level? Here, many different theories, suggested tactics and techniques in dealing with the environment, some taking into consideration economic, social and cultural models, for addressing the environment arise. Oftentimes, we become so involved in these formulations for manipulating the environment that we accept the approach as appropriate.

The role of indigenous peoples and their methods of dealing with the environment are placed under one or another program for manipulating the environment to maintain the level of degradation agreed upon, oftentimes without benefit of indigenous participation at the outset.

This historical approach is based on what some people may consider to be a very arrogant posture, i.e., that the environment has no other purpose but to support and sustain humankind - to be dominated, conquered, controlled, for that singular purpose.

Many indigenous peoples, however, approach the environment from a totally different

posture. Instead of beginning with a relationship of domination over the environment, indigenous peoples have approached the environment from a position of reverence, of equality, of respect and even worship, oftentimes treating the interrelationship with the environment as nothing less than spiritual work of the highest degree. In fact, this approach is not limited to indigenous peoples but adopted and practiced by others as well, nor do all indigenous peoples today respond to the environment in this way.

Taking as an example, one indigenous view, the Hawaiian people, we find the following:

*There are five principle God-elements in the world,
The Sun (fire) element - representative of all life forces.
The Air (winds) element - representative of Time .
The Waters (fresh and salt) element - representative of fluidity, the ever changing characteristics in the world
The Land element - representative of stability, foundation, life substance; and,
Humankind - representative of values we call humanity.*

All of these God-elements are on the same creational plane, all forming part of and sharing the existence embodied in this life, this time, this ever changing, yet stable existence from which men and women constantly seek to harmonize.

There can be no ownership, domination or any form of superiority of one over the other element. Instead, the environment must be treated in a relationship of reverence - of highest respect.

Given this indigenous approach, the attempt to relegate indigenous peoples' tactics and techniques of dealing with the environment to fulfill the objectives set forth in the conventional approach detailed, would surely be placing indigenous peoples in the wrong place.

Thus, as those organizations may ask, "How do we protect our ocean as a most valuable resource?", our Hawaiian practitioners would ask, "How do we protect this womb, this sacred place of creation, this spiritual core of the earth?"

Let's take a look at other differences regarding the ocean.

Stewardship vs. Kinship

The use of the word, "stewardship," which is much used in today's environmental protection parlance, suggests that the relationship of humankind to the ocean is that of benevolent despot. Stewardship suggests that man is charged with the duty of protecting the ocean as he would his manor, his forest, his kingdom . . . But what that means is that man is in charge, he is separate from and superior to that of which he is the steward.

In the Hawaiian way, as celebrated in the "Kumulipo," we are born on the same genealogical line as the sea cucumber, the limu, the starfish, the slug, the shark, the dolphin, the whale. We are part of, kin to, the ocean and all of its living partners. Therefore, this relationship requires the same kind of protection and respect that human relations require.

Scarcity vs Abundance

There is the predominant view that we are surrounded by a scarcity of resources. Based upon that view, all resources must be claimed and form the basis of an economic model. Out of this scarcity, either in fact, or by controlling availability of goods in the market place, a margin of profit is maintained between production cost and sale price to drive the economy.

Hawaiian belief is built around a framework of abundance upon which a presumption that no matter how much or how little is available, in the sharing, there will be enough for all. Abundance, however, does carry with it strict responsibilities of respect, of caring for, of feeding the food supply and of recognizing the connectedness between everything. It does not imply carelessness, wastefulness, or disrespect. Hoarding is one of the great social evils: making a profit is to take advantage of another's misfortune - a breach of proper conduct.

Aquatic continent vs. Ocean & Land

Former President of the United States, George Bush, in a speech at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii on October 27, 1990, referred to the Pacific ocean as an aquatic continent. If that concept is accepted, the next step in relation to the ocean is to apply continental approaches to division of territory and of resources. Lines of demarcation are thus appropriate since they've worked so well in Europe, the Americas, etc. - so the logic goes.

Hawaiians see the Pacific ocean as having its own characteristic. The ocean differs from continents in that it represents another element in the Hawaiian creational framework. It represents fluidity in life, the ever changing nature of the world; quite a contrast to land which represents the element of stability. Specific rules, different from lands, must be observed for the ocean. To pollute one part of the ocean is to pollute distant places touched by its waters. To destroy a specie in one part of the ocean is to starve a people dependent on that specie in a completely opposite part of that ocean. The ocean is a great connector of countries and of peoples. It is the streets, highways and freeways connecting Pacific island interchanges; the common amniotic fluid from which we have all come and continue to share in common; an ever-present source of sustenance in our lives.

Although land and waters are distinct elements in the Hawaiian creational framework, the ocean is inseparable from the land. To conceive of one without the other is to have night without day, a body without spirit, man without woman. Another Pacific Islander, Roman Bedor of Belau, aptly described the relationship of a Pacific Islander as one standing one leg on an island and the other in the ocean. Both are essential to his good health and happiness. To deprive this fellow of his island is to cut off one leg; to deprive him of the ocean is to cut off the other.

Resource vs. Ke Kumu

Black's Law Dictionary defines "Resources" as follows:

Money or any property that can be converted into supplies; means of

raising money or supplies; capabilities of raising wealth or to supply necessary wants; available means or capability of any kind.

Taking this definition, a resource forms the first stage of a purely economic model.

Ke Kumu, the Source, is the more traditional view of the Hawaiian people to the ocean and all of its living beings. The ocean is the source for a multitude of things beyond economics, security, or transport. It is the source of food to island peoples, the source of health, providing a whole variety of medicines for physical and emotional well being. It is also the source for cleansing, healing and nourishing the spirit, and for learning the ways of nature.

A special note on Hawaiian philosophy and its international role:

Having reviewed some fundamental differences between philosophical approaches to the ocean environment, lets turn to the avenues for contribution of these Hawaiian perspectives in the on-going international environmental discussions.

Hawaii has been kept out of full participation with other Pacific Island nations in regional and international development of environmental laws relating to the Ocean. That regional and international isolation is a result not of geography - Hawaii being the most distant land mass across a body of water than any other land mass in the world - but of political connivance and military aggression. The foundation of this isolation began with the initial invasion of the United States into the independent nation of Hawaii in January 1893 and the subsequent and continual occupation of this Pacific nation ever since, denying Hawaii's full participation as a Pacific Island nation.

Prior to that United States invasion in mid-January, 1893, Hawaii had been an active participant in international affairs with almost a hundred diplomatic and consul posts around the world, a member of the first modern international organization, the Universal Postal Union, and a nation which could boast of having been the first to have its head of state, King Kalakaua, circle the world in a voyage of friendship, commerce and peace. Hawaii had treaties and conventions with a multitude of countries - Belgium, Bremen, Denmark, France, the German Empire, Great Britain, Hamburg, Hong-Kong, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, New South Wales, Portugal, Russia, Samoa, Spain, The Swiss Confederation, Sweden and Norway, Tahiti and the United States of America.

During the presidency of Benjamin Harrison, the U.S. military, wanting a fortress in the Pacific for American expansion into this ocean and further into Asia, conspired with a group of businessmen known as the "Missionary Party," to take over Hawaii. The name of the party was indicative of the members' forefathers' original calling to Hawaii since the 1820s.

On January 16, 1893, the U.S. marines landed upon peaceful Honolulu and participated in establishing a "Provisional Government", - provisional until terms of annexation could be arranged between this government and the United States. The U.S. Minister Plenipotentiary to Hawaii, John Stevens swore to protect and defend this provisional government against its enemy, the constitutional monarchy of the Nation of Hawaii. Sanford Dole, son of missionary Daniel

Dole, was made President of the Provisional Government. He and his 18 cabinet members were all from the missionary party.

An international uproar over this aggression soon followed. Newly elected President Grover Cleveland, hearing the protests over this invasion and concerned about the attempt to quickly annex Hawaii to the United States of America, called for a subsequent investigation by American Minister James Blount. Blount's investigation revealed that the U.S. had no just cause for its invasion and establishment of the puppet government dubbed the "provisional government." Cleveland refused to support annexation.

With Cleveland standing in the way to annexation, and under the heat of international criticism of illegitimacy, the Provisional Government met in "constitutional convention" and, in a snake-like change of skin, emerged as a new government called the Republic of Hawaii. Sanford Dole remained President and his 18 cabinet members remained in power.

Upon the expiration of Cleveland's term of office in 1897 and under the Presidency of William McKinley, a treaty of annexation between the U.S. and Hawaii was hurriedly negotiated and signed. However, this treaty could not garner the 2/3 vote in the U.S. Senate required for all treaties under the U.S. Constitution. President McKinley, under the pretense that two houses are better than one, employed a parliamentary device called a "joint resolution of Congress" in which a mere majority of both the House and Senate would suffice to annex Hawaii. The U.S. Constitutional requirement was thus circumvented.

Hawaii subsequently became known as the "Territory of Hawaii" and Sanford Dole was appointed Governor by President McKinley. The United States soon built Hawaii into its Pacific military fortress and command post. The missionary party, having achieved its objective, had now secured a steady sugar market in the United States and soon developed Hawaii into their sugar-coated empire in which anything "sugar" touched, "sugar" controlled. Thus, all banking, utility, shipping, communications, media, and every level of politics were sugar controlled. The U.S. government ran Hawaii as its military fortress, taking over all control of immigration and "foreign" intercourse.

Hawaii has ceased to play any significant role as a member of the international community since the U.S. invasion. Its current status, shrouded in the legal fiction called "Statehood," is today being questioned by many people, predominantly those of the indigenous race. Interesting Hawaiian times are ahead. Hawaii is stepping into a period of self-examination as it reviews the struggles occurring in Europe as well as the Pacific for independence. 1993, the U.N.'s declared International Year for the World's Indigenous People, will also mark 100 years since the U.S. overthrow and subsequent occupation of Hawaii. (see unpublished manuscript by Poka Laenui Cause for Hawaiian Sovereignty; Queen Liliuokalani's Hawaii's Story; Lawrence Fuch's Hawaii Pono)

Notwithstanding the almost 100 years of occupation and recycling of the Hawaii's indigenous people into the American "way of life", the perspectives of Hawaii's indigenous people to their ocean is still alive and well as will be illustrated below. These perspectives have

also found its way into international forums through non-governmental organization activities. Hawaiian perspectives have been adopted as its own by the largest international indigenous non-governmental organization, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, and has been promoted before international organizations such as the World Commission on Environment and Development, the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the International Labour Organizations' Committee of Experts on the redrafting of its Convention Concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and other Tribal and Semi-tribal Populations in Independent Countries (Convention 107). Following is a relevant portion of such a submission to the U.N. working group and adopted in the Report of the Conference on Conservation and Development Implementing the World Conservation Strategy, Ottawa, Canada, 31 May - 5 June 1986:

The earth is not a commodity to be bartered back and forth to maximize profit or to be damaged for scientific exploration or tests. The earth is the foundation of indigenous peoples. It is the seat of spirituality, the fountain from which our cultures and languages flourish. The earth is our historian, the keeper of events and the cradle for the bones of our ancestors. It provides us food, medicine, shelter and clothing. It is the source of our independence. It is our mother. We do not dominate her, we harmonize with her.

While activism through indigenous non-governmental organizations are welcome opportunities for asserting Hawaii's indigenous perspectives in international environmental discourse, these experiences can be very limited (either because of lack of political access or economic limitations of such NGOs) and oftentimes given only cursory attention. In the Pacific region, however, Hawaii's "State" participation in such discussions may be more welcome, simply by the attitudes of fellow Pacific Island political entities which are willing to set aside strict political criteria for Pacific participants. The inclusion of Hawaii's participation in the South Pacific Games and the South Pacific Arts Festivals are two examples of this attitude toward Hawaii's direct participation in regional activities. Yet, aside from such demonstrative cultural activities within the region, such "State" participation usually does not encompass Hawaii's indigenous people's perspectives adequately but instead reflect a U.S.A. colonial perspective.

It should be noted that the Pacific colonial and decolonization experience is ever present in the consciousness of many independent and emerging independent countries of the Pacific. The possibilities of support for indigenous or suppressed minorities' perspectives by some of these Pacific countries are very promising. However, it does not seem likely that these Pacific countries will go out of their way to solicit the concerns of the indigenous peoples under colonial rule. It is also unlikely that indigenous peoples still under colonization have the sophistication and technical training to be aware of or understand the language of on-going international conferences on the issue. In this situation, unless some "translator" organization with sufficient resources to bring such indigenous and sympathetic governments together step forward, the possible contributions of indigenous peoples, such as the Hawaiians, will be lost.

A special note on Hawaiian philosophy and its practice in Hawaii today:

On the north-west coast of the island of O`ahu is the community of Wai`anae where the highest concentration of indigenous Hawaiians live today. This Wai`anae community has been known historically as a place of retreat and rejuvenation. Traditionally, whenever defenders of the island of O`ahu were defeated, they would gather in this area to rebuild in order to reclaim the island. It is said that the gods which protect and care for this place leave a very strong spirit in the people living in this area. Almost 50% of the population here are of the indigenous peoples as opposed to 18% for Hawaii as a whole.

Driving through the main street of Wai`anae, it is not easy to see the day to day exercise of Hawaiian philosophy by those trained in the practice. But if one observes carefully, one can usually come across such practice. Here is a collection of three incidents reflecting the continuing spirit of the indigenous people of Hawaii:

Keli`iokekai Paulo's `opelu fishnet has just been completed. This completion gave rise for celebration and blessing. A group of about 30, age stretching from great-grandparents to toddlers gathered for the dedication of the fishnet. Kupuna Ka'anana stood at the front, leading the ceremony, recalling from as long ago as his childhood, how his kupuna (elders) would give thanks to our ancestors' Gods, in the same way we would this day. He proceeds to recall that we must take this time to remember that we are part of the same creation as everything about us, that as we must respect and treat one another with aloha, we must always treat every other creation with aloha, that the gods within every one of us are also in all creation. In his prayer of dedication, he calls upon the fishnet to bring good fortune upon its fishing folks, and calls upon us to always keep intact our aloha for the waters and all of our relations found in and about them.

The prayer having been completed, we take part in that sacred activity of eating, feeding our bodies and the god within us under the spread of the `Opelu fishnet.

Keli`iokekai, now that his net has been consecrated, is able to fish with it. He watches for the right time of year, checks the moon phase, and prepares for fishing. Over the years, he has developed a Ko`a, a special place where the `opelu gathers. He has been feeding and cultivating the `opelu during the years, bringing pumpkin, taro, bread, or whatever other food he can find to feed the Ko`a. When he is ready to gather the fish, he will lower his large cone-shaped net above the Ko`a, continue feeding the fish, and simply lift the net up and onto the boat. If he finds old friends also caught in the net, he will release them, tossing them back into the ocean. They will teach the others of the Ko`a.

Puanani Burgess sits along the shoreline and watches dolphins play before her on her birthday. She writes:

Prayer from Hawaiian Sisters

Sisters and brothers,
Hear our prayer to you.

In the spirit of Aloha which our gods
bequeathed to us and
to you,
We ask you to hear our words and
feel our pain.

Long before your Christian forefathers
came upon our sacred `Aina (Land),
We were a million strong,
Strong in body, mind and spirit,
Our gods, our ways, our `Aina, our sea and sky
provided for and nourished us.

But your forefathers came to our shores;
they brought with them the Cross and
the Flag, and
Disease, and
Alcohol, and
Despair, and
Greed, and
Shame for what we were - "lowly heathens"
(I think they said).

They offered, no, demanded,
that we accept the Cross and the Flag
(those Siamese twins of Power)
And said, "Here, With these you will prosper."

We tried to put into their hands, our symbols:
The Kalo (Taro), from whose body we take sacred nourishment.
The `Aina (Land), from whose body we take sacred nourishment.
The Wai and the Kai (the fresh and sea Water), from whose body
we take sacred nourishment.

But they scorned our symbols. They scorned us.
They said, "Here. With these, you will "prosper."

But look at us now, Sisters and Brothers.
We are the poorest.

*We live in cars, tents, on beaches and sidewalks.
We occupy more jail cells, more hospital beds,
more morgue slabs and coffins
Than any other race in Hawaii.
Our children are labeled "DISADVANTAGED" and
can't read
can't write
can't get a job
can't get an education.*

We are beggars in our own homeland.

*But no more,
As we lay down the Cross,
As we lay down the Flag,
We search for and have found those symbols which spring
from this place
from this time
from this People.*

*In our hands we offer you:
a scoop of Earth, the `Aina;
a scoop of water from the land and the sea, Life;
a rainbow, Hope
and Aloha, Love.*

*but let us be clear,
Whether you accept our symbols or not,
We will continue to speak the truth of our history
the truth of our pain
the truth of our oppression
the truth of our colonization.
And through these truths we will be free.*

*This is our prayer to you, Sisters and Brothers.
Listen to it with your souls, Sisters and Brothers.*

Ka'anana, Keli'iokekai and Puanani are only three of many in the struggle to keep alive the practice of the traditional people of Hawaii and the respect which must accompany that practice. Human bodies will be born and die here in Hawaii. We accept that as part of the life process. However, to allow the many generations of developing awareness and respect for our common birth place, Earth, to be lost to a lifestyle which places the human being separate and apart from the rest of Earth is unacceptable. It is a threat to the most important of life's

development - spiritual development.

CONCLUSION

These are some perspectives of the Hawaiian people to the environment. This is not to say that these perspectives are exclusive to the Hawaiian people, or to Pacific Islanders. They are shared by people who can be found in many parts and in many disciplines around the world, people who have taken the time and care in understanding themselves, their environment and the inseparable relation between us all. We continue to be, unfortunately, a small minority of opinion and conduct in the present world. Hope springs eternal!