

E KŪ MAKANI: A “LIFE HISTORY” STORY OF
KAHUNA LĀ‘AU LAPA‘AU LEVON OHAI

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by

Keoki Baclayon

For my Kumu Levon Ammon Ohai.

E kū makani.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to recount a “life history” of the late Levon Ammon Ohai by focusing on his teachings and narrative interviews: Levon was a retired DOE teacher from Kaua‘i and also a lā‘au lapa‘au instructor at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. This thesis addresses the issue of a gap in knowledge on Levon Ohai with special attention to the connections of what he believed in and the results of what he did with those beliefs. The product of this endeavor is this thesis which emphasized: the sense of urgency to document the mo‘olelo of a kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au; the incongruent value systems he experienced between his lā‘au lapa‘au culture and western institutions; the value of empirical medicine; and his love for Akua. These themes that illuminated themselves in the narratives validated the importance of documenting life histories for future generations. The emergence of this life history research at this time contributes considerably to the field of Hawaiian biographical research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOC	Area of Concentration
HawCC	Hawai‘i Community College
HCC	Honolulu Community College
HSB	Hawaiian Studies Building
HWST	Hawaiian Studies
KCC	Kapi‘olani Community College
Kaua‘i CC	Kaua‘i Community College
KCHS	Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies
LDS	Latter-Day Saint
LCC	Leeward Community College
MCC	Māui Community College
OSN	Open Science Network
POL	Papa Ola Lōkahi
SB	Senate Bill
UFP	Université de la Polynésie Française (University of French Polynesia)
UHM	University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
UHH	University of Hawai‘i at Hilo
UHWO	University of Hawai‘i-West O‘ahu
WCC	Windward Community College

CHAPTER 1

KA PAE: THE PLATFORM

In ancient Hawai‘i,¹ the division of people with special expertise was a society of professionals called kāhuna^{2,3} or experts, whose collective knowledge ranged from astronomy, celestial navigation, and sailing to farming, health, martial arts, and warfare.⁴ They provided a wealth of knowledge and services to the Kānaka ‘Ōiwi⁵ of the land, but are most notably remembered in the historical “tellings” of chiefly aristocracy. Within this society of the kāhuna the various divisions of knowledge were institutions of learning to which kāhuna belonged. In the institution of healing, a medical expert was called a kahuna lapa‘au,⁶ but the ancient Hawaiian classification system specified further formal associations and orders⁷ of healing.

These kāhuna lā‘au⁸ lapa‘au have operated and established themselves throughout the centuries as the primary physician-priests on the islands. They lived and functioned as the

¹ In this thesis, no Hawaiian words including names of people and places are italicized; because it is not a foreign language. Other languages such as Latin used in binomial nomenclature for plant taxonomy will be italicized.

² All Hawaiian words in this thesis and their meanings are taken from the following standard unless specified: Mary Kawena Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, Rev. and enl. ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991).

³ The word kāhuna, pluralizes the word “kahuna.” I apply kahuna to both a religious “priest” and to one form of expert in secular work in ancient Hawaiian society.

⁴ There are many more areas of knowledge that kāhuna held expertise in besides what I have offered. I do no justice to the kahuna society by failing to mention that their knowledge and influence permeated every aspect of ancient society.

⁵ People native born to the Hawaiian Islands.

⁶ Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau, “Ka Moololelo Hawaii: No Na Kahuna Lapaau,” *Ke Au Okoa* Vol. 6, No. 17 (Honolulu: August 11, 1870), Final edition. “He nui ke ano o na kahuna lapaau, a he oihana kahiko loa keia o ka oihana lapaau ma Hawaii nei.” Kahuna lapa‘au: there are many types of healing kahunas; the healing kahuna is an ancient occupation in Hawai‘i.

⁷ I use the word “order” instead of the word “class” to denote that kahuna formed, as it were, a brotherhood. Individual kahuna worked closely together in areas of their expertise and knew with the utmost familiarity the lineage, strengths, and talents of the other.

⁸ Lā‘au meaning plant, herb, shrub, tree, or medicine.

frontline against illnesses before the introduction of contemporary ideologies of health restoration.⁹ Isabella Abbott commented on the comprehensive training these healers accumulated:

Their knowledge spanned three disciplines we consider separate today—botany, pharmacology, and medicine. They consistently recognized and identified plants, knew their characteristics, and contributed importantly to the high level of Hawaiian plant taxonomy, all of which fall in the realm of botany. In preparing the plants—selecting them according to their maturity and season, mixing them in proper proportion—they functioned as pharmacists. And in prescribing and administering them, of course, they served as physicians.¹⁰

During ancient times, the enormous amount of knowledge represented by kāhuna was uniform within the cultural parameters anciently established for their society. This allowed a small number of people to possess the knowledge in its entirety. However, this uniformity became inconsistent as an already strikingly small population of kāhuna fought to preserve their way of life against extirpating acts of colonial violence during the kingdom and post-monarchal eras.¹¹ What remain today are the vestiges of a once great society held in the hands of post-colonial survivors.

⁹ Amanda Lokelani Donlin, “When All the Kahuna Are Gone: Evaluating Hawai‘i’s Traditional Hawaiian Healers’ Law,” *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal* (William S. Richardson School of Law University of Hawaii) 12, no. 1 (2010): 211.

¹⁰ Isabella Abbott, *Lā‘au Hawai‘i: Traditional Hawaiian Uses of Plants*, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992), 98. Kāhuna rely on factum and its collection regarding disease or illness through Akua, keen observation and analysis; because of the many varieties of illnesses encountered by kāhuna, their knowledge naturally moves them into the category of epidemiologist also.

¹¹ Janine A. Powers, “Worlds Beyond Medicine: Nils P. Larsen’s Impact on Hawai‘i,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 39 (2005): 107.

In the 21st century kāhuna¹² are still practicing their healing art, and are concerned about the continued survival of their knowledge. In the case of lā‘au lapa‘au,¹³ its very capacity to survive another century has slowly been diminishing primarily because of a lack of time. This scarcity is manifest in two ways. The first is in the aging of kāhuna, and the second is in the sense of urgency created by social stressors to produce another kahuna before the passing of another teacher.¹⁴

Even though traditional norms of Hawaiian society today still expect kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au,¹⁵ like Levon Ohai,¹⁶ to follow established traditions¹⁷ that favor the passing and

¹² Kamaki Kanahale, “Lā‘au Lapa‘au”. Mo‘o ‘ōlelo presented at the Accountability of Proposing a Lā‘au Lapa‘au Bill: Levon Ohai, Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, April 2011. In 1998, the Hawaiian community recognized several people as being the experts who represented Hawai‘i’s remaining members of the ancient society of the kahuna: Henry Auwae, Malia Craver, Agnes Cope, Kalua Kaiahua, David Kala‘akea, and Margaret Machado. Kāhuna who wished not to be seen or heard were not listed or recognized in public, usually by their own volition, and remained unknown for some time, like the members of the Ohai family. Several years later, in 2000, Henry Auwae, Kalua Kaiahua and David Kala‘akea passed away and Margaret Machado passed away in 2009 at the age of 93. Agnes Cope is the final member of that 1998 group of recognized masters.

¹³ The meaning of this word as applied in this paper is plant medicine, or medicinal herbs.

¹⁴ I make this comment because “time” is one dynamic of the apprenticing experience that we do not have on our side. The protocol must be followed; however, because many kāhuna have been passing away, there is little left to represent them besides the voices of the few who remain, and the textbooks written about them and their practice. What do we do about the vacuum that has deprived us of kāhuna to heal and to teach us?

¹⁵ I am unaware as to when, who or what entity determined the beginnings of the “title” Kahuna Lā‘au Lapa‘au within his familial practice. It is unknown whether or not Levon received the title Kahuna Lā‘au Lapa‘au in a formal traditional fashion as in an ‘ūniki—a formal graduation ceremony from a traditional school—or if he assumed the title because of his extensive knowledge in lā‘au lapa‘au. (See chapter 3). Due to his sudden death, these questions remain unanswered. Nevertheless, because of his tireless work in lā‘au lapa‘au, he is known to many in the community as a Kahuna. He is a recognized traditional healer by Papa Ola Lōkahi (a federally approved organization that has been designated as the entity who approves the formation of Native Hawaiian healing councils and the healers they recruit. Papa Ola Lōkahi’s authority over Native Hawaiian medicine was established by the Hawai‘i State Legislature. Criteria: Act 153 “allowed the panels to determine their own criteria for certifying practitioners.” (Donlin: 227 Act 153-3, reprinted in 2005 Haw. Sess. Laws 378, 379.) Currently, if a Kūpuna Council wishes to gain authority to certify kahuna under the Healers’ Law, it must submit a request to POL. In this request, the council must include the names of its members and evidence showing that its members are good candidates for recognition. Traditional healers must disclose the names of their teachers, information about the healers’ families, and the traditional Hawaiian healing disciplines in which they are proficient.) (Donlin: 229 Ho‘ōla Lāhui Hawai‘i on Kaua‘i...) (Wilma Holī: Levon is one of our certified practitioners with Ho‘ōla Lāhui Hawai‘i) Because of this, I will continue to refer to Levon in this thesis, as he is known in the community, as a Kahuna Lā‘au Lapa‘au.

¹⁶ Levon Ohai was from Kapa‘a on the island of Kaua‘i. Having been taught in the ways of his grandfather in lā‘au lapa‘au, he chose to teach and perpetuate it in the community.

documenting of traditional knowledge within familial lines, Kānaka¹⁸ must respond from their various cultural contexts to preserve their knowledge and “life history.”¹⁹ Knowledge that was passed down in the traditional fashion transcended space and time as it was extremely rare. Having engaged in the process of documenting Levon Ohai’s “life history” in order to validate the birthright of all kāhuna, and to perpetuate Levon’s legacy, he suddenly passed away in March 2012, leaving me with interviews I conducted, past conversations, and his ‘ohana to tell his story.

In this partial life history, I provide in chapter 3 an *incomplete* list²⁰ of information. This withholding of information is a part of following the traditional practices of kānaka ‘ōiwi when maintaining the mana of a person or ‘ohana, in this case Levon Ohai. An example of this is found in Desha’s *Kamehameha and his Warrior Kekūhaupi‘o*, when Kekūhaupi‘o, during the final stages of completing his ‘ūniki²¹ to become a lua master himself, was to fight his teacher. His teacher had trained him in all the fighting moves he knew with the exception of one, in order to preserve his mana and his life. If the teacher had shared all of his knowledge with Kekūhaupi‘o, he would have had no way to attack or defend himself against his student. In relation to lā‘au lapa‘au, divulging Levon’s familial ‘ike in its entirety would

¹⁷ See note 12. At this meeting, Levon was explaining to the council of healers that he did not want to offend the traditional healing community by interfering, changing or altering the current protective law called Act 162 through the introduction of his Herbal Licensing bill, into the State of Hawai‘i’s legislature. His explanation for listening to them and changing the verbiage of his herbal bill was “I came from them, the traditional healing community.”

¹⁸ Native Hawaiians.

¹⁹ Annica Ojermark, *Presenting Life Histories: A literature review and annotated bibliography*, Chronic Poverty Research Center, 2007, 4. “Account of a life based on interviews and conversation.” The author provides further descriptions of the life history approach and differences from other forms of biographical research such as oral history, family history, and ethnography. See Literature Review section for terms and definitions used in biographical research.

²⁰ See He ‘Ano Hana, *Ke Koho: The Art of Choosing* : The Art of Choosing in chapter 3. There are various other reasons why certain pieces of information are withheld from student(s).

²¹ Graduation from a traditional school of learning i.e. hula and lua.

cease to maintain some degree of authority and potency over what Levon has already given to the public. This means that there are many things still to be learned from Levon's practice of lā'au lapa'au.

Questions to be Answered

1. What is the lineage of Levon's lā'au lapa'au knowledge and when did his apprenticeship begin as a Kahuna²² Lā'au Lapa'au? What was his life like, and who were some of the people that have empowered him in lā'au lapa'au?
2. What does the practice of herbal medicine mean to his 'ohana (family)? How and why does he select certain herbs (endemic, native, hānai²³) and their methodologies of preparation over others when treating individual cases of specific diseases and illnesses?
3. What is his vision for the future of lā'au lapa'au in contemporary medicine and education in the future? What things are needed to employ it, and are there foreseen obstacles that could prove it useless?

I chose to undertake this research in the spring of 2011, when I found that there was very little useable published material devoted to the detailing of Levon Ohai's life history. My thesis research will also be a significant addition to the published anthologies of kūpuna who have been interviewed in the past. My analysis of his life history will focus on important personal experiences, life events, and a socio-historical context that have all helped define Levon Ohai's outlook on life. I will also include his attitudes and personal beliefs. Of special interest to me are the relationships that he has forged with his 'ohana, fellow healing practitioners, and friends, how these people have been affected by his kuleana as a healer,

²² See note 15.

²³ Adopted. Here it refers to plants that have been adopted and used along side traditional herbs for the use of healing. An example of this is nīoi (capsicum annuum), also called cayenne or jalapenos peppers.

and how they affected him in embracing it. Controversial practices such as breaking away from kahuna protocols²⁴ to teach haole²⁵ some of the lā‘au lapa‘au traditions are to me important indicators of change. Why were the galvanizing events that led up to such decision(s) so influential, and did this shift in Levon’s view reflect a shift in his value for tradition? These are only a few of the questions that speak to my curiosity. The evolution of my analysis of his narrative will be reflected in the approaches and methodologies I employ to support a “telling” of Levon Ohai’s life history.

Three Areas of Concentration

My thesis will add new ‘ike²⁶ in more than one way to the academy, and will speak to several of the following focus areas within the Hawaiian Studies M. A. program:

- 1) Mālama Hawai‘i: Living Lōkahi with the ‘Āina- Land Resource Management
- 2) Mo‘olelo ‘Ōiwi: Native History and Literature
- 3) Kumu Kahiki: Comparative Polynesian and Indigenous Studies²⁷

This thesis research will provide a common benefit to these areas of focus by presenting Levon’s life history as a biographical text that will provide an analysis of experiences occurring on the ‘āina, among the people, on the ocean, and in the forest, all

²⁴ There were numerous times that Levon declared in his classes and in personal conversations with me that teaching lā‘au lapa‘au in the university was not within lā‘au lapa‘au protocols.

²⁵ I use this term not as a racial slur, but respectfully to mean any persons (including Hawaiians) not accustomed to Hawaiian traditions, beliefs, or practices. I have found that even Hawaiians born and raised away from the very culture that gives them their language and identity have openly refused to become ma‘a (accustomed) to it and debase its dignity with shallow words.

²⁶ Knowledge.

²⁷ HWST 670 is a graduate seminar class under the area of concentration called Kumu Kahiki: Comparative Polynesian and Indigenous Studies that compares gods/myths from ancient Tahiti by Teuira Henry (600 pages) with the six volumes of Hawaiian historians Kamakau and Malo. The mo‘olelo recorded by Teuira Henry names many plants used as medicine in Hawai‘i. The plants that appear in this text are comparable to some of the plants used by Levon Ohai.

laden with the additional gift of a “primary voice”—his voice, in mo‘olelo, speaking for himself.

As for what specific contributions this thesis can make to each of the focus areas, let’s begin with the Mālama ‘Āina focus. My work offers a window for understanding the lifespan of one of “land’s” lifelong friends, Levon Ohai. Identifying some of Levon’s human qualities and character is important in order to know how to expedite the operation of the word “mālama”²⁸ with aloha—kindness, love, and compassion—towards the limited environmental resources of our islands. In other words, the practice of land management today requires a resolute character that shares the same affinity for ‘āina as did the ancestors and which we may hope to find observable in the interviews. Future analysis of the interviews in regards to qualities of character would bolster the Native Hawaiian viewpoint of land management from a kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au.

The Mo‘olelo ‘Ōiwi area of focus will benefit from an added “mo‘o ‘ōlelo”²⁹ that compiles ‘Ōiwi recorded histories. The totality of the interviews and analysis of the narrative reveals gems about the phenomenological experience in Native-based knowledge systems like lā‘au lapa‘au, a revelation that will help to answer at least one significant question: “how do we know what we know?” The viewpoint or perspective of a person is sometimes understood as coming through the eyes only, but lā‘au lapa‘au epistemology suggests that the external environment is experienced not only by the eyes, but also through the whole of the body, and the soul.

The third area that will benefit from this research is Kumu Kahiki. The primary graduate class for this area is HWST 670 Kumu Kahiki: Comparative Hawaiian and Tahitian

²⁸ To take care of; to preserve and to protect.

²⁹ Succession of talk.

Cosmogonies. In it, Teuira Henry's 600 page historiographical work and cosmogonies of Tahiti are compared in depth with those of Kamakau and Malo. The frequent occurrences of lā'au names in these texts as well as information about their uses, are easily identifiable, and should now be compared with the lā'au names provided by Levon Ohai from the transliterations of his own lā'au lapa'au epistemology. In practice, such a comparative analysis must adopt a hermeneutical approach to ascertaining the hidden purpose, the function, and the meaning of these terms' inclusion in the recorded chants in these texts. Including Levon's lists of plants is a new concept that I would like to pursue. Though Levon's place and time in the 20th and 21st century could be seen as detrimental to the validity of his 'ike when compared to ancient or very old texts I would argue that what he knew about plants has great merit for this discussion because his 'ike is trans-generational, making it much older than he actual is.

Literature Review

Nā Hua 'Ōlelo: Life History

Before I begin the literature review, some definition of key terms is necessary. The life history approach is often confused with other forms of biographical research, but while there are similarities, each has distinct characteristics that produce different results and are used for specific audiences. The following table from *Presenting Life Histories: A literature review and annotated bibliography* by Annica Ojermark clarifies these differences.

Figure 1. Life History terminologies. *

Life History Terminology
Biographical research: Research undertaken on individual lives employing autobiographical documents, interviews or other sources and presenting accounts in various forms (e.g. in terms of editing, written, visual or oral presentation, and degree of researcher's narration and reflexivity).
Ethnography: Written account of a culture or group.
Family history: The systematic narrative and research of past events relating to a specific family, or specific families.
Narrative: A story, having a plot and existence separate from life of the teller. Narrative is linked with time as a fundamental aspect of social action. Narratives provide the organization for our actions and experiences, since we experience life through conceptions of the past, present and future.
Oral history: Personal recollections of events and their causes and effects. Also refers to the practice of interviewing individuals on their past experiences of events with the intention of constructing an historical account.
Case history: History of an event or social process, not of a person in particular.
Case study: Analysis and record of a single case.
Life history: Account of a life based on interviews and conversation. The life history is based on the collection of a written or transcribed oral account requested by a researcher. The life story is subsequently edited, interpreted and presented in one of a number of ways, often in conjunction with other sources. Life histories may be topical, focusing on only one segmented portion of a life, or complete, attempting to tell the full details of a life as it is recollected.
Life story: The account of a person's story of his or her life, or a segment of it, as told to another. It is usually quite a full account across the length of life but may refer to a period or aspect of the life experience. When related by interview to the researcher it is the result of an interactive relationship.
Narrative inquiry: Similar to 'biographical research' or 'life history research' this term is a loose frame of reference for a subset of qualitative research that uses personal narratives as the basis of research. 'Narrative' refers to a discourse form in which events and happenings are configured into a personal unity by means of a plot.
Testimonio: The first-person account of a real situation that involves repression and marginalization.

* Annica Ojermark, Presenting Life Histories: A literature review and annotated bibliography, Chronic Poverty Research Center, 2007, 4.

Ka ‘Imi ‘Ana: The Research

Literature present in this review includes books, conference reports, empirical research, peer-reviewed articles, journals, and dissertations. The amount of published literature on Levon Ohai is small. A search using Pubget, Google Scholar, CrossRef,³⁰ and PubMed Medline³¹ yielded that Levon Ohai co-authored (1) empirical research article,³² was mentioned in (1) annual journal,³³ referenced in (2) books,^{34, 35} and acknowledged in (1) dissertation.³⁶ Searching outside of the criteria used by these engines located (1) DVD³⁷ also co-authored by him. The Online Indexes to the *Honolulu Advertiser & Honolulu Star Bulletin* produced (6) articles.³⁸ The Biography and Genealogy Master Index,³⁹ the Hawai‘i Pacific Journal Index (HPJI)⁴⁰ and AnthroSource⁴¹ yielded nothing.

A further gathering of “Ohai” related materials on the broad road of the Internet resulted in an interesting find. After typing “Levon Ohai” in the search box, the results were

³⁰ Pubget, Google Scholar and CrossRef are three scholarly search engines with access to numerous databases that store academic and professional literature: legal opinions, journals, books, patents, etc.

³¹ PubMed Medline indexes life science journals.

³² Mary R. Jaeger Greer, Rex G. Cates, F. Brent Johnson, Driss Lamnaouer, and Levon Ohai, “Activity of acetone and methanol extracts from thirty-one medicinal plant species against herpes simplex virus types 1 and 2,” *Pharmaceutical Biology* 48, no. 9 (2010): 1031-1037.

³³ ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui, “‘Ike ‘Āina: Native Hawaiian Culturally Based Indigenous Literacy,” *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being* 5, no. 1 (2008): 232.

³⁴ Edith Kanaka‘ole Foundation, *Ma‘iola Indigenous Health Program: Curriculum Guide*, Hilo, HI: The Foundation, 2003, Bibliography. No page numbers in the bibliography.

³⁵ Rita Beamish, *Perils of Paradise*, (Honolulu, HI: Bess Press, 2004).

³⁶ Kāwika Winter, “Hawaiian ‘Awa, Piper Methysticum: A Study in Ethnobotany” 2004, iii.

³⁷ University of Hawaii at Manoa. An Introduction to Ethnobotany: Peaceful Warriors. Ethnobotany, University of Hawai‘i, 2007. <http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/ethnobotany/modules/Hawaiian HealthCare.html>.

³⁸ The six articles were not about Levon Ohai, but about his father Leo Ohai. These articles will be used to develop the context narrative, and construct history.

³⁹ This is a database accessed through the UH library electronic resources which collects biographical information throughout the world, and from all time periods.

⁴⁰ HPJI is an index to 140 journals with specific publications about Hawai‘i and the Pacific region.

⁴¹ AnthroSource is a database of the American Anthropological Association which provides access to past and current anthropological articles from 32 journals.

situated into four types of websites: sites that announced him as a speaker/presenter for some activity; sites that interviewed him; personal sites of former students mentioning his name; and sites that extolled him and other Hawaiians as cultural icons. Although Internet searches like this can be considered suspect, it must be noted that their value here was to identify peripheral sources that show the degree of exposure Levon had in the community.

He Wehewehe Mana‘o: An Explanation

It is clear that little biographical research has been done on Levon Ohai, and that this is symptomatic of the “state of knowledge” in local cultural biography. The literature review reveals a huge “gap” of information about him as a person, a kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au, a fisherman, a former professional athlete, a Hawaiian, an educator, a farmer, a counselor, a father, a son, a husband, a Vietnam veteran, and a private writer. The infinitesimal amount of “Levon” related sources available today creates a demand for space to tell his mo‘olelo.⁴²

Now, I turn to several important sources that while not about Ohai himself—we have already established that there is a deficiency in this area—provide important information and context for portraying and evaluating Ohai’s achievements. A brief synopsis for each book identifies its applicability to this thesis:

Ka Po‘e Kahiko: The People of Old, by Samuel Kamakau;

Ka ‘Oihana Lawai‘a: Hawaiian Fishing Traditions by Daniel Kahā‘ulelio;

Hawaiian Antiquities: Moolelo Hawaii by David Malo;

Kahuna Lā‘au Lapa‘au: The Practice of Hawaiian Herbal Medicine by June Gutmanis;

Native Planters in Old Hawaii: Their Life, Lore, and Environment, by E. S. Handy;

⁴² Story, history.

Nā Kua‘āina: Living Hawaiian Culture, by Davianna McGregor; and

Hā‘ena: Through the Eyes of the Ancestors, by Carlos Andrade

Ka Po‘e Kahiko: The People of Old, by Samuel Kamakau was originally written in the Hawaiian newspapers *Ke Au Oko ‘a* and *Kū‘oko ‘a* between October 20, 1866 and February 2, 1871. Since then various parts have been collected in books—in the original Hawaiian and in English translations. As a Hawaiian nationalist, his writings were inspired by a Hawaiian culture whose history, beliefs, and practices were falling into the annals of time with the oncoming of westernization and Christianity.

Kamakau’s simple yet complex depiction of the traditions and beliefs of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi during this transitory period discusses Hawaiian society and its hierarchy, the organization of the family unit and the function of family ‘aumakua,⁴³ the world(s) of the spirit, ‘oihana lapa‘au (medical practices), magic and sorcery. The chapter on ‘oihana lapa‘au is essential to this thesis because it describes the different types of kāhuna lapa‘au, the ‘oihana ancient origins and organizations, the apprenticeship training process, and specific remedies.

Ka ‘Oihana Lawai‘a: Hawaiian Fishing Traditions by Daniel Kahā‘ulelio is a compilation of articles that appeared in the Hawaiian language newspaper *Ka Nūpepa Kū‘oko ‘a* from February 24, 1902 until July 4th of that same year. These articles described in detail the most complete list we have of traditional fishing variations as practiced by Kānaka ‘Ōiwi. The book was published in both Hawaiian and English, which benefit the Hawaiian language learner in understanding and interpreting the

⁴³ Family or personal gods, deified ancestors who might assume the shape of an animal, especially a shark.

descriptions in further detail. The chapters describing fishing practices are important to this research because Levon's family kuleana also lies with the sea as fishermen.

Hawaiian Antiquities: Mo'olelo Hawai'i by David Malo served as a model for following Hawaiian scholars who would be writing on the culture and beliefs of Kānaka 'Ōiwi. Malo's descriptions of Hawaiian society and material culture are viewed as primary information because as a young man he lived in a Hawaiian society that was pre-Christian (1793-1853). Malo recounts the 'ōiwi worldview and the classification systems used in identifying and describing the numerous divisions of land, ocean, heavens, commoners, ali'i, food, conduct, religion, beliefs, ceremony, wa'a, heiau, kahuna, sports, hula, recreation, and tradition. Of value to this thesis is Malo's explanation of the process of medically treating the sick in chapter 30 (p. 107), which is more detailed than other accounts, with regard to what action the kahuna takes when treating a patient.

June Gutmanis's book a classic in Hawaiian literature is *Kahuna Lā'au Lapa'au: The Practice of Hawaiian Herbal Medicine*. It delves into the peculiarities of the practice of this type of kahuna from ancient times until the 1970's. It reveals specific practices from the prayers given to the gods for and on behalf of the patient.

Additionally, remedies and cures of various kinds were included which were specific to illnesses introduced into the Kānaka 'Ōiwi population at the onset of colonialism in Hawai'i. Terminologies used in the practice of lā'au lapa'au are also listed to help understand the 'ike that the kāhuna possessed. This book is important to this research as it documents the changes occurring in the belief systems of Native Hawaiians and the kāhuna themselves, and how they negotiated a society's growing complexity of

beliefs that were both Christian and Hawaiian. Gutmanis’s sources are impressive, relying on people who were kāhuna themselves or were related to family that were kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au.

Native Planters in Old Hawaii: Their Life, Lore, and Environment by E. S. Handy is written as an ethnographic text on the cultivation practices, beliefs, and rituals of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi that explores the connections they had with the ‘āina.⁴⁴ It describes the various horticultural skills they used, the types of tools, planting patterns, land and plant classifications, methods of water irrigation, and the mo‘olelo that accompanied ceremony in relation to planting practices. The mahi‘ai—farmer—and his keen observation of the world around him is the centerpiece of this book that connects to the phenomenological experiences that Ohai described in the use of lā‘au lapa‘au. Its weight in descriptions of mahi‘ai practice provides the comparative ‘ike.

Nā Kua‘āina: Living Hawaiian Culture by Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor focuses on the kua‘āina⁴⁵ and discusses their position in modern times, viewing their small communities as cultural oases where the traditions and beliefs of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi still thrive. *Nā Kua‘āina* also carefully demonstrates a transition of areas that once had large Hawaiian population centers to mixed-blood communities through intermarriage with immigrant labor workers who eventually settled in Hawai‘i. The descriptors and personal accounts of ‘ōiwi parallel the social and cultural evolution of Levon’s local culture in Kapa‘a on Kaua‘i. The accounts of social changes however, are just general

⁴⁴ Land, earth; that which feeds.

⁴⁵ Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina: Living Hawaiian Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 108. McGregor uses two meanings of kua‘āina in her book. The first is its historical meaning as mentioned in the Hawaiian Dictionary by Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert. This is a “person from the country, rustic, backwoodsman; of the country, countrified, rustic, rural. Lit. back land.” The second: a person directly related to the land who has a particular knowledge of it. These people are the remnants of ancient Hawaiian society and a source for restoring cultural knowledge.

descriptions of what happened throughout the islands. The more intimate stories of how and why such changes affected the Ohai family on Kaua‘i are of interest and applicability to this research.

Hā‘ena: Through the Eyes of the Ancestors, by Carlos Andrade, is an important book because the mo‘olelo of Hā‘ena, Kaua‘i is told through the perspective of the historian-geographer (Andrade), interwoven with wefts of personal interviews of the many people who have lived there as living testimony. This book is laden with local lore, mo‘olelo, and ways of living—hula, fishing, weaving, ali‘i, maka‘āinana and more. Andrade cleverly utilizes chants and a collection of memory-laden interviews to talk about the ways of life in this once thriving land division even after changes in the way that land was managed and handled. *Hā‘ena* stands as a work of significance for this thesis because it focuses closely on a specific era and place very similar to Levon’s in the ahupua‘a⁴⁶ of Kapa‘a.

Activity of acetone and methanol extracts from thirty-one medicinal plant species against herpes simplex virus types 1 and 2, is an article⁴⁷ that was co-authored by Levon with several other scientific researchers. It was a report that surveyed thirty-one plants used by indigenous healers to find out whether or not they were comparable in efficacy to others in terms of antiviral benefits after completing the bioassay⁴⁸ process. Notwithstanding that it was written for an audience in the

⁴⁶ Land division usually extending from the uplands to the sea, so called because the boundary was marked by a heap (ahu) of stones surmounted by an image of a pig (pua‘a), or because a pig or other tribute was laid on the altar as tax to the chief.

⁴⁷ Mary R. Jaeger Greer, Rex G. Cates, F. Brent Johnson, Driss Lamnaouer, and Levon Ohai, “Activity of acetone and methanol extracts from thirty-one medicinal plant species against herpes simplex virus types 1 and 2,” *Pharmaceutical Biology* 48, no. 9 (2010): 1031-1037.

⁴⁸ Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged. S.v. "bioassay." Retrieved December 14, 2011 from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/bioassay>. A “method of determining the concentration, activity, or effect of a

biopharmaceutical community, and that it neither mentions anything about kāhuna or the traditional medicinal practices of Hawai‘i, the real interest for this thesis is on things that ultimately were not said. The value of this article is that it sheds light on issues that have long plagued the relationship between native healing practices and the science community in bioprospecting.⁴⁹ However, if the ‘ike is given with agreeable consensus, then is it still considered bioprospecting? Because it was given with consensus, Levon’s actions are perhaps not at all what they seem. In fact, he was adding to a new paradigm in lā‘au lapa‘au.⁵⁰

These readings are representative of a much larger bibliography that addresses issues of change during the lifetime of Ohai. The time periods that each book covers overlap almost seamlessly with the others, from the mālama ‘āina perspective. These texts serve as historical guideposts for the evolution of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi thought, beliefs, and practices, allowing us to retrace stories back into the past. Kamakau, Kahā‘ulelio, and Malo provide the foundation and act as guides for what a kahuna lapa‘au and a fisherman is, what they do, and how they perform this work. The clarity of these sources makes it easier to establish definitions and

change to substance by testing its effect on a living organism and comparing this with the activity of an agreed standard.”

⁴⁹ Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged. S.v. "bioprospecting." Retrieved December 7 2011 from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/bioprospecting>. "(Business/Commerce) searching for plant or animal species for use as a source of commercially exploitable products, such as medicinal drugs."

⁵⁰ There are two examples of this preexisting lā‘au lapa‘au paradigm of sharing traditional ‘ike of plants with a science related community. The first example comes from two knowledgeable kānaka maoli who worked for the Hawai‘i Territorial Board of Health named D. M. Ka‘aiakamanu and J. K. ‘Akina. While employed with the Territorial Board of Health they collected plant knowledge and efficacy related data and had the information compiled for the Board of Health. Their work is now known today as Hawaiian Herbs of Medicinal Value: Found Among the Mountains and Elsewhere in the Hawaiian Islands, and Known to the Hawaiians to Possess Curative and Palliative Properties Most Effective in Removing Physical Ailments. The final example comes from the contributions of three Hawaiian master healers and one kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au. Quoting from the "Acknowledgements" section of the following article, Christopher P. Locher, et al., "Antiviral activity of Hawaiian medicinal plants against human immunodeficiency Virus Type-1 (HIV-1)," *Phytomedicine* (Elsevier GmbH) 2, no. 3 (January 1996): 259-264, "The authors extend their gratitude to Irving Butch Richards, Margaret Kalehuamakano‘elu‘ulu‘u‘onapali Machado, Rev. David Ka‘alakea, and Henry Auwae for sharing their knowledge of Hawaiian medicinal plant use."

contexts that prove very useful when comparing these accounts with the kahuna of the 21st century.

Gutmanis and Handy offer specific accounts about the practice of the farmer, and the kahuna during times when the socio-cultural and economic changes in Hawai‘i were affecting the entire society, changing the dynamics by which the farmer and the kahuna believed and performed their duties. The prayers, perspectives, rituals, actions, and beliefs recorded by these two authors offer valuable insights into the phenomenology of being who they are.

McGregor and Andrade’s books describe an already assimilated Hawaiian culture struggling to survive in the 20th and 21st centuries. Their contents offer a glimpse into the small, yet interconnected cultural communities which fits the lifestyle in Levon’s home in the ahupua‘a of Kapa‘a. And one last note for McGregor's *Nā Kua ‘āina*: it contains many first-hand accounts of the continuation of lā‘au traditions, and of the status of kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au in those various areas.

The final piece by Ohai and his co-authors is characteristic of the work produced in the past by the academic and professional communities⁵¹ on lā‘au lapa‘au. The deep-seated animosity of the science and social science communities toward encroachment into their culture comes to the forefront when a person such as Levon assists in the professional research process. Mutual distrust between Hawaiian culture and “the west” in Hawai‘i has led to ‘Ōiwi marginalization. This last collaborative article raises important questions. What benefits does Levon see as results from sharing traditional ‘ike, and does this new paradigm of thinking enact an internal shift in philosophy of practice?

⁵¹ I am referring to the communities of academic and white-collar professionals who steal the intellectual property of indigenous people by bioprospecting or by taking without permission, respect of persons, consent, or reciprocity.

Nā Kumu ‘Ē A‘e: Other Sources

Certain key sources are crucial in composing this “life history.” First and foremost are my interviews with Levon Ohai and the family members closest to him. In *Biographical Research*, Brian Roberts writes that “Family stories are the grist of social description, the raw material for both history and social change.”⁵² Such raw material appears time and time again in the mo‘olelo, myths, and legends of Hawai‘i, and at the individual family level, influences and guides the actions of its members. The culture of preserving memories in a Hawaiian family produces the most important sources for any life history, for as Paul Atkinson comments, “Memory is a cultural phenomenon, and is therefore a collective one.”⁵³

The Ohai family resources have been supplemented by three other genealogical archives: the Hawai‘i State Public Library; the Department of Health Vital Records, and the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Hawaiian Collection. All provide birth, marriage, death records, and U.S. census information.

The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum contains rare collections and manuscripts related to my field of research. Located in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, it has Levon’s family lā‘au lapa‘au book which will provide insight into the perspective of the kahuna. Additionally, the HEN (Hawaiian Ethnological Notes), also kept at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, holds a collection of books written by kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au who were contemporaries with Levon Ohai’s “great-tūtū Kainoa” and his grandfather—Ben Ohai. Some of these books and manuscripts provide multiple notes for remedies, or remedies for a single illness, and are written mostly in Hawaiian.

⁵² Brian Roberts, *Biographical Research*, (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002), 145.

⁵³ James A Holstein, and Jaber F. Gubrium, *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 810.

Methodology

Two theoretical concepts inform my approach life story: narrative theory,⁵⁴ and symbolic interactionism.⁵⁵ The methodologies used for the interviewing stages, I adopted two approaches: the life history interview and the ethnographic interview. These approaches will be discussed in the section entitled Nā Kūkā Kama‘ilio: Interviews.

Loina Mo‘omeheu Hawai‘i: Hawaiian Etiquette

Kānaka ‘Ōiwi oral traditions perpetuate the memory and history of the people, with the belief that these will teach and guide future generations. Oral history requires the curious listener, one in line with cultural customs that stress the values of oral sources of knowledge, and especially empirical traditions such as lā‘au lapa‘au. Considering carefully the approach and context when asking kūpuna for anything, including mo‘olelo, becomes important.

Both my cultural position and the official context for my inquiry (academia) are in conflict with Hawaiian values. I conducted interviews and questioned Levon in ways that helped *me* to complete *my* research, rather than receiving what Ohai, as a kumu, *wants* to teach me. This seems to me a self-serving situation. I believe that cultural guidelines helped Ohai and myself move past the potentially damaging context of my inquiries. Hawaiian culture prizes the balance that comes from mutual respect, and especially with kūpuna. Good manners are noticed by others, because they reflect the refinement of a person’s character and family. Mary Kawena Pukui reminds us of this in the following ‘ōlelo no‘eau:⁵⁶

⁵⁴ TheFreeDictionary.com. S.v. “Narrative theory.” Retrieved December 6 2011 from <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Narrative+theory>

⁵⁵ TheFreeDictionary.com. S.v. “Symbolic interaction theory.” Retrieved December 14 2011 from <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Symbolic+interaction+theory>. “People act toward things based on the meaning those things have for them; and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation.”

⁵⁶ Proverb, wise saying, traditional saying.

‘Ōlelo No‘eau No.

1007

Nā ‘Ōlelo No‘eau

Hilu ka i‘a, he i‘a no‘eno‘e.

The fish is the hilu an attractive one.

A quiet well-behaved person. When a pregnant woman longed for *hilu* fish, the child born to her would be well-mannered, quiet, and unobtrusive.⁵⁷

884

He pane makamaka ‘ole.

An answer that keeps no friends.

A rude retort.⁵⁸

393

Hā‘ale i ka wai a ka manu.

The rippling water where birds gather.

A beautiful person. The rippling water denotes a quiet, peaceful nature which attracts others.⁵⁹

839

**He Napo‘opo‘o i ‘ikea ke po‘o,
he Napo‘opo‘o i ‘ikea ka pepeiao.**

A [person of] Napo‘opo‘o whose head is seen; a Napo‘opo‘o whose

⁵⁷ Mary Kawena Pukui, “‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum special publication no. 71. (Honolulu, Hawaii: Bishop Museum Press, 1983), 108.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 95.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 49.

ears are seen.

A play on *nipo 'o* (to sink), as the sun
sinks in the west. No matter what
your claim to rank may be, we can see
that your head is low and that your
mindfulness of etiquette is equally low.⁶⁰

The attractive and unattractive qualities alluded to in the previous proverbs inform behavior, which is still important to many Hawaiian families today. Kāwika Winter⁶¹ has written that failing to adhere to display such manners before, during, and after an interview risks losing the opportunity to find out what you need to know. “Stepping out of these bounds could result in my being restricted from access to information, or being given wrong information as a punishment for not following the cultural guidelines.”⁶² In my own family, these guidelines were expressed as “kulikuli ka waha” (be quiet), “you like me pull you[r] ear?” (listen), “jus watch!”(observe), and “ho‘omanawanui” (be patient). In short, for Hawaiians it is better to close your mouth, observe with your eyes, listen with your ears, and work with patience.

Respectfully asking permission to conduct research on Levon was of the utmost priority, and he gave me permission to conduct oral history interviews with him, and the rest of his family. Establishing a rapport with his family through a *makana*⁶³ also helped in acquiring interviews. From the very beginning, Levon and I established specific boundaries.

He made clear what personal information he would not give, what questions should not be

⁶⁰ Ibid., 91.

⁶¹ Kāwika Winter (Ph.D.) is a Native Hawaiian scholar and graduate of UHM who currently serves as the director of Limahuli Garden and Preserve on Kaua‘i.

⁶² Kāwika Winter, “Hawaiian ‘Awa, Piper Methysticum: A Study in Ethnobotany” (MS thesis, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 2004), 20.

⁶³ Gift, present; reward, award, donation, prize; to give a gift.

asked, how I could use the information that he shared with me. Protecting whatever he shared is my primary concern and duty as a researcher, as a Hawaiian, as a student, and as a friend. Intellectual property rights privy only to Levon and his family are involved. As Levon, and his family, are the primary voices (narrators) of this partial life history, I have completed the application process as outlined by the University of Hawai‘i's Committee on Human Studies—IRB to obtain permission from the people in this life history research.

Nā Kūkā Kama‘ilio/ Wahi: Interviews and Location

As previously mentioned, my two models for gathering information are the life history interview and the ethnographic interview. The life history questions were about his life from childhood until the present. The interviews were semi-structured and informal. The ethnographic approach focused upon understanding his use of plants as medicine, and recording his methods for selecting them when using them as medicine. The interviews with Ohai and his family occurred whenever he or they were most available which required flexibility on my part. Interviews took place at Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, his home on Kaua‘i, and in the forest.

Ethnographic Approach

The ethnographic approach was used exclusively for discussing Levon’s lā‘au lapa‘au practice. A semi-structured approach worked better for gathering this information rather than the “life history” approach.

Data Collection

1. Interviews (informal, semi-structured)
2. Participant Observation
3. Free-listing

Ethnographic Interviews⁶⁴

The majority of my interview time, however, focused on Levon's life and key experiences that have influenced him. Substantial time was devoted to his sharing of accumulated plant knowledge. A variety of questions, from specific to open-ended questions, was employed.⁶⁵

Participant Observation

Participant observation of Levon and his family on O'ahu and Kaua'i when conducting or making lā'au lapa'au was also important. Held in the communities they reside in, this allowed me to witness additional healing modalities and the associations he has with traditional beliefs. Throughout, I have kept a systematic record of observations and informal conversations, which assisted me in identifying aspects of Levon's life that needed to be examined further, sometimes through additional interviews.

Free-listing

I used free-listing—also known as free-recall elicitation—to create a list of the plants and plant parts that Levon has traditionally used.⁶⁶ I also recorded, when possible, his stories about each plant and the illnesses they helped treat. This list helps me identify the order of preference that Levon placed on a range of plants, which grants us some insight into how he arranged and conceptualized his healing art.

⁶⁴ Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein eds., "The History of the Interview," *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*, Edited by (California: Thousand Oaks, 2002), 39-40. This type of interview is useful for discovering possible social patterns between the relationships of various subjects.

⁶⁵ Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, How to do oral history, 3rd ed., (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 18.

⁶⁶ F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein Johnson eds., "Elicitation Techniques for Interviewing." *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*. (California: Thousand Oaks, 2002), 501. Free-recall is when informants are asked to recall as much they can on a topic without being given specific examples.

Chapter Headings: The Questions

1. *What is the lineage of his lā‘au lapa‘au knowledge, and when did his apprenticeship begin? Who were some of the people that have impacted his life, and what have they done to empower him?*

At a meeting with other traditional healers, Kamaki Kanahele⁶⁷ said to Levon, “I know, we all know [pointing to the other healers] your mo‘okū‘auhau; we all know your genealogy and that you are like us. We know your father Leo and where he comes from.”⁶⁸ This declaration was an important one for this thesis: it confirmed that Levon and his family, like others, were descendants of the healers of Hawai‘i. I anticipate that eventually I will determine how Levon’s lineage is connected, if not intertwined, with those we learn about in the mo‘olelo of Hawai‘i. To be able to declare your own genealogy is powerful and comforting, because it speaks to how we as ‘Ōiwi use mo‘okū‘auhau to validate our actions. When moving forward, we never delineate a new path without the support of both our living and deceased ancestors. In my mana‘o,⁶⁹ Levon’s apprenticeship as a young boy into the world of lā‘au lapa‘au was a well thought out decision by his grand-father Ben Ohai to teach the young Levon the nature of his craft. As a specific ‘ōiwi epistemology, it relies heavily on the empirically observed and experimental experiences. Ben Ohai was careful in his handling of his knowledge, and when imagining its possibilities in the future, he knew its power could continue to benefit communities through his mo‘opuna⁷⁰ Levon.

⁶⁷ Kamaki Kanahele is a renowned kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au from Kaua‘i, and currently serves as the director for Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center’s traditional healing center.

⁶⁸ Kamaki Kanahele, “Lā‘au Lapa‘au,” Mo‘o ‘ōlelo presented at the Accountability of Proposing a Lā‘au Lapa‘au Bill: Levon Ohai, Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, April 2011.

⁶⁹ Thought, idea, belief or opinion.

⁷⁰ Grandchild.

Applying this newfound ‘ike created a sense of awe within Levon at different stages in his life. As a child, Levon frequently witnessed the applicability of lā‘au lapa‘au in every day life; as a young adult and in married life Levon used lā‘au for himself and those closest to him. And his years as a kupuna neither limited his opportunities to refine his practice nor slowed his desire of sharing it with everyone.

2. What does the practice of herbal medicine mean to his ‘ohana (family)? How and why does he select certain herbs (endemic, native, hānai)⁷¹ and methods of preparation over others when dealing with specific diseases and illnesses?

To have an ‘ohana imbued with a particular ‘ike, in my thinking, empowers its individual members to perpetuate and to magnify its concepts and practices. How possessing something so valuable brings meaning to a person’s life informs Levon’s sharing of his life. The familial generations preceding Levon must have thought the same. If they had not, then Levon would not have had the ‘ike he possessed. While working with Levon at Kamakakūokalani, I saw him use this ‘ike in many ways; for example, the way he chose one set of plants over another, even though both sets could have accomplished the same purposes in healing. Why he preferred one over the other is a question for later discussion that can enlighten us as to how one kahuna classifies degrees of efficacy in treating certain illnesses and disease. And one final question: if Levon had neither set of plants at his disposal, how would he approached the healing process?

3. What is Levon Ohai’s vision for lā‘au lapa‘au in contemporary medicine, and in the future? What things are needed to employ it, and are there foreseen limitations / obstacles that could make it useless?

⁷¹ Adopted. The way that it is used here refers to any plants that have been adopted and used along side traditional herbs for the use of healing. Two examples are nīoi (capsicum annum) and aloe—commonly called aloe vera.

In the 21st century, biomedicine and its methods for treating the human body have marginalized cultural healing practices as only semi-valid health care for people. In “Studying Knowledge, Culture, and Behavior in Applied Medical Anthropology,” Pertti and Gretel Pelto note that, “Anthropologists working in various primary-health contexts have frequently felt frustration that health-system policy makers and practitioners appear to pay little heed to the importance of understanding the cultural beliefs and knowledge systems of the peoples they are meant to serve.”⁷² This lack of understanding about indigenous peoples’ approach to health care often pushes patients away from being treated by a western doctor. A greater degree of understanding and sensitivity by doctors and nurses towards indigenous peoples’ beliefs, and willingness to work with patients who also seek a traditional healer, could begin to close this gap of inequity. The Peltos certainly state the current problem with biomedicine (modern health professionals, western medicine):

Often *beliefs* are used to connote ideas that are erroneous from the perspective of biomedicine and that constitute obstacles to appropriate behavior. For example, health professionals would apply the term *belief* to that feature of a folk model that explains fever-associated convulsions in infants as a sign of spirit possession and that lead families to seek help from a spiritual healer rather than a trained medical provider.⁷³

Levon’s and my own beliefs are quite clear: lā‘au lapa‘au as well as the other healing arts of Hawai‘i should be incorporated into the health plan regime of hospital patients when they are already familiar with its practices and precepts or if out of convenience they would choose a traditional healing methodology.

⁷² Pertti and Gretel H. Pelto, “Studying Knowledge, Culture, and Behavior in Applied Medical Anthropology,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (1997), 148.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 2

KA HA'I 'ANA I KA MO'OLELO: TELLING THE STORY

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to presenting a brief description of Levon Ammon Ohai's life based on what he shared publicly in his classes, what he disclosed during interviews, and what other family members have shared about him. Since Levon passed away at the beginning of March 2012, we must now look to the mo'olelo he told and left behind for personal information and insights. Throughout, I encourage the reader to take the extra moment to notice the veiled layers of meaning in some of his comments, as they are characteristic of the complexity, subtleness, and resemblance of kaona.⁷⁴ Recreating the appropriate context for these short impactful recollections of his life and the "telling" of them is the primary goal of this chapter.

Kekauaimokuohaikainoa: "Great-tūtū Kainoa"

We often herald people's lives by beginning with their birth as the pinnacle event that established their presence on the earth. In the case of Levon Ammon Ohai, however, we see that the making of such a man began many years prior to his birth. As far as Levon was concerned, it was the hand of Akua⁷⁵ and his ancestors that gave him the knowledge of healing. His mo'okū'auhau as a master of the lā'au in his practice comes from his kūpuna of two different lineages, originating in Hawai'i and China. We will begin with his lineage from Hawai'i.

⁷⁴ Hidden meaning or concealed reference to a person, place or thing.

⁷⁵ The word akua (lower-cased), in this paper refers to god, or chief. The word Akua (capitalized) means God. As a devout Latter-Day Saint or Mormon, Levon uses the term Akua interchangeably with 'Iō, Iesu Kristo, and Jesus Christ. 'Aumakua (singular form) or 'aumākua (plural form) refer to ancestral guardians or as Levon would say "angels."

My ‘ohana goes like all Hawaiians, if you Hawaiian, you know. Sometimes it’s difficult to trace because they had no written language. So, as far back as what is handed down to our family from my tūtūs,⁷⁶ we came from the Big Island, Hawai‘i.⁷⁷

His great-grandfather Kekauaimokuohaikainoa, also known as “great-tūtū Kainoa,” through whom Levon traced his mo‘okū‘auhau for lā‘au lapa‘au, was living on Hawai‘i Island. This was sometime between the 1870’s and the 1880’s assuming that his birth occurred around 1855. At some point, Kekauaimokuohaikainoa stole away on a ship to save his life when a problem occurred in Kohala. Levon told the story this way:

[...] my great-grandfather who came from Māui, was living in the Big Island, he made the girl friend of the Captain of the King’s guard at the time hāpai,⁷⁸ and they were going to kill him because of what he did. So, they, all the native warriors⁷⁹ put out, you know, wanted sale on his head And so that he wouldn’t get killed he stole

⁷⁶ Tūtū means grandparent. However, Levon’s use of tūtū is familial in that it is inclusive of the great-grandparent generation. In Hawaiian, the term for great-grandparent is kupuna kuakahi. Therefore, Levon calls his paternal great-grandfather Kekauaimokuohaikainoa, “great-tūtū Kainoa.”

⁷⁷ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, “E Kū Makani: Oral History Interview with Levon Ohai,” September 2011, transcript, 4.

⁷⁸ To carry child; pregnant.

⁷⁹ Levon uses the term “warriors” instead of koa, pū‘ali, or soldier. The word “warriors” in the recounting of this mo‘olelo may create some confusion as the word “warrior” can suggest malo-clad warriors from the time period of the late 1700’s to the early 1800’s. By the 1840’s and 50’s, the Kingdom of Hawai‘i had already been modernizing its army. Ulukau: The Hawaiian Electronic Library, “Ulukau.org.” Polk 1880: Hawaiian kingdom statistical and commercial directory and tourists’ guide, 1880/1881. 1880-1881. <http://ulukau.org/elib/cgi-bin/library?c=polk1880&a=q&q=army&summarise=1&l=en&w=utf-8&t=1> (accessed October 15, 2012). From page 614 of Polk 1880: Hawaiian Kingdom Statistical and Commercial Directory and Tourists’ Guide, 1880/1881, we gain an understanding of the development of the Kingdom army since the time of Kamehameha I. “From that time forward the organization of the military was made to conform more and more closely each year to civilized methods, so that in 1843, when Lord Byron, the British commander arrived, a grand review was held on the plain of Kula o Kahua (to the eastward of Honolulu) participated in by the marines and sailors of the British ships and a force of about fifteen hundred Hawaiians, uniformed, armed and drilled in such a manner that at a short distance away, scarcely any difference could be perceived in them and their foreign friends.”

himself on one of the ships in the 1800's and went back to Māui. So he stayed on Māui for a while, at the place of his birth, but they pursued him on Māui.⁸⁰

Kekauaimokuohaikainoa must have been living near relatives who moved from Māui to Hawai'i Island; alternatively, they may have originally been from the Kohala area and intermarried with those on Māui. Kānaka 'ōiwi of Kekauaimokuohaikainoa's time and those of previous Hawai'i Island and Māui generations have historically been tied together politically through associations of the island chiefs, war, ho'āo^{81, 82} and moe mau.⁸³

Kekauaimokuohaikainoa was evidently an important person among the Hawaiians of that time and place. Levon informs us that great-tūtū Kainoa, had made “the girl-friend of the Captain of the King's guard at the time hāpai,”⁸⁴ indicating that he lived in Kohala sometime between 1860 to at latest the 1880's. This was sometime during the reign of these monarchs: Kamehameha V—Lot Kapuāiwa (1863-1872), William Charles Lunalilo (January 8, 1873 until February 3, 1874), David Kalākaua (February 12, 1874 until January 20, 1891).

Whatever the circumstances were, he had become acquainted enough with the Captain of the

⁸⁰ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 5.

⁸¹ To marry; marriage (old term, probably lit. to stay until daylight). It is the term defining the practice and therefore the custom of Native Hawaiians from the ancient times.

⁸² Mary K. Pukui 'Ōlelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1983. The following traditional proverbs assist in understanding cultural values on seeking marriage or companionship. Awaiāulu ke aloha. (Love made fast by tying together—Marriage) ON 245; Uo 'uo 'ia a pa'a. (Tied fast together—Married. 'Uo is to tie feathers together in preparation for lei making). ON 2854; Uliuli kai holo ka manō. (Where the sea is dark, sharks swim—Sharks are found in the deep sea. Also applied to men out seeking the society of the opposite sex.) ON 2865; 'Uo 'ia i ka mania ho'okāhi. (Strung [like flowers] on the same lei needle. —Married). ON 2881. He ali'i no mai ka pa'a a ke ali'i; he kanaka no mai ka pa'a a ke kanaka. (A chief from the foundation of chiefs; a commoner from the foundation of commoners—A chief is a chief because his ancestors were; a commoner is a commoner because his ancestors were. Often said to a young person of chiefly lineage to warn that if he wishes to preserve the rank of his descendants, he should see that his mate is of chiefly rank and not a commoner).

⁸³ To live with a mate out of wedlock; spouse. Lit., constant mating.

⁸⁴ Pregnant.

King's guard and their families so that he eventually fell in love with the Captain's wahine.⁸⁵ As the news about their secret union was disclosed, great-tūtū Kainoa escaped from Kohala for his life. Perhaps because he knew all about their tracking and reconnoitering practices for wanted individuals, he also changed his name "So our name is supposed to be Kainoa," Levon said, "but, it was switched to Ohai. Our full name is supposed to be Kekauaimokuohaikainoa. Kainoa was dropped Ohai was picked up. . . ."⁸⁶ Throughout the various stages of fleeing from the warriors of Hawai'i Island, he was changing his name and creating a new identity to avoid discovery:

[...] basically that, coming down to there, he ran away from Maui too, into Kaua'i. When he came to Kaua'i, that's when he dropped his whole name Kainoa otherwise they were going to follow him. When he dropped Kainoa they didn't know that he came to Kaua'i, and he picked up, Kekauaimokuohaikainoa, dropped Kainoa picked up Ohai, that's how we today Ohai. But there are two Kainoa lines. One Kainoa line is not related to us by blood. But, the other Kainoa line, as I was going from Big Island—we go back, then [to] Maui, because of my great-grandfather, he was from Maui, and Kaua'i---Ohai, and that's how they never traced him thus began the name Ohai, but the real name, according to the genealogists supposed to be Kainoa. But Ohai fits us best, cause nobody get the name Ohai.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Wahine (singular) for woman; wāhine (plural) for women.

⁸⁶ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 5.

⁸⁷ Ibid., The genealogist(s) that Levon refers to are familial genealogists and a genealogist of a non-related Kainoa line. The familial genealogists are correct in saying that Kainoa is supposed to be the surname for the family, because it is the name that Kekauaimokuohaikainoa chose to use when he settled on Kaua'i. Interestingly enough, his son Benjamin does not take on the surname Kainoa; instead, Benjamin were given the surname of Ohai. The genealogists of the non-related Kainoa line were unfamiliar with the mo'olelo that explained how the name Kainoa came into the Ohai family line. Therefore, they insisted that a connection existed between the two families based on what they knew.

When Kekauaimokuohaikainoa arrived on Kaua‘i after leaving Māui, he was faced with the dilemma of his identity. He changed his name for the reasons of self-preservation; but to what degree did he reveal his true identity to others while his life was still in danger? As he never returned to Hawai‘i Island to marry the woman that was hāpai with his child, he instead settled on Kaua‘i and married another woman named Akio Aki in the 1880s who just happened to be from the same Kohala area.

In regards to the name Kekauaimokuohaikainoa itself, Levon expounded briefly on the probable meanings of it, which included the names historical connection to the first major battle (kaua) fought by Kamehameha I at Moku‘ōhai⁸⁸ on Hawai‘i Island in 1782. It must be clear that Kekauimokuohaikainoa was not at this battle as he was born around the 1850’s. The fact that he carried the name in commemoration of the event is substantial. In referring to the battle Kamakau wrote: “ke kaua ‘ana ma Moku-‘ōhai, ‘o ia ho‘i ke kaua mua o ko Kamehameha na‘i aupuni ‘ana”. The fighting at Moku-‘ōhai is undoubtedly the first war which initiated Kamehameha’s nation conquering.⁸⁹

L⁹⁰: So, the name Ohai—Kekauaimokuohai—is the battle of Moku‘ōhai, there was a battle. In the genealogies, it speaks of a great battle of Moku‘ōhai, and that’s where our name came from. Our ancestors may have been involved in that great battle.

Moku‘ōhai could be either an object or an island, or a part of an island named Moku‘ōhai, because it says the battle of Moku‘ōhai. It could be a place, an island,

⁸⁸ Located in south Kona, Moku‘ōhai is the next bay south of Kealakekua Bay on Hawai‘i Island. It usually appears on maps as “Moku a Kae” with Moku‘ōhai appearing next to it in parentheses.

⁸⁹ Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau, and ‘Ahahui ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, (Honolulu, HI: Ke Kumu Lama, 1996), 76. (Translation mine). Kamehameha’s campaign to conquer all of the islands ended with King Kaumuali‘i’s 1810 giving of Kaua‘i and Ni‘ihau to Kamehameha I.

⁹⁰ “L” is Levon Ammon Ohai, who is being interviewed, and “K” is Keoki Baclayon—the interviewer.

because moku means island. Moku can also mean ship. So it could be the great battle of this ship or many ships. So, that is as far as we went and left it that way.

K: Is there a place over on Big Island called Moku‘ōhai, perhaps?

L: There is a place called Moku‘ōhai, because when you go back to the genealogists and you just mention Moku‘ōhai, they goin say oh, oh, yeah, yeah, there was a battle of Moku‘ōhai. But, they not specific as to what was Moku‘ōhai, because Moku can mean an island. But moku can also mean a ship or a vessel. So, the vessel alone may be the battle of the ship “Moku‘ōhai”, or the battle of “Moku‘ōhai” the place, the location. So, we left it that way, and just went through the genealogy with what happened to great-tūtū-man, and saw that, yeah—he was a little mischievous, so he had to run away for his neck. And we see all during those times, eh, Hawaiians, they were mischievous too, they love go sleep with other women, plenty. And so that’s why a lot of them went change their, [or] dropped their last name, plenty. Ah, when they did, the genealogy gets all kapakahi.⁹¹ And that’s where a lot of Hawaiians get hard time going back with their genealogy; a lot of them dropped their beginning last names. That is what happened to us, but that’s the line we trace, Kainoa.⁹²

It appeared that Levon had accepted all of the meanings for his family name rather than just one. I however tend to lean more toward his statement that someone in his family, before the birth of Kekauaimokuohaikainoa, participated in the important historic battle that occurred at Moku‘ōhai on Hawai‘i Island when Kamehameha the Great fought against Kīwala‘ō and

⁹¹ Messy, crooked, lopsided; bent. Levon uses kapakahi in place of kāpulu which means labeled by lack of attention or thoroughness; careless, untidy, and unkempt. This is perhaps his family use of the word.

⁹² Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 5-6. According to the Hawaiian Dictionary by Mary K. Puku‘i, moku‘ōhai literally means ‘ōhai tree grove. The word ‘ōhai refers to the legume-producing shrub called *Sesbania tomentosa* that is native to Hawai‘i.

Keōua in 1782. Because that battle was a pivotal moment for those who fought or supported the side of Kamehameha, it was perpetuated in the naming of Levon’s great-tūtū Kekauaimokuohaikainoa.

In addition to Levon’s historical lineage connecting him to warfare, an antithetical lineage of healing also stretches from his great-tūtū Kainoa. Great-tūtū Kainoa came from that class of healers⁹³ who studied lā‘au lapa‘au, lā‘au kāhea,⁹⁴ and ho‘oponopono.⁹⁵ Through him came perhaps one the most important facets of the Kekauaimokuohaikainoa body of knowledge: identifying and harnessing numerous lā‘au to create medicine for the sick.

“Great-tūtū lady” Akio Aki (The Greater Healer)

In addition to his great-tūtū man Kainoa, Levon’s healing genealogy included that of his wife, a half-Hawaiian-Chinese wahine named Akio Aki. She was born during the reign of Kamehameha V (Lot Kapuāiwa) on April 10, 1864 in Kohala.⁹⁶ Akio’s mother was from a line of 医家(yījiā) traditional Chinese herbal healers from China,⁹⁷ and was “well schooled” in the traditions of her healing art, which were passed down to Akio. In a sense then, it is a

⁹³ Levon shared this point about “great-tūtū” Kainoa in several personal conversations with me between 2009 and 2011. He however did not divulge the process by which “great-tūtū” earned the rank of kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au because this is perhaps an intimate detail for only members of his immediate family which I am not.

⁹⁴ A type of faith healing of broken or crushed bones or sprains. Lit, calling medicine. Levon extended his practice of lā‘au kāhea to other ailments outside of the description offered by Mary Kawena Pukui in the Hawaiian Dictionary.

⁹⁵ To fix or correct that which has fallen out of harmony with the whole. The practice of meeting together as family members, or offender and offended, in order to restore strained relationships.

⁹⁶ Roberta Livingston, “Individual Record: Benjamin Ohai,” Name search engine, Family Search, n.d. http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/AF/individual_record.asp?recid=6475049&lds=0®ion=-1®ionfriendly=&frompage=99.

⁹⁷ MDBG English to Chinese dictionary, <http://www.mdbg.net/chindict/chindict.php?page=worddict&wdrst=0&wdqb=healer> (accessed October 15, 2012). 医家(yījiā) traditional Chinese herbalist. Some of the Chinese herbs that Levon continued to use included Ginko Biloba, (Chinese) Ginger also called ‘Awapuhi Pākē, Ginseng (Panax), Má Huáng (Ephedra), and Kinamona (Cinnamon), just to name a few.

“double-folded” lineage, because two genealogies of traditional medicines can be traced from the one side of his ‘ohana, his father:

K: Your, great-tūtū, [Kekauaimokuohaikainoa] was he the lā‘au lapa‘au person from his line?

L: His wife. My great-grandmother.

K: His wife?

L: She was greater than him.

K: She was greater?

OHAI ADJUSTS THE MICROPHONE AND PULLS IT CLOSER TO HIS SIDE
AS HE MAKES HIMSELF MORE COMFORTABLE ON THE FOLDED OUT
BED

L: Because her ancestors came from China, so she was half Chinese, half Hawaiian when she met and married my great-grandfather. She was of the first offspring of the immigrants from China who came to Hawai‘i.

K: Really?

L: Her mother was pure Chinese, and she was Chinese herbal medicine woman, well schooled. So, she taught her daughter, which was my great-grandmother, which on my tūtū man’s side, his mother. His mother in turn was well versed with strictness, organization. Taught that to my grandfather [Benjamin Ohai] who taught that to me.

K: Your great-tūtū lady, what was her name?

L: Akio Aki.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 8.

When Levon mentioned that his “great-tūtū lady” was the greater healer, I was suddenly very interested. Why and how was this possible that she was greater than her husband? How was it that Kekauaimokuohaikainoa, who received the training for acolytes in the healing society of the kahuna, was not the greater healer? Kahuna training was the pinnacle of Hawaiian achievement in traditional education, for within it were built-in mechanisms for transferring and retaining knowledge that was orally transmitted. Nevertheless, Levon made it clear that Kekauaimokuohaikainoa was great; but she was greater. Perhaps she was better at applying her skills than he was, though he was born with the birthright and the authority as a healer from his familial line. But we will never truly know, unless Levon has written about it somewhere in his personal writings.

Further, Levon talked about the merits of Akio Aki’s practices. Through education in her own Hawaiian family traditions, nourished and fused with the ‘ike of healing from her mother, she brought a great contribution to the way the Kekauaimokuohaikainoa ‘ohana practiced their art of lā‘au lapa‘au:

But, it was his mother [Akio] who had a deeper understanding and knowledge through her father—Hawaiian, pure Hawaiian, and her mother—pure Chinese, who was already a practicing herbalist from China. So, my great-great grandmother taught my grandfather’s mother Akio Aki you know, about discipline, everything needs to be organized And, you know, according to the Chinese everything written down, discipline; and you must follow what you preach. So, what was passed down to my grandfather was a lot of strictness.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Ibid.

The combination of the positive aspects of both cultural healing practices was an evolution of the art, an expansion and adaptation to the changing influx of diseases in the Hawaiian Islands. As much as it was Levon's ancestors' responsibility to know thoroughly the whole of their healing practice, so it was with Levon as he taught and educated himself with the philosophies, codes, and values of his family practice of *lā'au lapa'au*. Many students who have studied under Levon's guidance can acknowledge Akio for passing these principles on to her son Benjamin Ohai, who ultimately became the master teacher for Levon. And these principles of organization proved easily transferable to the realm of academia at the University of Hawai'i at the turn of the 21st century.

Tūtū man: Benjamin Ohai

Levon's tūtū man, Benjamin Ohai Sr., "homesteaded on Kauai prior to World War II. He was a longtime fishing enthusiast and member of the Hawaiian Homes Commission."¹⁰⁰ Benjamin was the first hired and appointed Fish & Game warden on the island of Kaua'i, an accomplishment during the territorial years since many state and federal government positions went to non-Hawaiians. Levon recalled that his tūtū was never one to grumble about things, and found happiness in spending time with his grandchildren, because such times were teaching opportunities for passing on his 'ike.

I gotta love for my "gran-dad," because he nevah fuss, he made you smile. When we went down 'o'opu road, go mountain—my tūtū he love dat kine too see—going fishing, torching, you know; that's when he taught us lessons, when we on the farm,

¹⁰⁰ Honolulu Star Bulletin, "Search Continues for Kaua'i Pilot-fisherman," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Honolulu, HI, January 9, 1967, sec. A1:B.

digging weeds, planting whatevah, that's when he talk, talk, talk always talking, talk.¹⁰¹

Benjamin spoke Hawaiian and English; though during Martial Law in Hawai'i from December 1941 until 1944, no other languages were allowed to be spoken except English for security reasons. This language ban permeated so deeply into local society that many families, including the Ohai's, did not speak their language as freely for some time beyond the Marshal Law years.

During those days, we were under the law; you cannot talk, because of the war.

Cannot talk no other language but English. So, we were all brought up, and we weren't taught Hawaiian; and the law stayed for a long time. We were under military rule.¹⁰²

Martial Law had effects beyond language. Levon repeated that long-time friends who were Japanese fisherman asked Leo (Levon's dad, who was also a fisherman), to take care of their boats:

All the Japanese schools, all the Japanese fisherman whatevah, they were all transported went to prison, up dea. The Japanese fishermen, they sank their boats and they told my dad, "Eh Leo, take care fo us." They went [to the Japanese internment camps], and they were all faithful American citizens.¹⁰³

Benjamin was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). As a lay member, he helped the church in various positions on the island of Kaua'i. Members knew

¹⁰¹ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 22.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid. Levon's 'ohana raised the boats back up from the seafloor, so when the Japanese fishermen were released from the internment camps, their boats were floating, waiting for them at the pier.

him best for his service following the United States' formal entry into World War II. After the December 1941 attacks on Pearl Harbor in Hawai'i and Manila in the Philippines, the United States declared Martial Law over the Territory of Hawai'i.¹⁰⁴ This limited communication and goods between the islands, and the church was forced to reorganize locally to fill its prominent church positions with local lay members, instead of with service missionaries from mainland America. The Hawai'i mission was therefore ordered by the presidency of the church to prepare the general Hawai'i membership to fill these positions, because missionaries could not be sent out until the threat of war was clearly over. Benjamin Ohai was one of these lay member leaders who administered the affairs of the church on Kaua'i. The mood and sense of urgency are evident in the LDS Hawai'i mission newsletter in 1942:

War sounded an ominous note of warning in the shocked ears of the forty-eight states of our unprepared Union. That same clarion roar of the "blitz" awakened forty-eight branches¹⁰⁵ of the Hawaiian Mission to the startling discovery that they, too, were face-to-face with an emergency that demanded the utmost in resourcefulness, training, sacrifice, and dependable leadership. War in the Pacific meant the termination of the missionary system. It meant a stern challenge to the five thousand members of the church here in Hawaii: Either they step to the fore and shoulder the full responsibility of directing the affairs of the nine missionary districts while the

¹⁰⁴ James Cartwright, Martha Chantiny, Joan Hori, and Karen Peacock, "The Digital Landscape: The Hawaiian Newspapers and War Records and Trust Territory Image Repository of the University of Hawai'i," The University of Hawai'i, January 10, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, Second ed., (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1966), 102. The average ward (basic congregation of the church) has a membership of about 300. Likewise, "...congregations of saints which are not large and stable enough to form wards are organized into branches, presided over by a branch president [. . .] All the congregations of saints, no matter how strong and stable, which are located within the districts of missions are called branches."

handful of presiding elders remain as instructors, or the work of nearly a thousand servants of the Lord over a period of ninety-two years would perish.¹⁰⁶

The official decision led to the creation of nine districts. The first three were Kaua‘i, Honolulu, Moloka‘i. Since the island of Māui covered a great deal of area it contained two districts appropriately called “Māui” and “Hāna,” making it a total of five districts so far. Hawai‘i Island’s immense land mass was divided into four districts: Kona, Kohala, Hāmākua, and Hilo making it a total of nine districts in the LDS Hawaiian Mission.¹⁰⁷ Each district had a board of church members that supervised, facilitated, and assisted the work of the branches in their area. Having a sense of control over their wartime predicament was important to both the lay members and leadership of the LDS church, which is reflected in this statement:

Foremost among the innovations prompted in mission organization by the outbreak of the war and its subsequent civic reactions stand the fully organized “District Local Boards” now established throughout Hawaii. Local leaders in each district have been set apart to direct the progress of the Church and its auxiliaries. Our districts are well on the road to self-sufficiency.¹⁰⁸

For the District Local Board of Kaua‘i, Benjamin Ohai was called to serve as the “District Supervisor of Welfare” for a number of years.¹⁰⁹ (See Appendix A for the District Board of

¹⁰⁶ Hawaiian Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, “Ka ‘Elele o Hawai‘i: The Hawaiian Mission Newsletter”, Honolulu, HI, 1942. Mormon Pacific Historical Society, 41.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁰⁹ Hawaiian Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Ka Elele o Hawai‘i: The Hawaiian Mission Newsletter”, 81-82. Responsibilities as a “District Supervisor of Welfare” included: 1. Agricultural Undertakings: this was to secure and develop agriculturally at least 5 acres of land for the members of the church to farm; 2. Acquire warehouses (or District Warehouses) by which the various branches (congregations) on the island would be able to have access to the distribution of welfare related goods; 3. Ensure the District

Kaua‘i). Benjamin also had other areas of responsibility. According to Levon, Benjamin had served as a branch president for 18 years and as the MIA president for 25 years.

Fishing with “Dad”—Leo Ohai

Levon began working at a young age with his dad Leo and his brothers Nephi and Leo Jr. on the family fishing boats catching schools of akule.¹¹⁰ Although working as a fisherman may seem to have been just a way to provide for the family, the boat became an outside classroom, where Levon learned about the responsibilities of being a kāne, and the benefits of hard work. Elizabeth Chandler, a Hā‘ena kupuna, stresses the importance of working together as a family, because this was one of many ways that Hawaiian elders transferred their mana‘o about work and the world around them to their children:

The parents of those days, they no talk nothing. *They taught by example.* Cause they only work, work, work. Work is necessary to take care of their family. Work in the taro patch, work fishing, work at home. Go down to the ocean to catch fish, come back with fish. The ocean was very important for all the families, because that’s where they get their food, eh?¹¹¹

Before Leo used planes, he would fish from the boat without any type of spotter flying above pointing out the location of the school of akule. Daniel Kahā‘ulelio, an expert fisherman, wrote the following in 1902 about fishing for akule:

Warehouses are stocked with “dry-goods” (used clothing, furniture, etc.), and canned foods, and safeguard the equitable distribution of them to members who are in need; 4. Fishing Project: supervise the church fishing operation in the Kaua‘i district—using decommissioned Sampans (boats) from WW I, to overcome persistent meat shortages and dependence on mainland shipped foods.

¹¹⁰ Daniel Kahā‘ulelio, *Ka ‘Oihana Lawaia: Hawaiian Fishing Traditions*, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 2006), 326. Akule is the Hawaiian name for the Bigeye Scad (*Selar crumenophthalmus*).

¹¹¹ Carlos Andrade, *Hā‘ena: Through the Eyes of the Ancestors*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008), 22. (Emphasis added).

No kēia i‘a ka olelo ia e ka poe lawaia hoomamao ke akule i ka hohonu, a i kahi wa no hoi pipili aina kahakai mai no. O ke kulana o kēia ano i‘a, he i‘a kaapuni honua, a kahi no hoi paha a lākou e manao ai e hoolulu, a laila, o ka noho ihola no hoi ia; ke nana aku oe mai uka aku o ka aina, e ike no oe i ka punohu ula a ina hoi e loa a i ke apu, a laila, akahi no a maopopo i ka poe holona (poe ike ole i ka lawaia), he mau la a he mau pule ke noho.

It is for this kind of fishing that the saying came to be used, “The *akule* fish seek the deep.” Sometimes though, they come close inshore. These fish are globe-trotters and stop whenever they find a place that they like, then they stay there. When you see them from the shore, you will see the redness of the water. Only when caught do those who were not skilled in fishing lore know that they are present. They remain several days or weeks at a place.¹¹²

Sometime later, Bob Krauss, a columnist for the *Honolulu Advertiser* who was shadowing Leo on a fish-spotting mission, described the experience of spotting fish from the air:

He [Leo] peered though his side window. “There’s the school now. See it?” I didn’t the first time. Finally, I made out a blob in the water that looked like another coral formation. The blob was slowly moving away from a ledge of reef.¹¹³

Levon eventually got his pilot’s license and became a fish-spotter for his dad. As a young fisherman-pilot he came to understand the hazards of fishing and boats, but also the dangers

¹¹² Daniel Kahā‘ulelio, *Ka ‘Oihana Lawai‘a: Hawaiian Fishing Traditions*, 200-201. In this section of his book called “Ka Lawai‘a Akule: Akule Fishing,” Kahā‘ulelio describes a traditional practice for catching a school of akule.

¹¹³ Bob Krauss, “Pilot Aloft Spots Fish; Crew Below Spreads the Nets,” *Honolulu Advertiser* (La Perouse Bay, Māui), March 20, 1969, sec. A1:3. Column continues on page A-14, Col. 2.

of flying light aircraft over an open ocean. During a conversation with Levon, he recounted a life changing experience for his dad Leo that tested his skills in piloting, emergency survival on the open ocean and his faith in Akua and ‘aumakua.

As a commercial businessman and fisherman in 1967, Leo owned the twenty-year-old company Oceanic Fisheries, which used three single-engine Piper Cruisers¹¹⁴ and two fishing boats. Leo utilized the planes to “spot” fish from the sky, “seven days a week, flying at about 1,500 feet along every island, observing the water for changing colors. (A school of mackerel, for instance, would make the water reddish.)”¹¹⁵ On Sunday, January 8, 1967, he took off from Honolulu at 9:25 a.m. on a routine fish spotting flight. Leo who at the time was about 44 years old, “radioed a distress call about a half hour later at 10:02 a.m.” He repeated his distress call “mayday,” giving his position for about two more minutes, until his plane crashed into the ocean nearly four miles off the shores of Moloka‘i near Lā‘au Point.¹¹⁶ What transpired in the next 20 ½ hours was a grueling swim that carried Leo with the dominant current away from Moloka‘i, only to bring him back full-circle to Lā‘au Point on Moloka‘i. When he reached shore, he walked for about 6 hours to the closest bay, Hale o Lono Harbor, where a dredging crew was working. They took care of him until help arrived. I was amazed of course at the length of time he was swimming in the open ocean, so I asked Levon to verify:

K: He was swimming?

L: Swimming; twenty-one hours.

¹¹⁴ The Honolulu Advertiser (1/9/67 A1:B) had interviewed representatives of Sky ranch Aviation—the company that services Oceanic Fisheries planes; they told the Advertiser that all of Leo’s aircraft have a high-wing with fixed landing gear that contains a life raft and survival gear for its pilots and passengers.

¹¹⁵ Honolulu Star Bulletin, “Search Continues for Kauai Pilot-fisherman,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* (Honolulu, HI), January 9, 1967, sec. A1: B.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

K: Twenty-one hours.

L: Almost twenty-two. His plane I mean

HE MOTIONS WITH HIS HANDS MIMICKING A PLANE CRASHING INTO
THE OCEAN

K: Into the ocean.

L: Yeah, the engine went stop . . . on a Sunday. He wasn't going church anyway. He fell down between Honolulu and Molokai. Before that river, you know that pathway. There's the Molokai channel, but there's a pathway that comes from the north. The waters are always ripply even in Wai'ale'ale, always ripply. Its like a path, you see the current, you get caught in the current it's gonna take you way down, and boom, he swing you around and come back up. And when he was coming up he went swim out of the current, hit Molokai, and uh, the southwest side, you know, by the harbor side all that area.¹¹⁷

This is the story that most people have heard about or read in the newspapers: the Hawaiian fisherman, Leo, was a hero in the ways of ocean knowledge. His ability to survive reinforced the legacy of ancient and modern fisherman that they had grit, perseverance, courage, skill, ocean knowledge, and patience. But for any grueling experience, there is always more to the story. The part of the mo'olelo never told to the press in the late 1960's was his encounters with one of the huge sharks of the channel that appeared and hit him on the right side several times throughout his swimming ordeal. When Leo first told Levon this story, it was as a remarkable reminder of the impermanence that people face, for his father could have easily passed away. In retrospect, the experience made Leo think about his own faith in and

¹¹⁷ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 20.

relationship with Akua. Furthermore, Leo's identity as a Hawaiian whose life was pili¹¹⁸ to the great sea forced him to consider his own connection with this shark that swam with him. It never gave in to hunger, which left Leo in awe until he had arrived safely upon land, where he acknowledged it as 'aumakua. Though he must have told his father's story many times, as Levon recounted it with me in our interview, his sense of awe made it seem as if it had just occurred.

L: How come he nevah take my father's life? How come he make one manō 15 feet long—is the only manō he saw in the ocean and [it] came to him three times; hit him ovah hea.

LEVON HITS ONE FIST INTO THE PALM OF HIS OTHER HAND AND THEN POINTS TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF HIS BODY.

...and scrape him like dis. He can see from dis side dis big freekin animal 15 feet long. [INAUDIBLE SPEECH]... and then again at an [INAUDIBLE] came again; same place—same place right side. Three times, and one just before he hit land. He could see a small little opening on the sea waves. [When] his feet touched the surf, touched the sand. This little channel he came in, he heard behind...

LEVON MAKES SWISHING SOUNDS IMITATING THE SOUND OF THE 15 FT SHARK ADVANCING ON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER THROUGH THE SMALL CHANNEL TOWARD LEO.

He look behind see the fin coming in. Same, the same manō came hit him again right here, right side.

¹¹⁸ Pili in this paper means united; joining; of or belonging to a person or thing.

HE HITS FIST AND PALM AGAIN TO EMPHASIZE HOW THE SHARK HIT HIS FATHER ON THE SIDE.

His feet touch the sand already. Big boom. Circle him one time, fin straight up. That's the story I share with you, but we tell no one because they will nevah believe it. But I did. Cuz when I went to go visit my father he said, "Look."

LEVON RESPONDED TO HIS FATHER'S INJURIES

"Ho!" [in surprise].

You know da strawberry, where the buggah hit; and was bleeding. How come the manō nevah bite him, and chew him up? Blood. And no other manō, Molokai, dats da house of shark, loaded! Acres we see, hee!

Only dat one, which is another connection to our genealogy. Eia 'aumakua. [Here is the family guardian]. So my tūtū was saying, "Who are our 'aumākua?" 'Aumakua is God's angels, chosen . . . his angels. They can take any form and become twelve men. Just like the angels came to help Abraham to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. They just came as men, clothes everything; but, Abraham knew who they were.¹¹⁹

When Leo returned safely to Honolulu, he was met at the airport by Levon and a number of others who fished and flew with him.¹²⁰ In private, Leo shared with Levon his manō experience, and they both often pondered how and why he was kept alive in that great space of ocean that Levon described as "da house of shark, loaded! Acres we see." The shark-

¹¹⁹ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 19-20.

¹²⁰ Tomi Knaefler, "Pilot Ohai Safe After 20 1/2-hour Ordeal in Water," *Star Bulletin* (Honolulu, HI), January 10, 1967, Home Edition, sec. A1: 4.

infested bay below Pu‘ukoholā heiau at Kawaihae is another place like the Moloka‘i channel where a person can safely observe this meaning of “house of shark.”¹²¹

Are ‘aumākua real? As Levon plainly explained it, they are “God’s angels,” and “another connection to our genealogy.” Mary Kawena Pukui in *‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings* wrote further explaining the ‘aumākua relationship in the following proverb:

‘Ano lani; ‘ano honua.

A heavenly nature; an earthly nature.

Said of some ‘aumākua who make themselves visible to loved ones by assuming an earthly form, such as fish, fowl, or animal, yet retain the nature of a god.¹²²

In the not too distant past, it was believed that these ‘aumākua were “long departed ancestors” that were now god-spirits and could take on certain body forms or kinolau.¹²³ Levon’s comments on ‘aumākua allude to the forces that govern the laws of nature that allow man, plants and other living organisms to work together, and care for each other. The mere appearance of a ‘aumakua, in whatever form to its ‘ohana, functioned as a way to uphold a family’s code of conduct, or guide the descendant to follow a better path.¹²⁴ Samuel Kamakau wrote a comment about manō:

¹²¹ Mary K. Pukui, S. H. Elbert, & E. T. Mo'okini, *Place Names of Hawai'i*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1974), 97. The area that is referred to as being the home of the Pai family is the land in the Kohala district named Kawaihae around Kawaihae harbor.

¹²² Mary Kawena Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Special Publication no. 71, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1983), 15. ‘Ōlelo No‘eau No. 119.

¹²³ Mary K. Pukui, E. W. Haertig, & C. A. Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu: Look to the Source*, (Honolulu: Hui Hānai, an auxiliary of the Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, 1979), 294.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

[They] became defenders and guides in times of trouble and danger on the ocean, quieting the stormy ocean and bringing their people back to land. If their canoes came to grief and were smashed to pieces, their shark would carry them safely to shore.¹²⁵

He also wrote that manō come to help rescue "their kahu or their descendants."¹²⁶ If the manō had not come, perhaps Leo would not have exerted the extra effort to swim, which increased his metabolism through muscle contraction, preventing hypothermia and increasing his survivability in the ocean.¹²⁷

In an interview with Bob Krauss, Leo shared the reasons why he believed his life was spared, and why it happened to him.

“Ever since I started fishing 29 years ago, Sundays have meant nothing . . . We work every day of the week. Just a week before I fell in the water, I got a letter from my daughter at Brigham Young University. She asked if I had made any New Year’s resolutions. I wrote that for over 20 years I had been flying on Sunday. No more. So what happened? I went out on the first Sunday of the year and fell in the water. While I was swimming, I said to myself, ‘You stupid jackass! This was meant to be.’”¹²⁸

The self-discovery that led him to say that his experience was “meant to be” was really about Leo reconciling¹²⁹ himself to what was pono in his beliefs as a Hawaiian and as a member of

¹²⁵ S. M. Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko: The People of Old*, (M. K. Pukui, Trans.) (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1964), 76.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹²⁷ Kaiser Permanente, *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*, (Boise: Healthwise Incorporated, 2003), 57. Hypothermia “develops when your body loses heat faster than heat can be produced by metabolism, muscle contractions, and shivering.”

¹²⁸ Bob Krauss, “Ditched Plane Off Molokai: 21-Hour Swim a Snap for Flying Fisherman,” *Honolulu Advertiser* (La Perouse Bay, Māui), March 22, 1969, sec. B1: 1.

¹²⁹ Mary K. Pukui, E. W. Haertig, & C. A. Lee, 1979: 294. The authors of *Nānā I Ke Kumu* wrote that Hawaiian families who experienced having a connection to family ‘aumakua were aware of certain behaviors or acts of

the LDS church.¹³⁰ Levon also firmly believed that this life-threatening experience was supposed to teach his father respect for Akua. “Yeah, the engine went stop . . . on a Sunday. He wasn’t going church anyway. He fell down between Honolulu and Molokai.”¹³¹ Levon, his sister, and his dad Leo all believed that the plane crash happened to teach Leo that Akua is merciful. But a further result of the experience was Leo realizing that he needed to reconnect to his ‘aumakua.

The things that Leo gained in knowledge regarding Akua and ‘aumākua seemed to be especially important to Levon in this mo‘olelo; however, as he could have chosen any other mo‘olelo it is important to ask why he shared what he did when he knew that he was being interviewed about his life, lā‘au lapa‘au and his practice of it. In some instances, the attempts at trying to explain what someone feels or believes are best explained in a story. The careful explanation of how Leo, his dad, came to change his mana‘o regarding Akua, ‘aumākua and the way he was conducting himself in his fishing practice mirrors Levon’s personal beliefs and a particular process under ho‘oponopono where positive change is achieved. This story in its own way is filled with hidden gems that reveal important elements of Levon’s lā‘au lapa‘au practice.

conduct that were required of them. If a person was not in harmony with what was right, he or she was meant to reconcile themselves to follow and maintain an appropriate behavior and conduct.

¹³⁰ *The Holy Bible*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 109. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe in the King James Version of the Holy Bible, and within it the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:8-11; “8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, not thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is with-in thy gates: 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

¹³¹ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 19-20.

Levon Ammon Ohai

Levon was born on January 26, 1942 to Leo Ammon Ohai and his wife Clara in Kapa‘a, Kaua‘i. He was the hiapo—first born—and the eldest of eight brothers and sisters: Nephi, Anolani, Roberta, Laola, Leo, Lisa, John, and Reri. Levon was also the first grandson in the family, which naturally made him a favorite of his tūtū Ben Ohai—his teacher in lā‘au lapa‘au.

When Levon was growing up in Kapa‘a, having a lot of money didn’t matter to him or to his family; in fact, his ‘ohana was like many other families that made do with what they had, and felt blessed when fortune smiled on them financially. What was most important to Levon was doing what was right and honoring his family name—an old time perspective that placed a high value on the good name of a family, based on the actions and reputation of all its family members.

[...] for us we were strictly, bred, born, *country* (laughs); climb coconut tree, bare feet, that’s *country*; but, all of dat, we were “smooth,” we [were] rough if you look at us.

SPEAKING AS IF HE WERE SOMEONE ELSE

Oh these guys they, you know, they no wear shoes, you know, you look at them they go wild, and den, they go climb tree like notin, boy, they go up mountains and no more shoes, go on the reef for fishing and But look at their record . . . We nevah did break any law. We were “smooth” when it came to Him, Akua. That’s what [inaudible]. “Smooth” means... Hawaiian way when they say you “smooth,” like uh, kēia the mirror stone, smooth, “smooth” means, “squared away” keeping the commandments of God [. . .]¹³²

¹³² Ibid., 21.

This commitment to being a good person, to being “smooth” and squared away, was really about honoring the laws of the land and protecting the family name by conduct that was pono. Mary Kawena Pukui spoke about this exact singularity that existed in the olden times of Hawai‘i:

A man might wear his brother’s *malo* [loin cloth] but not the *malo* of anyone else, . . . Young people were told to ‘behave so you won’t shame your family.’ . . . If two persons would not end a quarrel, they could break the family tie. But, if a person behaved disgracefully, his ‘*ohana* could not disown him.¹³³

How Levon conducted himself was reflective of the guidance he chose to listen and adhere to from his ‘ohana and especially his tūtū.

When I grew up, I was morally clean. I didn’t go on a mission.¹³⁴ But I was morally clean. I used to date out you know, college, and before that, high school—hardly any dates. Just played sports.¹³⁵

In 1964, a terrible event shook the family to its core, forcing them as well as the young Levon, now a young adult at twenty-two years old, to look deeply into their personal beliefs and rally to each other’s support. His younger brother by two years was involved in a fishing accident that claimed his life. In August of 1964 Leo Paul Ohai was working on one of his father’s boats, laying fishing nets off shore at Barber’s Point, when his feet got tangled in the netting. This type of netting is used to catch large schools of fish and at times can

¹³³ Mary Kawena Pukui, E.W. Haertig M.D., and Catherine A. Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu: Look to the Source*, 1972, 170.

¹³⁴ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, Second ed., (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 509. A mission is when members of the church leave their homes—at their own expense, while stopping all “temporal pursuits”—to devote their full-time efforts towards proselytizing and the service of others.

¹³⁵ Levon Ohai, interview by Keoki Baclayon, 22.

become snagged on the reef, which would require a swimmer or diver to free it. Leo's feet became snagged in the netting. In struggling to get himself free from it in the water, he drowned. Levon gives no other comment, as this was a sensitive topic for him.

May 28, 1965 Levon received a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University-Provo in Utah. According to Jacqueline Ohai, Levon's wife, he majored in history and minored in drama. After he graduated, he returned home during the summer of '65 to Kaua'i to work with his father in fishing. Nearly a year later in '66 a position opened at Kapa'a High School to teach. In 1969, Levon returns to Provo to begin working as a teacher.

As circumstance would have it, that same year he was drafted into the U.S. Army Reserves to fight in the Vietnam war. He served in the 184th Chemical Detachment under the 1st Air Cavalry Division which left from Fort Benning Georgia in 1969. After his tour, he returned to the United States in 1970.¹³⁶ Levon's service in the 184th Chemical Detachment involved the chemical warfare aspect of the Vietnam War. According to Dr. Jon Thiel (a veteran of the 184th Chemical Detachment), Levon was one of a small group of soldiers who was cross-trained in various chemical warfare skills.¹³⁷ In the past, Levon sometimes mentioned his war time experiences in handling, preparing, and arming aircraft with a

¹³⁶ Johnny Hubbs, "1st Cav-History," 1st Cav-History, July 10, 2010.

<http://www.229thavbn.com/1stcav/History.html>. Hubbs, an online historian of the 1st Cavalry division, reported the following regarding the activities of the division focus during the time that Levon was serving in the chemical platoons. He wrote, "Thus the 1st Cavalry Division became the first American division to have fought in all four tactical zones in the Republic of Vietnam. During [sic] the summer of 1969 the enemy made frequent attacks attempting to overrun division firebases, actions which were costly to both sides. During May and June of 1970 the 1st Cavalry Division invaded Cambodia although a strategic success was somewhat hampered by a restriction of 30-kilometer advance. The 1st Cavalry Division had recorded an unparalleled series of firsts as well as demonstrating the effectiveness of airmobile [sic] warfare."

¹³⁷ The mission of the 184th Chemical Platoon was to provide direct combat support to the 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) under the Division Chemical Officer. The 184th Chemical Platoon conducted "Support missions [which] included ground and aerial application of insecticides and herbicides, ground and aerial employment of riot control agents, flame weapon service and flame field expedients, inspection and repair of division chemical equipment, water transport and showers in forward areas, and, eventually, gathering aerial chemical intelligence."

powerful herbicide called Agent Orange; however, prior to Levon's work with Agent Orange in 1965, Agent Purple was sprayed over dense jungle foliage beginning in 1962 to give American forces a fighting chance against the Viet Cong that were using the jungle as concealment. For a little more than a decade, "they [the United States] unloaded some 77 million liters of herbicides on 2.6 million hectares of south and central Vietnam."^{138, 139} There are two books that deliver insight into the actions of Levon's unit during its tour in Vietnam. The first is *Hunter Killer Squadron: Aero Weapons, Aero-Scouts, Aero-Rifles-Vietnam 1965-1972* by Matthew Brennan. The second book is called *Vietnam Order of Battle* by Captain Shelby L. Stanton and General William C. Westmoreland. Until we are able to piece together experiences from Levon's life from Vietnam, we continue the mo'olelo of Levon who returned from Vietnam to the United States in 1970 as a veteran.

During the same year Levon began pursuing his master's degree at the University of Colorado; however, Colorado was short lived and lasted for less than a year. In 1971, Levon returned to Hawai'i to help his father Leo in the fishing business, fishing for schools of akule. He would be gone throughout the week fishing and then return to port during the weekends to attend church. Levon met Jacqueline Lien at a church function; the two would soon marry in 1971. Using his Montgomery G.I bill (monies set aside for members of the U.S. Armed Forces for educational and career development), Levon received his master's degree in Communications at the University of Arizona on December 31, 1972. He worked for several decades, on Kaua'i as a teacher in the public school system, in the community as an instructor in lā'au lapa'au, and as a fisherman intermittently with his dad Leo.

¹³⁸ Richard Stone, "Agent Orange's Bitter Harvest," *Science* (American Association for Advancement of Science) 315, no. 5809 (January 2007): 176-177.

¹³⁹ Chris Brummitt, "Vietnam Agent Orange Sick Get Scientology 'Detox'," *Associated Press* (Hanoi, Vietnam: September 6, 2012).

Levon shared that in 2000, he had read an advertisement from the Hawaiian Studies department at UH-Mānoa, who was looking for an instructor of *lā‘au lapa‘au*. Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa (who was the director during that time at Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies) confirmed that they had sent out this advertisement looking for someone that had the minimum qualifications of a master’s degree and could teach the subject of *lā‘au lapa‘au*.¹⁴⁰ “Levon had a master’s degree; it was in a subject outside of *lā‘au lapa‘au*, but it was still a master’s degree. He met the academic qualifications but most importantly he had the traditional *lapa‘au* knowledge from his family.”¹⁴¹ In speaking at Levon’s memorial service at Kamakakūokalani, Lilikalā briefly talked about her first meeting with him. When Levon first came to the center, she was told there was someone who wanted to talk to her about applying for the position and that he knew *lā‘au lapa‘au*. As she met with him, Levon shared what he wanted to teach. Because he was a person that had vision for his work, she found herself looking for grant money that would fund a teaching position temporarily until she could petition to the university to fund his position permanently.¹⁴² Rochelle Pi‘ilani Ka‘aloa (the chair for the curriculum committee at Kamakakūokalani when Levon first began teaching in 2001) also reported the same: that Lilikalā was the person who brought him to the center by finding the money to fund the position that ultimately led to Levon being hired as a faculty member.

Ka‘aloa also shared that Lilikalā had helped Levon write the syllabus for the class now known as HWST 285 and that by the time that she (Ka‘aloa) had started working with Hawaiian Studies as the chair of the curriculum committee in 2001, Levon was already

¹⁴⁰ Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, Personal Communication to Keoki Baclayon, Hiring Levon Ohai (August 6, 2012).

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies, "A Celebration of the Life of Kumu Levon Ohai," Honolulu, HI, March 14, 2012.

brainstorming other ideas that could develop into other classes. Ka‘aloha as well as Marvlee Naukana-Gilding at this point were influential in assisting Levon in typing and structuring his following courses so that they would meet the specifications and standards set by the university curriculum committee. These courses were: HWST 385, 485, and 487. Ka‘aloha indicated that the shaping of these later courses required a lot of time to properly develop the correct learning objectives and syllabi. Levon knew what he wanted to teach throughout the week; however, putting those things into learning objectives, assignments, and grade point averages were challenging. Honoring all what he wanted to do in a western classroom while maintaining his narrative in the class was the end goal.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Rochelle “Pi‘ilani” Ka‘aloha, (Helping Levon Ohai Write Syllabi) in discussion with the author, (August 13, 2012).

CHAPTER 3

LĀ‘AU LAPA‘AU: THE PRAXIS

This chapter highlights what lā‘au lapa‘au means to the Ohai ‘ohana by focusing on what Levon has shared regarding the basic tenets of his practice, and by describing his methodology when selecting certain plants for the creation of remedies. By doing this, you will see how Levon and the family ‘ike of lā‘au lapa‘au are dear to his ‘ohana. Though certain information will not be divulged or discussed, this chapter does present fundamentals of the practice, considered by many as pearls of wisdom.

Akua

If Akua is not in your language, He is not in your life. Gotta be close to your heart not close to your mind. Da mind has no feelings.

–Levon Ohai

As in the times of ka po‘e kahiko (the people of old), recognizing and relying upon a higher power or “divine source” is vital to the healing art of lā‘au lapa‘au. Levon often spoke of Akua in his classes, though he left the defining of who and what a “divine source” was to the individual. He was, however, clear about who his “divine source” was, and encouraged all people who had lost their faith, or had never known their own “divine source,” to find it once again. Recognizing this “divine source” is directly associated with having faith in Akua. One can know that even though removed from physical sight, Akua is as real as a person is tangible. Levon believed in God the Father, his son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, and he used the term Akua interchangeably with Jesus Christ. When referring to God the Father, he used “Akua the Father.” For Levon, Akua was the principal author of his ‘ike, and he

recognized Him as his sole Akua, whom he worshiped, revered, and asked for enlightenment.¹⁴⁴

With the exception of one traditional god whom he called 'Īo,¹⁴⁵ Levon viewed the Hawaiian gods as great ancestors who once lived. They left a great heritage and legacy, and an insurmountable amount of knowledge for learning. The mo'olelo recounted of their contributions to society display how their descendants and followers venerate, honor, and esteem them.

Pule

Physics and chemistry cannot heal anything; anything that is pul(ed) upon is sacred for as long as the medicine shall last.

-Levon Ohai

For Levon, to pule¹⁴⁶ (pray) to Akua was an act of devotion that helped align a person with what was pono. Pule was an act of humility and reverence, through which a person recognized their dependence on Akua for knowledge and guidance. It can be performed at any time of the day or night, vocally or silently, because all pule that are honest, sincere, and clean will be heard by Akua. Throughout Levon's life, he also observed this basic principle

¹⁴⁴ Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko: The People of Old*, Ed. Dorothy B Barrère. Trans. Mary Kawena Pukui. (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1993), 107. Kamakau reveals an important aspect of the art of lā'au lapa'au that "The god was the guide to all things, the giver of boundless life; therefore every person who was learning the arts depended upon the god. The god did not give the same gifts to all the hosts of heaven."

¹⁴⁵ Kapi'ikauiāmoku, "Eternity Song: Song of Hawai'i, Prince Keawe," *Honolulu Advertiser* (Honolulu, HI), Sept. 4, 1955. A:12. Levon mentioned on different occasions in his lā'au lapa'au classes that 'Īo was "the supreme being," and indicated that this was Akua's name.

¹⁴⁶ Pule means prayer, blessing, grace, to say prayer or as a blessing; to pray. There were many types of pule which Levon practiced, some of which are listed in the Hawaiian dictionary: pule hāmau; pule ho'opōmaika'i; pule ho'ouluulu'ai; pule hui; pule huikala—in ho'oponopono meetings with individuals, couples, 'ohana or groups of people; pule kāhea—not in the sense of pule to worship family gods, but to request Akua to send them to impart their guidance, strength, wisdom and knowledge, and thus through faith, effect the healing process; pule kala; pule ho'omana'o—pule remembering those in his 'ohana who taught him in the ways of lā'au lapa'au—Kamakau similarly mentions this for those of the order of Lonopuha; pule mahiki—which included pule pale; and pule 'ohana.

of lā‘au lapa‘au in the fishing tradition of his dad, Leo, who expressed his faith in Akua through pule. To find the answer that Leo knew would eventually come, Leo pondered the situation that perplexed him until he knew with a surety that he had heard the whisperings of Akua in his heart, and was enlightened as to the course of action he should take. Levon described this practice at his home on Kaua‘i:

L: Unbelievable my father.

K: Did he learn from your tūtū man, how to fish?

L: He learned the basics, and then from that experience, you know, he go try [something new], “oh da ting no work!” [inaudible].

OHAI CLASPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER AND CLOSES HIS EYES TO DEMONSTRATE HOW HIS FATHER LEO PRAYED TO AKUA TO HELP HIM SOLVE A PROBLEM WITH HIS FISHING METHOD. HIS ARMS THEN OPENED WIDE AND HE LOOKED UP FOR A SECOND BEFORE LOOKING AT ME AGAIN TO SEE IF I WAS FOLLOWING HIM.

K: Pray.

L: Think, think, think. He always brought Akua into it. Think, think, think.

OHAI REENACTS HIS FATHER IN RECEIVING INSPIRATION WITH AN EXPRESSION OF EPIPHANY

“Oh!”

“We gotta try ‘em dis way. Get da net. Get da trap. Redo this, uh, construction, or the structure, or the architectural, uh, you know, the shape whatevah.”

WITH HANDS AND ARMS MOVING AS IF HE WERE PULLING NETS INTO THE BOAT HE SUMMARIZES HIS FATHER’S SUCCESS.

Boom! Gets ‘em all. [All the fish].

K: Wow.

L: Tons! [Laughs].

Leo’s waihā—or request through prayer—meets the requirements of having faith in Akua, and showing humility and reverence. Only with these things in place did Leo receive the answers to the problems he fixed.

In one lā‘au lapa‘au class, Levon stated that there were differences between Christian and traditional Hawaiian prayers. And yet, though he implied there were many, both verbal and non-verbal, he only mentioned and demonstrated one. “This is the Christian way of pule” [Levon folds his arms and bows his head with eyes closed]. And then, “This is the Hawaiian way of pule” [Levon opens his arms wide to the sky with eyes open]. This was interesting because of the fact that Levon was open to people practicing their own way of pule as long as they were in touch with their “divine source”; how a person applied their method of showing reverence depended on the person’s belief and faith.

A Pattern for Pule

Da first step of “perfecshun” is learning pule Pule so that your mind, body and spirit forms the foundation.

-Levon Ohai

Many of Levon’s students had some experience praying, but some people did not completely understand the steps involved nor did they know what to pule for. Teaching the purpose and function of pule brought meaning into the lives of those who listened and acted on what he was teaching them. On Tuesday, January 18, 2011, the second week into the

spring semester at UH-Mānoa, Levon gave a mini-lesson on pule to a few students who were unfamiliar with it. With chalk in hand, he wrote the following on the board:

1. Address Him, the King of the universe.
2. Thank Him.
3. Ask for forgiveness for any wrong or imperfections.
4. Ask for blessings; for the restoration of knowledge; an instilling of desire [to do good], ask to be an influence in someone's life.
5. 'Amene.¹⁴⁷

This pattern provided students the fundamentals of pule while encouraging them to pule about any needs they had in their own lives. The concept of pule, as he taught it, was about exercising faith in Akua as the first line of defense in medicine. When no lā'au were available, people would be able to employ pule for healing.

Pule in the Art of Lā'au Lapa'au

When Levon was called upon for his services he immediately said a pule for the ill person and the 'ohana, whether privately by himself, or with the family. His pule would request Akua to give him guidance to know exactly how to treat their sickness—a vision¹⁴⁸ or inspiration of what to do or where to find the proper plants.¹⁴⁹ At times Levon would

¹⁴⁷ Levon Ohai, "Pule & Rules of the Practitioner," Instruction presented at the Kamakākūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies Class HWST 285 Lā'au Lapa'au I: Introduction to Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Kamakākūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies, Rm. 202, January 18, 2011. Comment in brackets mine.

¹⁴⁸ Levon identifies various types of visions that people can receive. The one that I want to highlight is the flash vision, a term he used when he taught about pule and revelation. It can best be defined as an unexpected daytime communication from the divine source to your mind of answers or words of direction concerning a situation or perplexing problem. What makes a flash vision distinctive is that it comes suddenly and the receiver is consciously awake.

¹⁴⁹ Mary K. Pukui, E. W. Haertig, and C. A. Lee, *Nānā i Ke Kumu (Look to the source)*, 1979, 11. Pukui's definition of akakū closely aligns with the "flash vision" experiences that Levon describes. However, one distinct difference was that his akakū vision almost always accompanied hearing a voice, 'ūlāleo. His

ho‘okē ‘ai—go without food or water for twenty-four hours. Doing so clarified his thoughts and his sensitivity to the promptings of the spirit. The spirit would then teach him the things he should do.¹⁵⁰

In March 2008, Levon gave a presentation for the UH Botany department’s Ethnobotany class on the ways that guidance came from Akua. Levon’s statement was recorded in a power point presentation documented by Al Chock of Mānoa’s Botany Department:

Pule (prayer) was important when gathering, preparing, and applying the herbs. The intuitive part of the mind is very important: when to use the plant, and why, is directed by prayer. They [the ancestors] were guided by divine sources in gathering plants through visions, foresight, and intuition. Knowledge plus intuition would make you almost perfect. Scientists go by what they can see under the microscope; you need to go beyond what you can see, to go with your heart, beyond the classroom. You must have the spirit in your thoughts and life. There is a need to balance the cognitive and the intuitive.¹⁵¹

Levon taught that this necessary balance between cognition¹⁵² and intuition¹⁵³ is the ideal mental and emotional state for a person desiring the spirit of Akua to teach and inspire.

experiences with visions also included hihio—vision by dream. Further defined: akakū--vision, or to see a vision; also trance or reflection, as in a pool or mirror; ‘ulāleo--supernatural voice or sound; the hearing of such a voice or sound.

¹⁵⁰ Samuel Kamakau, *Ka Po‘e Kahiko: The People of Old*, 95. Kamakau writes of this exact principle: if a “kahuna was an upright person he would be guided properly by true revelations of his spirit guides; the secret things of his ancestors would be revealed to him, and all the hallowed things about which he did not know.”

¹⁵¹ Levon Ohai, “Hawaiian Healthcare,” Guest Speaker presentation presented at the Ethnobotany of Hawaiian Medicine, March, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Botany Department, 2008. Recognition to Al Chock (Documenter).

¹⁵² The mental action of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought.

¹⁵³ The ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for intellectual reasoning.

The innate ability to reason, to factually identify the relationships between people and things and their possible outcomes are the characteristics of cognitive thinking. Intuitive thinking relates to the na‘au (gut feeling, or heart), the space where faith in the things that a person cannot see or does not know for certain is located.¹⁵⁴ The reward for achieving the cognitive and intuitive balance is perfection: “Knowledge plus intuition would make you almost perfect.”

The knowledge of how, when, where, and what to pule for governs the intuitive action of pule before a person goes into the forest to gather lā‘au for medicine. Pule in this case is a constant action, from the time before one enters the forest, through the time of gathering and departure, and into the time of preparation, administration, and follow-up visits. One of the primary purposes of saying a pule was to request divine protection and help in finding the plant(s) that were needed:

L: Before you go into the forest, what you do?

K: Pule.

L: Then you gotta follow it, [be]cause you going for answers and revelation, they [the ancestors] believed in that strongly, not like us today. And he [Levon’s tūtū-man, Benjamin Ohai] was always taught, that when you going for revelation and [to get] answers to your prayers, [go] alone. All others who are not on your wavelength will cause a disruption in your communication with the great God. It will not come, it must be in tune just like you. It must be the same spirit. Usually it’s one [person that goes into the forest] and it goes back to the time of our forefathers Abraham all them.

They never go into the mountains, whatevah, with two or three people.

¹⁵⁴ Pualani Hopkins HWST 107 Reader.

K: Just one person

L: To receive instruction.¹⁵⁵

A person enters the forest alone to communicate with Akua, free from outside distractions, and sensitivity to the promptings of Akua. Levon believed that the knowledge gained through personal revelation while alone in the forest becomes gems of understanding that can later be applied to the person's own life.

Aloha

People are illogical, self-centered, and unreasonable . . . love dem anyway.

-Levon Ohai

The Ohai family's methods for practicing lā'au lapa'au have been an enactment of aloha.¹⁵⁶ Family members have brought lā'au lapa'au into various contexts and circumstances. Some have simply administered herbal medicines while visiting a friend's home. Others have shared their lā'au lapa'au and informed advice with people who were waiting for them at the boat docks when they returned from fishing. Still others have formally taught their traditional art in the community and university system. Regardless of the situation, they all have always been willing to kōkua others in their times of need. From Levon's perspective, lā'au lapa'au "is a gift and a tool that Akua has given us by which we can administer healing to the sick and the afflicted; it isn't meant to be left in a bottle on a shelf, or in the mountains unused and unvisited."¹⁵⁷ In lā'au lapa'au, aloha is a requirement, and was always the epitome of Levon's practice and way of life.

¹⁵⁵ Levon implies that the people of his generation have been struggling in their faith in receiving "answers and revelation" in this time of progress and change.

¹⁵⁶ Compassion, mercy, sympathy, pity, kindness, sentiment, grace, charity.

¹⁵⁷ Note from HWST 285 notebook. HWST 285: Introduction to Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs, taught by Levon Ohai in Fall 2009. P. 83.

Akua Chooses Him

Never forget, never forget, never forget these things I teach you.

(Commonly said by Benjamin Ohai to Levon).

I want to briefly revisit the relationships between Levon Ohai and the other men who will be brought up in this section. Leo Ohai is Levon's fisherman dad. Leo's father is Benjamin Ohai, and Levon's grandfather. Kekauaimokuohaikainoa is Benjamin Ohai's father, and Levon's great-grandfather.

Since the stewardship of *lā'au lapa'au* was passed to Benjamin Ohai from his father Kekauaimokuohaikainoa, Benjamin was closely attentive to the details of Levon's birth as the first grandson of the family. For some years after Levon was born, he was watched to see if he was developing the proper character and disposition.¹⁵⁸ As his future teacher, Benjamin waited until Levon turned seven years old to decide whether or not he would be the person to be taught in all the ways of the tradition.¹⁵⁹ Benjamin may also have waited because he wanted to preserve and perpetuate the mana and authority of his tradition by teaching it to someone of his own bloodline. "Ho'i ka mana i loko" is the term for someone like Levon, who learned *lā'au lapa'au* knowledge from his direct bloodline.¹⁶⁰ "Ho'i ka mana i waho" is

¹⁵⁸ Levon was born during the "fifth month of Ho'oilō" Ho'oilō (the rainy season in Hawai'i which begins in November and ends in April). The moon in the heavens January 24, 1942 was 'Ōle Kū Lua, which fell on none of the ancient kapu times of Kū, Hua, Kaloa, or Kāne. Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau, *The Works of the People of Old: Nā Hana a Ka Po'e Kahiko*, (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1992), 16-18.

¹⁵⁹ Janine A. Powers, "Worlds Beyond Medicine: Nils P. Larsen's Impact on Hawai'i," *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 39 (2005): 108. Powers noted from Larsen that training was begun as early as five years of age. From ancient times, careful attention to the occurrences of good or bad *hō'ailona* associated with a person throughout life often determined whether or not that the individual was accepted by his or her ancestors as the one to learn the tradition. The mere appearance of *hō'ailona* wasn't enough; did they have the desired 'ano, personality, intelligence and work ethic necessary to achieve success in the tradition, bring honor and respect to their ancestors, 'ohana, and the art itself?

¹⁶⁰ June Gutmanis, *Kāhuna Lā'au Lapa'au: Hawaiian Herbal Medicine*, (Waipahu: Island Heritage Publishing, 2007), 3-5. The statement in regards to who the knowledge flowed to in succession was determined by the words "waho" or "loko." Gutmanis only gives the example of "waho"; however, an understanding of the Hawaiian

the label for those not related to the kahuna directly, but who learned the same degree of knowledge and gained the same experience from the master-teacher.¹⁶¹

K: Can you tell us your experience as far as how your tūtū man let you know that he wanted to teach you? Was there a certain day or certain way that he told you?

L: He didn't let me know.

K: Yeah?

L: He just, like... see if he told me that then I know I would rebel. If I hadn't...

K: Why you would rebel if...

L: Yeah, like learning herbs; I didn't wanna learn herbs. No way! [inaudible] leaves, plants, that's far from my mind. What I...what I wanted to do [as far as] learning to live is to go and be in the mountains and down the ocean, go fishing, go hook 'o'opu¹⁶² and all that. That's what I wanted. And that's what he used to do with us for our activity. No more dis kine all you gotta go to da movies and all for activity.

Levon's tūtū understood that the boy and his siblings were more interested in hunting, fishing, and other activities during the later part of the 1940's. When Levon was seven, Benjamin recognized that Akua had chosen him, because he possessed the particular attributes his tūtū was looking for.¹⁶³ At this juncture Benjamin decided to encourage

language, the concepts, and its context confirms that the word "loko" can refer to any child born directly from that kahuna.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² 'O'opu is the "General name for fishes included in the families Eleotridae, Gobiidae, and Blennidae. Some are in salt water near the shore, others in fresh water, and some said to be in either fresh or salt water."

¹⁶³ Levon recognized that people had to be chosen, and couldn't boast self-appointment to callings that only Akua could appoint. Levon defined the prerequisite character and 'ano needed for adults to be called into practitionership, but he never divulged what Benjamin looked for in Levon at the age of seven though what Benjamin observed was probably similar to what Levon was teaching as the prerequisites for adults.

Levon's learning and his inquisitiveness until an interest in lā'au lapa'au budded, without forcing the inherent calling of lā'au lapa'au upon him.

Benjamin was born at the advent of the territorial era, in the early 20th century. During the time from his infancy until his adult years in the 1940's, Hawai'i experienced great change domestically and culturally, largely due to Territorial/U.S. government policies, and technological advancements that affected communication, transportation, medicine, and infrastructure locally and worldwide. In order to give the reader a sense of understanding regarding these changes that Benjamin perhaps read about in a newspaper, heard from someone else, or experienced first-hand I dedicate some time to identifying local and world events that occurred during Benjamin's life.

The influxes of immigrant labor into Hawai'i came dominantly at the hand of the large plantation operations that were in business during the monarchy era and the territorial years. These plantations were, for many immigrant laborers, the center of social life and exchange which as a result changed the way they lived. Some people of various ethnic groups assimilated by replacing entirely their customs and beliefs with the those things of their new home; other immigrants acculturated their experience by maintaining their identity from their homeland yet, included aspects of their host culture.

During the Territorial period a "local" culture combining Native Hawaiian culture with the cultures of the various immigrant groups who settled in Hawai'i began to evolve. Most of the immigrants who were imported to work on Hawai'i's plantations had been peasant farmers in their countries of origin. They shared with the majority of Hawaiians, who were planters and fishermen, a reliance upon the land and its resources and a strong respect for extended family relationships . . . Children of

immigrant workers and Native Hawaiians alike attended Hawai‘i’s public schools. There they were socialized by the American school system. The children learned together, ate and shared meals together, and communicated across cultural barriers in pidgin . . . The rate of intermarriage between Hawaiians and immigrant groups, particularly the second and third generations, was very high.¹⁶⁴

Further commenting on plantation life, Jonathan Osorio’s comment on the effects of local agribusiness was still applicable up to the 1940’s, as it was still the primary source of employment:

In Hawai‘i, modern institutions of law and economics did not evolve either naturally or spontaneously. These were already existent structures carried here by white settlers, erected as a framework for conversion, embellished by the accumulated wealth of agribusiness and fortified by nascent racism.¹⁶⁵

Health wise, some people were affected by outbreaks of communicable diseases. When pathology identified tuberculosis, Yellow fever, and Dengue fever as major culprits that debilitated large groups of people in Hawai‘i, hospitals like Lē‘ahi Hospital in Kaimukī were built to curb the threat of at least one specific disease, tuberculosis. The danger of tuberculosis was so rampant that a Board of Tuberculosis was created in 1910. A year later, Yellow fever arrived via Mexico.¹⁶⁶ The appearance of more foreigners, a decline in Hawaiian language literacy by the end of the 1940’s and 50’s, and the economic boost offered by tourism are just a few indicators of change in and outside of Hawai‘i. These world

¹⁶⁴ Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina: Living Hawaiian Culture*, (Honolulu HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 44-45.

¹⁶⁵ Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887*, (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 252.

¹⁶⁶ Bradley E. Hope and Janette Harbottle Hope, “Native Hawaiian Health in Hawaii: Historical Highlights,” *Californian Journal of Health Promotion* 1 (2003): 1-9.

and local events occurred during the rapid cultural loss experienced between 1900 and 1959; they appear on the following abbreviated timeline.

Figure 2. Historical events during Benjamin Ohai’s lifetime.

- 1900** Republic of Hawai‘i becomes a Territory of the United States.
Federal law outlaws contract-labor system in Hawai‘i
- 1903** Wright brothers make their first flight.
- 1905** Revised Laws of Hawai‘i, Chapter 89, Section 1077, outlawed kāhuna or native healers from practicing.
- 1908** Henry Ford introduces the Model T
US develops Pearl Harbor
College of Hawai‘i (University of Hawai‘i) offers its first courses
- 1914** World War I begins in Europe
- 1917** Queen Lili‘uokalani, the monarchy’s last queen and monarch dies of a stroke at 79 years of age on November 11.
Territorial Legislature commissions an investigation of plants for medicinal value.
US enters World War I
- 1918** World War I ends
- 1919** Hawai‘i Medicine Board decides to allow the licensing of kāhuna.¹⁶⁷
Prince Kūhio introduces in Congress a bill to grant statehood to Hawai‘i
- 1920** Pure Native Hawaiian population down to 23,723
Part-Hawaiian population up to 18,027.
10,000+ Japanese and Filipino workers strike.
19th amendment of the U.S, grants suffrage to women.
- 1921** Hawaiian Homes Commission Act passed to protect 200,000 acres of Native Hawaiian land against agricultural corporations and the US government from taking their land.

¹⁶⁷ A.L. Donlin, “When All the Kahuna Are Gone: Evaluating Hawai‘i’s Traditional Hawaiian Healers’ Law,” *Asian-Pacific L. & Pol’y J.* 12 (2010): 219. “The practice of traditional Hawaiian medicine remained prohibited until Hawai‘i was annexed to the United States and was governed by a Territorial Legislature. In 1919, the Territorial Legislature passed a bill allowing traditional healers to practice medicine once they received a license from the Board of Health.”

Figure 2. (Continued) Historical events during Benjamin Ohai’s lifetime.

- 1922** Hawaiian Homes established on Moloka‘i.
Hawaiian Herbs of Medicinal Value published by the Territorial Board of Health.
Hawaiian Pineapple Company buys Lāna‘i for growing and processing pineapple.
Ala Wai Canal is dredged and Waikīkī wetlands are filled in.
- 1929** US Stock Market crashes
Great Depression begins
- 1939** World War II begins in Europe
- 1941** Japanese attack Pearl Harbor
- 1942** Levon Ammon Ohai is born
- 1945** All applicants for marriage required by law to check for syphilis.
- 1946** US restores independence to Philippines with agreement to lease land to US for bases.
US Congress passes the Indian Claims Commission Act¹⁶⁸
- 1959** Hawai‘i becomes the 50th State

* Taylor Quintard Jr., US History Timeline 1900-2000, February 8, 2007. http://faculty.washington.edu/qtaylor/a_us_history/1900_2000_timeline.htm (accessed July 26, 2012). Dates for this ultra-abbreviated timeline were chosen to highlight some of the domestic and foreign events that affected Hawai‘i during Benjamin Ohai’s life. It uses dates from Dr. Taylor Quintard’s American History website, Bradley and Janette Hope’s article Native Hawaiian Health in Hawaii: Historical Highlights and Beth T.’s essay called *Ka Nūpepa Kū‘oko‘a*, October 27, 2005, p. 17. Beth T. identified key events in Hawai‘i that occurred during the years that *Ka Nūpepa Kū‘oko‘a*.

¹⁶⁸ “Dislocated: The Federal Policy of Termination and Relocation, 1945-1960,” In *They Made Us Many Promises: The American Indian Experience 1524 to the Present*, by Donald Fixico, edited by Philip Weeks, 193-209, (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2002), 194-195. “To hear and determine the following claims against the United States on behalf of any Indian tribe, band, or other identifiable group of American Indians of the United States or Alaska.”

In 1949, aware that the world that he knew as a youth was considerably different from the one Levon and the children of his generation now lived in teaching his practice of lā‘au lapa‘au would be a challenge. Benjamin therefore cautiously encouraged Levon to learn about the plants used to heal. Fearing that he would lose Levon’s interest, Benjamin did not tell his grandson for some time that Akua had chosen him to be the keeper of the flame, the next kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au of the Ohai practice. Benjamin’s restrained approach partially resulted from the loss of culture and language he was witnessing; he must have feared that his ‘ike would not be passed on. The kāhuna of ancient times did not have to worry about the lack of potential acolytes or that their ‘ike would not be passed down. Someone was always willing to learn. How Benjamin came to know that Levon, his mo‘opuna, was to be his student in lā‘au lapa‘au, was a process taught to him by his father, Kekauaimokuohaikainoa. In Levon’s case, it took Benjamin seven years to determine that Levon was the one.¹⁶⁹

Levon’s early learning of his tūtū man’s healing pharmacopeia primarily took place when the two of them were fishing, hunting, or working along side each other and when Akua prompted his tūtū-man to impart knowledge. These various terrains all willingly offered the plants, minerals, and animals necessary for Levon’s learning, serving as classroom specimens for Levon to study. Part of Levon’s training conforms to Dr. Isabella Abbott’s account:

A kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au began his training at the age of five in the house of an elder expert in this field, perhaps his father but often another man. As he grew up, he received comprehensive instruction about the medicinal plants, their value and effect on the body, where they grew, how to gather, prepare, and administer them. Their

¹⁶⁹ The additional processes involved in Levon’s selection as the next kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au in his family’s practice will not be shared beyond what was previously mentioned above during Levon’s birth. It is sufficient to say that it bears some resemblance to what is discussed in Gutmanis, Kamakau and Malo’s books.

knowledge spanned three disciplines we consider separate today—botany, pharmacology, and medicine.¹⁷⁰

When recalling how he learned the plants, Levon said that his tūtū would simply point out a plant, teach him its medicinal properties, the method(s) for its preparation, and pule.¹⁷¹ The time that he spent each passing year farming on his tūtū man’s farm, hunting and fishing in the mountains, along the shore, or on the deep ocean revealed a complex weave of life cycles of plant, animal and man with each having an interdependency. Levon learned the seasons that were kapu for certain plants and animals, because they were either producing seed or breeding. These cycles followed both the moon and the sun. Under the tutelage of Benjamin, Levon also came to understand the numerous systems of the human body. Many of the pedagogical methods Levon used with students at UH-Mānoa resembled his descriptions of how he learned lā‘au lapa‘au.

On March 14, 1961, two months after Levon turned nineteen years old, Benjamin Ohai passed away.¹⁷² “His passing was a difficult one,” Levon said one day, during a conversation in Honolulu. The impact that Levon’s tūtū had on his life was enormous. Levon constantly recognized the importance of his tūtū man Benjamin Ohai both publicly and privately, and Levon’s second son, Benjamin Ohai would be his tūtū’s namesake.

¹⁷⁰ Isabella Abbott, *Lā'au Hawai'i: Traditional Hawaiian Uses of Plants*, (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992), 98.

¹⁷¹ For Levon, the finer points of knowing the potency of various lā‘au was closely learned by observing the efficacy of medicinal administrations to the sick or afflicted.

¹⁷² Roberta Livingston, “Individual Record: Benjamin Ohai,” Name search engine, Family Search. http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/AF/individual_record.asp?recid=6475049&lds=0®ion=-1®ionfriendly=&frompage=99. Roberta (Levon’s sister) records their tūtū’s death as March 14, 1961.

Levon practiced and perfected what he learned from Benjamin, using his “great-tūtū Kainoa’s” lā‘au lapa‘au book as a guide and reference for healing others.¹⁷³ Around 1994, Levon began teaching lā‘au lapa‘au more frequently in various communities on Kaua‘i and other islands. This he did for about six years, which he identified as a preparatory period that helped him organize his lā‘au lapa‘au knowledge into a rough curriculum. In 2000, Levon found himself preparing to teach at Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies the following year. In referring to his arrival at KCHS in 2001, he always commented “Akua had led me here.” With the help of Aunty Marvlee Naukana-Gilding and Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa (director at Levon’s time of hire), Levon was oriented in organizing and preparing the core elements of his lā‘au lapa‘au course(s) into sixteen weeks of instruction, according to UH-Mānoa requirements.¹⁷⁴

Six years I taught lā‘au lapa‘au on my own. I had classes in adult education. When I got this call to the University of Hawai‘i, I was already prepared; six years Akua brought me along, [saying] “Prepare this, do it this way, add this.” And then He said [to me], “Go back to those six years. What did you learn? There is your syllabus; you just need a little bit more refinement. I will refine you. And I will continue to refine you.”

The refinement Levon was seeking came through the arduous process of revising his syllabus per the curriculum committee’s recommendations. After the committee made a decision to accept his revisions, Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa—director of Hawaiian Studies in 2001—then met with Levon to ensure that the content of the course was what he wanted in the syllabus:

¹⁷³ Out of respect for Levon and his ‘ohana, the specific details regarding the family lā‘au lapa‘au book will not be discussed further.

¹⁷⁴ Levon also taught his lā‘au lapa‘au courses at Kaua‘i and Kapi‘olani Community Colleges.

that it would reflect the course description he had prepared. His course was first called HWST 297: Lā‘au Lapa‘au Hawai‘i: Medicinal Herbs of Hawai‘i; a three credit course, it was a “presentation of Hawaiian medicinal herbs including basic philosophy, identification, utilization and preparation of such herbs for human ailments.”¹⁷⁵ In 2002, the Hawaiian Studies department announced four new courses to be taught beginning spring semester 2003, one of which was Levon’s HWST 297 Lā‘au Lapa‘au Hawai‘i which received a new name. It was changed to HWST 285: Lā‘au Lapa‘au: Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs.¹⁷⁶

The following are the bullet points that were prepared for the HWST 297:

Introduction to Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs course first taught in 2001:

Week 1: Introduction to the course

Week 2: Traditional Philosophy of Lā‘au Lapa‘au

Week 3: The Warriors

Week 4: The Warriors

Week 5: Nature of the Lā‘au

Week 6: Gathering Lā‘au

Week 7: Preparing Lā‘au

Week 8: Planting Lā‘au

Week 9: Minerals in Lā‘au Lapa‘au

Week 10: Animal Products in Lā‘au Lapa‘au

¹⁷⁵ Marvlee Naukana-Gilding, Shanye “Kauwela” Valeho-Novikoff, “Fall 2001 Hawaiian Studies Course Schedule,” Compiled by Marvlee Naukana-Gilding, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, October 30, 2012. In 2001, Levon’s HWST 297: Lā‘au Lapa‘au Hawai‘i (CRN #50651) met on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30-11:45 in HSB (Hawaiian Studies Building) 201.

¹⁷⁶ Marvlee Naukana-Gilding, Shanye “Kauwela” Valeho-Novikoff, “New [Hawaiian Studies] Courses: Spring 2003/Fall 2003,” Compiled by Marvlee Naukana-Gilding, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, October 30, 2012. The other three courses that were announced were: HWST 385: Lā‘au Lapa‘au II: Advanced Medicinal Herbs; HWST 485: Mahi Lā‘au Lapa‘au: Hawaiian Medicinal Horticulture; and HWST 441: Ceded Lands: Focus on Crown and Government Lands 1848 to Present.

Week 11: Human Products in Lā‘au Lapa‘au

Week 12: Phases of the Moon in Planting Lā‘au Lapa‘au

Week 13: Fasting

Week 14: The Laws of Health

Week 15: Cleansing

Week 16: Incurables¹⁷⁷

Character and Behavior in the Practice

Levon was the embodiment of lā‘au lapa‘au tradition that was passed down to him. He followed, acted out and proclaimed every principle he taught regarding the mental, physical, and spiritual health of the soul of man.¹⁷⁸ In doing so, Levon set a standard for all students and practitioners, who studied with him to respect, follow, and attain. At the age of 69, he was physically built with muscle tone in the chest and back, and striations of muscles under the skin of his forearms. Levon’s visible degree of fitness never diminished.¹⁷⁹ This level of excellence was only achieved by strict adherence to a proper diet, proper nutrition, exercise, sufficient rest, and pule. Levon’s refinement of himself physically was never achieved by any artificial means, but by his own volition. But this desire would not have been fulfilled if it had not come from his own will, and the careful cultivation of his own

¹⁷⁷ This is the same outline (minus the lesson descriptions) of the HWST 285 syllabus that’s been used since 2009 during the time that I served as Levon’s kāko‘o and as far back as 2001. Again, reflecting on the challenge of the task in constructing syllabi that met the specifications and qualifications of Kamakākūokalani and the UH system, Levon relied heavily on Rochelle “Pi‘ilani” Ka‘aloha and Marvlee Naukana-Gilding, post HWST 285 course syllabus development, in shaping HWST 385, 485, and 487.

¹⁷⁸ Levon’s belief that the soul of man is comprised of two parts, the spirit, and the body, is indicative of his beliefs as a Native Hawaiian and Latter-Day Saint.

¹⁷⁹ Shane Enos, and Sterling Carvalho, former weight lifting students of Levon on Kaua‘i in the 1990’s, attest to Levon’s high level of fitness. These two athletes formally sought to train in weight lifting to enhance their strength for the sports they participated in from Levon because he had the knowledge and expertise from having been a former professional in weight lifting competitions.

pleasing character, with traits that set him apart as a person who held the good virtues of his Akua, the Hawaiian culture, and mankind in high esteem.

This was evident in class when he said, “If you will love what you do, you will be the best at what you do.” He continued by writing the following on the board:

Rules of Practitioner

Speak softly.

Don't judge.¹⁸⁰

To “speak softly” means to always talk kindly no matter what the situation. The meaning of “Don't judge” is straightforward because it is always better to know and understand the context or full story first. For Levon, by following these two rules, the virtues that he held in high esteem would develop and be cultivated in a practitioner. In the same class, he then addressed people who specifically wanted to practice and live his tradition. For them he wrote these added words of wisdom next to the two “Rules of Practitioner”:

Rules of Practitioner Master

Speak softly. a. no get mad

Don't judge. b. discernment

The added rules are for people who wanted to live beyond the basic rules for a practitioner. Under “master,” he wrote that it is harder to “no get mad,” because a person can still speak softly and be mad. In addition, Levon wrote that to be pono in your life, you must ask Akua for the gift of discernment—the ability to evaluate in a pono way. Unlike judging, discernment comes from Akua to a person—felt in the na'au, it enlightens the mind about anything pondered or prayed about.

¹⁸⁰ Levon Ohai, “Pule & Rules of the Practitioner.”

Time for Everyone

Levon recommended, made, and administered lā‘au lapa‘au to huge numbers of people, and continued to do so even after he became a full-time instructor at UHM’s Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies in 2001.¹⁸¹ In 2005, Leah Gouker, a reporter for *Ka Leo o Hawai‘i*, interviewed Levon and found that even as busy as Levon was, he still had the time to answer phone calls from people needing his advice and service. The majority of people who called him were referrals from others whom he had helped.¹⁸² For Levon, healing others was as natural as breathing.

He had the ability to know at a moment’s notice which plants to use, and the associated remedies for whatever illness presented.¹⁸³ An example of this took place on Wednesday, September 24, 2008 in Levon’s HWST 385 class—Lā‘au Lapa‘au II: Advanced Medicinal Herbs.¹⁸⁴ After beginning his class with a “Tot,” he wrote the word “Pule” on the board and underlined it.¹⁸⁵ Turning around, he asked, “Is there anyone that you know of that is sick or in need of our prayers today?” People began to raise their hands, and one by one,

¹⁸¹ Like many of his peers at Kamakakūokalani, Levon was a busy instructor, teaching up to four classes a day including labs.

¹⁸² Leah Gouker, “Hawaiian Herbal Healing Kept Alive at University,” *Ka Leo o Hawai‘i*, (Honolulu, HI, October 12, 2005), 1-2.

¹⁸³ Levon knew the medicinal properties of so many plants that he always had a third or fourth recommendation if the first plant was inaccessible, unavailable, or couldn’t be used in the treatment.

¹⁸⁴ University of Hawai‘i, “Hawaiian Studies Courses,” In University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa; 2011-2012 Catalog, n.d. <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/courses/departments/hwst.htm>. Advanced study and preparation of Hawaiian medicinal herb combinations.

¹⁸⁵ Levon was known for incorporating his Kaua‘i “pidgin” into his teachings whether spoken or written. His most famous written “pidgin” word, known by all his students was “Tot” which means “thought.” Each class always began with a “Tot” of the day to prepare the students’ minds for learning. The following list of words is not complete but it will give the reader insight into his use of language: dat—that, iz—is, perfecshun—perfection, evry—every, hart—heart, eryting—everything, trote—throat, neva—never, chu—you (as in, “How bout chu?”), wit—with, befoa—before, yu—you. He encouraged the perpetuation of pidgin as a unique variation of language evolution that occurred in Hawai‘i. What he wrote was often purposefully misspelled to align it closer to the way people speak.

said the names of people, how they knew them, and what illness they had. The “pule” list for that day looked like this:

Pule

M--- [pray] to be moa calm and nice; hard to get along with people

O--- emphysema/lung cancer

N--- kidney stones/gall stones too much coffee, soda, not enough H2O

Hawai‘i, Amelika (America)¹⁸⁶

After no other names were suggested for the list, he said, “pule kākou” (let us pray). Everyone lowered their heads and quietly said a silent pule for all who were listed. After about a minute Levon opened his eyes and said “mahalo,” indicating that people should end their pule. Based on the illnesses listed on the board, he taught us how and why “N---” came to have stones in both kidneys as well as the gall bladder.¹⁸⁷ He then named the lā‘au to be used in treating the stones as well as what their function was in relation to the organs, the removal of heavy metals in the body, and the dissolving or passing of the stones. Lastly, he indicated the amount of each herb and the corresponding dosage it would produce and concluded with the frequency and length of time “N---” should take the mixture and with advice on what to expect.

¹⁸⁶ Levon Ohai, “From Kidney Stones to Nā‘au”, Instruction presented at the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies Class Lā‘au Lapa‘au II: Advanced Medicinal Herbs (HWST 385), University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies, Rm. 107, September 24, 2008. Emphyzema was purposefully spelled with a “z” instead of an “s” to reflect the way it is pronounced.

¹⁸⁷ “Gallstones - PubMed Health,” Medical Library, PubMed Health, June 2, 2012. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001318/>. According to PubMed Health, “Gallstones are hard, pebble-like deposits that form inside the gallbladder. Gallstones may be as small as a grain of sand or as large as a golf ball.”

The student who recommended the name for the prayer list took the formula home and contacted the ill person, who after some persuasion, agreed to try the remedy. After following the directions, the person passed the small kidney and gallstones with minimum pain.

He ‘Ano Hana, Ke Koho: The Art of Choosing

You have to be in control of the potency of each herb.

-Levon Ohai

Levon’s methodology guided him in selecting certain plants to be used as remedies, whether by themselves, or in combination. The following is an *incomplete*¹⁸⁸ list of things that affected the choice of one lā‘au and method over another. Note: They are not listed in any particular order.

- A. Illness type
- B. Preexisting conditions/illness
- C. Pain
- D. Allergies
- E. Degree of personal commitment
- F. Degree of familial support
- G. Personal environment
 - Living
 - Work
- H. Hawaiian Season/kapu
- I. Season according to the west
- J. Time of day
- K. Time of night
- L. Moon cycle
- M. Ocean cycle

¹⁸⁸ See footnote 19 above.

- 1. Tide
- N. Fish cycle
- O. Plant cycle
- P. Human cycle/stage
 - 1. Age
 - a. Infant
 - b. Child
 - c. Teenager
 - d. Makua
 - e. Kupuna
 - 2. Menstruation
 - a. Menstrual stage
 - 3. Puberty
- Q. Place
 - 1. Kuahiwi
 - 2. Coastal
 - 3. Ocean
 - 3. Domestic
- R. Potency
- S. Plant Health
- T. Plant variety (species)¹⁸⁹
 - 1. Plant part
 - a. Leaf
 - (1) maturity
 - (2) size
 - (3) texture
 - (4) color
 - (5) amount
 - b. Root
 - (1) aerial

¹⁸⁹ This includes lichens and fungi.

(2) below ground

(3) size

(4) length

(5) color

c. Bark

(1) of root

(2) of trunk

(3) of branches

(4) outer bark

(5) inner bark

(6) thick bark

(7) thin bark

(8) protuberances

d. Stem

(1) hard

(2) soft

(3) color

(4) maturity

(5) protuberances

e. Rhizome

(1) size

(2) maturity

(3) rhizome health

f. Flower

g. Oil

(1) oil color

h. Sap

i. Seed

U. Availability

V. Cost

Although this list itemizes factors that Levon considered important when gathering and preparing his remedies, he relied heavily on the guidance of Akua to balance his ‘ike about the physical environment with spiritual promptings. For Levon’s ancestors, this intuitive strength was necessary to prevent mistakes during the testing, experimentation, and analysis of the plants for the sake of healing.¹⁹⁰ Determining the efficacy of the plants in the past benefited his family’s pharmacopeia by broadening its range to include useful hānai plants that they had access to. The following two remedies represent such changes in lā‘au lapa‘au. The first remedy contains a combination of kauna‘oa (*cuscuta sandwichiana*) with nīoi (from the genus *capsicum*) and kālika (*allium sativum*), which by Levon shared during his instructorship at Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies:

Lā‘au remedy

(Ailment to treat withheld)

Ingredients:

¼ tsp nīoi juice

2 cloves kālika

1 cup kauna‘oa

Preparation

Blend and strain each of the lā‘au then combine.

(Additional steps withheld)

Administration/Dosage/Frequency

Drink (amount is withheld) times a day.

‘Ōpū/Na‘au Cleanse

¹⁹⁰ Janine A. Powers, “Worlds Beyond Medicine: Nils P. Larsen’s Impact on Hawai‘i,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 39 (2005): 108. Powers noted Larsen’s findings that kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au also tested their remedies on animals, which they observed to document any change or improvement.

2 T pa‘akai

2 pints wai

Purpose: The ‘ōpū/na‘au cleanse helps your body to clean out the digestive system.

Directions:

Warm the wai in a pot and stir in the pa‘akai until it is entirely dissolved. After it is dissolved, pour in a bottle and drink the mixture. You will find that from the time of “inu” to the time of “using the bathroom” will vary with every person: for some it is within the hour and for others it is three hours later.

CHAPTER 4: FOLLOWING HIS VISION

Introduction

This chapter presents Levon’s vision for the medicinal plants, how he pursued bringing it to reality through education at the university and through certification and licensure.

His Vision for the Warriors

Within the hearts of people self-driven to do all they can to realize their dreams is a vision that keeps them focused, determined, and committed until the very end. Levon was such a man. He envisioned a return to prominence of the traditional and hānai herbs used in his practice of Hawaiian herbal medicine. These plants were not just any plants: they were individual “warriors” each with unique skills and characteristics that could fight illnesses and disease—individually or collectively. With the onset of modern medicine in Hawaii, the people who held the knowledge about these warriors and their uses faced a steep, but not total obstacle, when certain laws in Hawai‘i were passed that restricted their practice. Levon stated his vision this way:

to restore the standards and usage of traditional Hawaiian and hānai medicinal herbs to its proper place in today’s 21st century. A rebirth and restoration of our sacred herbs in secret places from darkness and obscurity into the light of education and science must occur in order for them to support, strengthen, and enhance the science with the art of healing, and to revolutionize personalized medicine.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Levon shared his vision with many people: lā‘au lapa‘au students, the Mobile Native Hawaiian Health Inc., UH-Mānoa student organizations and his lā‘au lapa‘au council on O‘ahu.

Revolutionize Medicine with a Healer in Every Home

I had a conversation with Mrs. Wilma Holī (Kaua‘i) several weeks after Levon’s funeral. She kindly revealed a conversation she had with Levon regarding what his mission was in regards to healing people with the ‘ike of lā‘au lapa‘au. She movingly said that “he wanted a healer in every family.”¹⁹² This was a pivotal moment for me in truly understanding the direction and the methodology Levon had adopted to accomplish the revolutionizing of personalized medicine, as we know it. Putting a healer in every home meant putting the kuleana and knowledge of health and the herbs back in the home. It meant that the plants and the knowledge of how Ohai used them would continue, or taken out from hidden “secret places,” but instead brought back “from darkness and obscurity into the light of education and science.” A product of this restoration of lā‘au lapa‘au would be the beginnings of revolutionizing personalized medicine; this is congruent with the mana‘o of educating others, notably to ho‘ōla lāhui.

The fruits of his mission in educating people in lā‘au lapa‘au since 2000 were already bearing fruit in the lives of those he instructed. People from many communities attended his classes in the university system from as far as Kaua‘i Community College (KauaiCC), to Kapi‘olani Community College (KCC), and UH Mānoa (UHM).

He embedded his mission of putting a healer in every home in all the lā‘au lapa‘au courses he crafted. In each lecture, every lab, his desire to make a healer out of anyone who would listen to him changed people because of the application of the basic tenets of his practice. All of the key indicators of positive change occurring in such people are not listed here; however, it should be said that Levon was astutely aware of how people were changing

¹⁹² Mrs. Wilma Holī, conversation with author at the funeral services of Levon Ohai, March 17, 2012.

for good because he closely observed character, countenance, actions, choices, speech, lifestyle, and diet. The goal of having a healer in every family, even if one already existed, was something he wanted everyone to achieve.

Perpetuating the Knowledge

The bringing of Levon's practice of *lā'au lapa'au* to the university did not happen accidentally. After much time, *pule* and reflection, Levon chose to act on the promptings he received from Akua; "Akua led me here to the university," he would always say. He saw that following what Akua asked him to do would help him in the attainment of his personal vision of raising the status of medicinal herbs on multiple levels and in innumerable circles of social and cultural influence. He was aware of the cultural and political ramifications he would encounter because of sharing his family's *lā'au lapa'au* knowledge with outsiders, and he pursued his decision while the community of traditional healers watched with eyes of uncertainty and concern.

Simultaneously, as Levon was seeking to share his family knowledge of *lā'au lapa'au* with the community and the university system, other Native Hawaiian healers were trying to address the sporadic foray of legislative bills in Honolulu regarding the credentialing and licensing of *lā'au lapa'au*. By the 1980's and 1990's healers met in their respective Hawaiian communities to discuss ways to preserve their practice and protect the rights of *kānaka maoli* healers from regulatory oversight by the State. In 1998, Papa Ola Lōkahi¹⁹³ organized a two

¹⁹³ To improve the health status and wellbeing of Native Hawaiians and others by advocating for, initiating and maintaining culturally appropriate strategic actions aimed at improving the physical, mental and spiritual health of Native Hawaiians and their 'ohana (families) and empowering them to determine their own destinies.

day meeting “of respected Native Hawaiian *kūpuna kāhuna*¹⁹⁴ of traditional healing practices and their *kako* ‘o to discuss Act 162¹⁹⁵ in Kailua –Kona, Hawai‘i.” These were:

Papa Henry Auwae (Haunani Kalama Smith)

*Kahu David Kaalakea (Keoki Sousa)

*Aunty Abbie Napeahi

Aunty Margaret Machado (Nerita Machado)

Aunty Agnes Cope (Kamaki Kanahele)

Aunty Malia Craver (Millie Kawaa)

Uncle Kalua Kaihua (Janice Nielson)

*unable to attend¹⁹⁶

An important outcome of this gathering was the crafted document called the *Kāhuna Statement* (in response to the enacted Act 162 and 453-2(c) by the legislature of Hawai‘i).

Papa Ola Lōkahi then presented legislation that included determining who would oversee certification and quasi-regulation of Native Hawaiian practitioners.¹⁹⁷ Article 12 section 7 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution had already recognized and allowed Native Hawaiian

¹⁹⁴ These people each represented a various type of healing within their respective traditional healing community.

¹⁹⁵ “Section 7. The State reaffirms and shall protect all rights, customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes and possessed by ahupua‘a tenants who are descendants of native Hawaiians who inhabited the Hawaiian Islands prior to 1778, subject to the right of the State to regulate such rights. [Add Const Con 1978 and election Nov 7, 1978].”

¹⁹⁶ Papa Ola Lōkahi, “Chronology of Events Relating to Traditional Hawaiian Healing Practices Since 1985,” Papa Ola Lōkahi. March 2008. http://www.papaolalokahi.org/~papaola/?page_id=21 (accessed September 24, 2012).

¹⁹⁷ The Kāhuna Statement was officially introduced by POL (Papa Ola Lōkahi) to the Hawai‘i State legislature January 25th, 2001 as SB (Senate Bill) 1390 which eventually becomes enacted as Act 304.

practitioners to practice without the issues of recognition, qualification, certification, licensing, and regulation.¹⁹⁸

Levon began teaching his practice of *lā‘au lapa‘au* to the community around 1994, and continued it until he accepted the instructor position at Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies (KCHS). Levon also traveled to Hawai‘i Island and Maui to teach his practice. As he taught others how to heal themselves, he also supported the traditional healers, making the origin of his *lā‘au lapa‘au* roots very clear by saying, “I came from dem (the traditional healers) my tūtū taught me; but, I am here now and I *nevah* forget where I came from and neither should you; but to answer your question, I chose to teach at the university what I know because Akua wanted me to.”¹⁹⁹ The same year that the *Kāhuna Statement* became Act 304 in Hawai‘i State law, Levon accepted an instructorship at KCHS, formally establishing his *lā‘au lapa‘au* practice at UH-Mānoa.

These two events of Act 304 and the entrance of his family practice of *lā‘au lapa‘au* onto the academic scene were antithetical ideologies that opposed each other culturally; the opposition comes with Levon breaking the unwritten rule of *lā‘au lapa‘au* tradition. It dictates that the preservation of healing knowledge should be a heritage to succeeding familial generations or limited to a chosen few inside and outside of the familial line. In the first instance, the traditional healers were working on Act 304 to preserve (legislatively) their knowledge and their rights to practice. Before, during and after the passing of Act 304 it appears they maintain the integrity of this rule. Levon, on the other hand willingly breaks

¹⁹⁸ The State of Hawai‘i, “The Constitution of the State of Hawai‘i: Article 12 Section 7-Traditional & Customary Rights,” hawaii.gov, November 7, 1978. <http://hawaii.gov/lrb/con/constitution/CONST%200012-0007.html> (accessed October 21, 2012).

¹⁹⁹ Levon Ohai, personal communication with author at Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies, February 12, 2009.

free from this and follows his own intuition in seeking to preserve his practice by teaching it to all people through the means of education at the university. This was an important moment for Levon because this meant that the sharing and distribution of his lā‘au lapa‘au practice was now in the hands of many people rather than a few. In essence, this gave his family knowledge a “perpetual” quality. This milestone became a major step forward toward his vision of restoring the use of medicinal plants in personalized health and putting a healer in every home.

Lā‘au Lapa‘au Certificate

Levon’s use of the university’s organizational framework provided a venue in which the basis of his ‘ike could be taught. Conventional in his outlook for the future of lā‘au lapa‘au, he stressed the need to strive for superiority in ‘ike as well as in spirit.²⁰⁰ This sense of perfection went hand-in-hand with his vision when training and developing “would-be” practitioners that were strong in spirit, had a respect for protocol, and were diligent in procedural compliance. Levon not only envisioned training people to be perpetual students of the practice, but created practitioners who would be qualified with enough knowledge and experience to become experts in the field. As experts, they would be able to earn a living by monetary compensation in return for their healing services.²⁰¹

In order to get to that point, Levon saw as a future possibility students receiving a certificate in lā‘au lapa‘au through the UH-Mānoa Outreach College and or the Hawaiian

²⁰⁰ Interestingly, in matters regarding a practitioner’s sensitivity to the spirit and ‘ike, Levon would always mention “you must be more than good, you must be of a higher echelon in your practice.” However, his final comments always ended with being “superior” in ‘ike, spirit and practice. The “superiority” Levon talked of was never the definition of having an overtly high opinion of oneself; in fact—in reference to ‘ike—he used the definition of “superiority” which meant having a high standard of ‘ike or ‘ike that was unquestionably of high quality. If “being excellent” is an echelon above “being good” at what you do, then “being superior” is the standard of perfection.

²⁰¹ Ohai, Benjamin, Personal Communication to Keoki Baclayon, *My Dad’s Reasons for Certification and Licensing*, (November 30, 2012).

Studies Program upon completion of a set of lā‘au lapa‘au courses. Although never realized, Levon thought that the issuance of a certificate of completion by the university—a modern western institution—would have helped expedite quicker the development of a formal “certification to licensure” process. The development would have focused on determining baseline practices, identifying and setting minimum educational standards, establishing examination criteria that tests applicant proficiency and comprehension, (legislatively) assisting in the tasks related to improving/passing Levon’s bill SB 1527/HB1618, developing a plan to coordinate and institute a process for the issuance of a license, defining and establishing requirements of eligibility for liability/malpractice insurance with insurance companies.

From the perspective of the UH system, certificates are not all the same as they all have varying requirements, fulfill different needs and are offered at both the university and community college levels.²⁰² In Levon’s request for his students to receive a certificate in lā‘au lapa‘au meant the development of a (non-degree) academic subject certificate program within the Hawaiian Studies program. A part of a memo issued by the UH system reads:

An academic subject certificate program is a designated set of courses that does not lead to a degree, but complements an existing degree program by enhancing the development of skills and knowledge in a focused area of study, or provides an alternative to a degree program in the form of intensive professional training or personal enrichment in a focused area of study. Certificate programs are classified as either graduate or undergraduate certificates. They are generally narrower in scope than degrees, and the courses, together with other forms of credited educational

²⁰² See Appendix B for a list of certificates granted by UH.

experience, are specifically structured to form a coherent specialization. They may be offered as a field of specialization within an existing degree program; as an interdisciplinary field that combines courses from two or more degree programs; or as an area of professional and practical forms of specialist knowledge and skills.²⁰³

As to which certificate program Levon would have ascribed to for his lā‘au lapa‘au courses is unknown to me. However, hypothetically speaking, even if the academic subject certificate program for a lā‘au lapa‘au proposal was accepted and put in place, key components such as funding, separate malpractice/liability insurance for both the classroom and practicum²⁰⁴ field training, memorandums²⁰⁵ of understanding, and a cadre of instructors would need to be clearly established.

Although his proposal was *avant-garde*, it brought out questions about what is gained or lost through the issuance of a certificate (an acknowledgement) by the university, versus acceptance, acknowledgement, and validation by Native Hawaiian healers.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ University of Hawai‘i, “University of Hawai‘i Search Results: Academic Subject Certificate Programs, Procedures and Guidelines,” *University of Hawai‘i*, June 1, 2004. www.manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcaa/planning.../pdf/procedures_guidelines.pdf (accessed December 2, 2012).

²⁰⁴ University of Hawai‘i: Office of Public Health Studies, *Field Practicum*, December 4, 2012. <http://www.hawaii.edu/publichealth/index.html> (accessed December 4, 2012). Although this is in reference to public health students, this may be considered an option for a future lā‘au lapa‘au program: “Liability Insurance: The University is prohibited from providing malpractice or liability insurance for students in field training . . . low cost Student Professional Liability Insurance Program is available. The insurance premium of \$15.00 is effective for one year, and insurance must be purchased before starting the practicum.” John A. Burns School of Medicine and the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene give similar advise to their students during their practicum/interning phases of their training.

²⁰⁵ MOU’s (Memorandums of Understanding) need to be established between practicum sites clearly outlining the expectations and requirements of both parties, in this case the lā‘au lapa‘au program (Hawaiian Studies) and the Queen’s hospital—for example.

²⁰⁶ Alyce Dodge, “Herbalists Licensing Meeting,” 2010 Meeting Notes, Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland’s Office, State Capitol, Rm 226, Hawai‘i State Government, Honolulu. From my understanding, in preparation for Levon’s 2009 proposal to legislators regarding licensing, Levon held organized and informal discussions/meetings as soon as 2007. Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa additionally indicated that the topic of certification and licensure, for Levon, occurred as soon as he began teaching at KCHS in 2001. In 2009, internal discussions with his ‘A‘ali‘i Council and the UH-Mānoa student led RIO (registered independent organization) ‘Ahahui Lā‘au Lapa‘au (no affiliation to the healer formed group ‘Ahahui Lā‘au Lapa‘au from Māui) regarding

Additionally, what does a certificate or even a licensed lā‘au lapa‘au practitioner truly mean among a group of traditional healers or a group of doctors? Would its issuance strengthen the approval of experienced Native Healers who do not have one? These are just some ongoing questions that have been generated among practitioners in general. One example demonstrating the “ongoing discussion” was when Levon attended a Native Hawaiian Healers conference on May 5, 2005 at Cottages in Waimea, Kaua‘i. In asking Levon about what the gathering was about, he mentioned that many healers had gathered from the various islands to talk about how to preserve and perpetuate the traditional practices. While unable to remember the exact details of the conference, he did remember that they had workshops, met other healers, and talked a lot about “the Healers Act” (Act 153), certification—documentation given by a medical board confirming proficiency and competence—and licensing.²⁰⁷ Because he also brought with him two students who were learning from him in the UH classes, issues about him teaching “others”—those not of his ‘ohana—were briefly brought up.²⁰⁸

A final example of this ongoing discussion about certification occurred in April 2011 at Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center in a meeting with traditional healers where

the bills effect of licensing lā‘au lapa‘au—a Native Hawaiian practice—found that it was even a sensitive issue within.

²⁰⁷ The People's Law Dictionary. S.v. “licensing.” Retrieved November 30 2012 from <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/licensing> “A license gives a person or organization permission to engage in a particular activity. If the government requires a license for an activity, it may issue criminal charges if a person engages in the activity without obtaining a license. Most licenses expire after a certain period of time, and most may be renewed. Failure to abide by certain laws and regulations can result in suspension or revocation of a license.”

²⁰⁸ Act 153 “allowed the panels to determine their own criteria for certifying practitioners.” (Donlin: 227 Act 153-3, reprinted in 2005 Haw. Sess. Laws 378, 379.) Donlin clearly summarized this process stating that “Currently, if a Kūpuna Council wishes to gain authority to certify kāhuna under the Healers’ Law, it must submit a request to POL. In this request, the council must include the names of its members and evidence showing that its members are good candidates for recognition. Traditional healers must disclose the names of their teachers, information about the healers’ families, and the traditional Hawaiian healing disciplines in which they are proficient . . .” (229).

Levon was summoned. Emmalani Makepa-Foley and myself accompanied him as he gave an accounting of the bill he helped author. The discussion centered on certification and licensing, the bill's wording, and its potential effect relating to Native Hawaiian healers and lā'au lapa'au. As all of the healers gathered in the room were deeply involved historically with the preservation of the traditional arts since the 60's, and for one kupuna healer a little earlier, their concerns were related to the impact that it was going to have on Native Hawaiian healers as a whole if it were passed. Was it going to unravel all that they had worked to preserve, and jeopardize what was left for Native Hawaiian healers? Comments in this meeting also were related to teaching lā'au lapa'au at the university where it was open for anybody to learn.²⁰⁹ Many more meetings have occurred since then with other groups of people bringing up certification because of Levon's pursuit to make it a profession. In comparison to today's physicians who treat patients with conventional medicine, Levon always thought it unfair that indigenous people—especially Native Hawaiians—who possessed a knowledge of healing the human body were ineligible to receive monetary payment for their services because they lacked a medical degree. As always in these meetings, certification, its purpose, role, function and meaning in practitionership were defined again, clarified and debated.

Healing the sick, and gaining a formal acknowledgement and validation of lā'au lapa'au and its efficacy in health restoration were at the heart of why Levon was seeking certification. While validity does not equate to legality, validating a traditional form of knowledge through certification would have made it eligible to be dealt with as a member of the modern medical community. An example of this lies in the fact that some people are

²⁰⁹ See note 16 above.

alternatively using herbal medicine while seeing a medical doctor. Additionally, physicians wanting to understand the outcomes of their patients' use of alternative/herbal/lā'au lapa'au healing modalities and the mixture of conventional medicine opens the door for them to seek accepting, if not, supporting their patients choice to do so. By this recognition alone, and the hope to establish it as a modern profession was Levon's hope that certification via the university would have become the "sluice gate" for practitionership in the 21st century, akin to licensing.

Nā Papa Lā'au Lapa'au: The Hawaiian Medicine Classes

The undergraduate lā'au lapa'au courses offered at Kamakākūokalani represent the most notable evidence of Levon's vision. These four classes are listed below with a class known as HWST 499.²¹⁰

HWST 285 Lā'au Lapa'au I: Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs

Presentation of Hawaiian medicinal herbs including basic philosophy, identification, utilization, and preparation of such herbs for human ailments.

HWST 385 Lā'au Lapa'au II : Advanced Medicinal Herbs

Advanced study and preparation of Hawaiian medicinal herb combinations.

HWST 485 Mahi Lā'au Lapa'au: Hawaiian Medicinal Horticulture

The science of planting and harvesting Hawaiian medicinal plants and exploring production and marketing strategies.

HWST 487 Hawaiian Aquatic Medicine

Identification, extraction and preparation of complexes of aquatic herbs to formulate a healing combination to contribute to maintaining overall health.

HWST 499 Directed Reading/ Research

²¹⁰ In the UH system, 499 courses in general are offered in many departments at the undergraduate level with the department designation preceding the number i.e. HWST 499 (Hawaiian Studies 499); PSY 499 (Psychology 499).

Before discussing the four lā‘au lapa‘au courses, the Directed Reading/Research course called HWST 499 will be mentioned.^{211, 212} This course allowed individual students to research in greater depth a topic they are interested in within the subject matter. For Levon, the students who expressed a desire to learn more regarding lā‘au lapa‘au and its influence in affecting the health status of people enrolled in this course under him. A list of some of those students and their topics of interest from 2005 until 2010 are found below.

Figure 3. HWST 499 Students with Levon Ohai from 2005 until 2010.

Date	Student Name	Research Topic(s)
2005	Krista Steinfeld ²¹³	Case Studies
2005	‘Uala Lenta	Cancer Treatments Alternative Medicine
2005	Heather	Ovarian Cancer Chinese Medicine: Chi
2005	Yuko	Depression Acupuncture Aromatherapy
2005	Melissa	Diabetes Diet
2005	Sean	Cancer: Japan, Africa and the West
2005	Ashley	Pterygium
2005	Leslie	Causes of obesity Programs for obesity Hereditary Issues of obesity

²¹¹ University of Hawai‘i, “Undergraduate Research Opportunities at Mānoa: Inventory of Research Courses Offered in Undergraduate Programs,” UH Mānoa: OVCAA: Undergraduate Education. November 22, 2012. http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcaa/undergrad/research_opportunities.htm (accessed November 22, 2012).

²¹² University of Hawai‘i, Opportunities for Independant Studies, November 24, 2012. http://www.advising.hawaii.edu/artsci/pages/resources/educ_plan/directed_reading_research.asp (accessed November 24, 2012). “Directed Reading/Research Courses allow students to pursue research or independent study under a sponsoring faculty mentor. For some students, this may involve gaining “hands-on” laboratory or field experience working on a research project under the guidance of a faculty member or a member of his or her research group. For others, it may involve in-depth reading and library research, followed by discussion sessions or a research paper.”

²¹³ Krista Steinfeld, Personal Communication by Keoki Baclayon. HWST 499 (October 5, 2012).

Figure 3. (Continued) HWST 499 Students with Levon Ohai from 2005 until 2010.

2005	Shane Satou	Mental Illness Heart Disease Cancer Diabetes Substance Abuse “SUNDS” Sudden Unexplained Death Syndrome
September 2005	Maile	Liver Kidney Nutrition Miscarriage Labor Pain Diabetes
September 23, 2005	Dave Reedy	HIV/AIDS Arthritis Diabetes H.B.P Traumatic Head Injury: Concussion Emphysema: Slow Suffocation
January 2006	Rion Muir Stanbro	Epidermal (Skin) Disorders
January 18, 2006	Laua’e Murphy	Allergic Reactions to Bee Stings
February 1, 2006	Dariel Hoapili	Arthritis Hypertension
2007	Mary Kalikolani Correa	Lupus
2008	Cody Keale	Diabetes
2009	Keoki Baclayon	Lā‘au Lapa‘au in the <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> and the <i>Star Bulletin</i> from 1900 to present
2010	Leina‘ala Bright	Waihona Lā‘au Lapa‘au: Hawaiian Medicine Cabinet

With the help of several faculty members at Kamakakūokalani (namely Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, Rochelle Pi‘ilani and Marvlee Naukana-Gilding) Levon’s four undergraduate courses, previously mentioned above, eventually came into fruition in the form of syllabi, learning objectives etc. The materialization of teachable courses from Levon’s lā‘au lapa‘au knowledge and ideas could not have been done without the primary assistance of the faculty mentioned, his family, as well as others who took the time to converse, support and review his ideas. Their recommendations helped design a lā‘au lapa‘au curriculum that takes the learner through a succession of lectures and lab projects, making

every preceding class valuable as a foundation to build upon. The lā‘au lapa‘au classes have continued to be categorized under the AOC (area of concentration) called Mālama ‘Āina²¹⁴ since HWST 285 was first taught in the Fall of 2001 at UH Mānoa.²¹⁵

Table 1. Known class enrollments from 2001-2009.

	FALL=F SPRING=S	HWST *297 or (285)	HWST *301 or (385)	HWST 485	HWST 487
F	2001	45	20		
S	2002				
F	2002	39			
S	2003	34	20		
F	2003	10		16	
S	2004		17	12	
F	2004	30		14	32
S	2005	31	33		
F	2005	42	12		23
S	2006				
F	2006				
S	2007				
F	2007	38	15	21	18
S	2008	39	22	18	
F	2008	38	20	13	16
S	2009	40	22	21	
F	2009	35	16		20

*Table information compiled by Marvlee Naukana-Gilding. The course designations 297 and 301 were changed in 2003 to HWST 285 and 385.

In a meeting with other healers, he shared that he had applied for the position to teach lā‘au lapa‘au at Kamakākūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies (in 2000). By Fall

²¹⁴ When undergraduate students declare Hawaiian Studies as their major they choose one AOC (area of concentration). Each AOC lists a number of courses which are taken on top of the core courses required for the Hawaiian Studies degree. The following are AOC that students can choose from: Hālau o Laka: Native Hawaiian Creative Expression, Kūkulu Aupuni: Envisioning the Nation, Kumu Kahiki: Comparative Hawai‘inuiākea and Indigenous Studies, Mālama ‘Āina: Hawaiian Perspectives on Resource Management, and Mo‘olelo ‘Ōiwi: Native History and Literature. Levon’s undergraduate courses are listed under the AOC Mālama ‘Āina: Hawaiian Perspectives on Resource Management.

²¹⁵ Marvlee Naukana-Gilding, Shanye (Kauwela) Valeho-Novikoff, “Fall 2001 Hawaiian Studies Course Schedule,” Compiled by Marvlee Naukana-Gilding” Honolulu, Hawai‘i, October 30, 2012.

2001, word had quickly spread about Levon teaching his first lā‘au lapa‘au class (HWST 285), and people from the community came to listen to Levon teach by enrolling and/or auditing²¹⁶ his course. There were many times when Levon’s classes were filled to enrollment²¹⁷ capacity, and he approved student overrides so that they could attend his class.²¹⁸ Levon believed that no one should *ever* be turned away, so he welcomed everyone.

Levon and the Influence of other Healers in the University

There are other courses that teach lā‘au lapa‘au: HWST 211 Hawaiian Ethnobotany, HWST 125 Hawaiian Plants and Their Uses, Botany 105 Ethnobotany, HWST 105 Hawai‘i Plant Culture, HWST 295 Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs II: Lā‘au Lapa‘au, and HWST 298H Lā‘au Lapa‘au Medicinal Herbs. HWST 211 and HWST 125 have largely been organized by haumāna (students) of the Edith Kanaka‘ole ‘ohana and haumāna of the late kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au Henry Auwae; all are from Hawai‘i Island. Aunty Izzie, (Dr. Isabella Aiona Abbott) joined the UHM Botany department in 1982 largely influencing the development of an undergraduate Ethnobotany tract.²¹⁹ One of these courses is Botany 105 (Ethnobotany) which covers the use of “plants and their influence upon [the] culture of Hawai‘i and [the] Pacific;

²¹⁶ University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, “University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Catalog 2012-2013,” University of Hawai‘i. October 6, 2012. <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/undergrad-ed/registration.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012). “Auditors are regularly admitted students who enroll for informational instruction only, and attend classes with the consent of the instructor. Auditors receive no credit, and they do not take course examinations. The extent of their classroom participation is at the instructor's discretion. Auditors are not generally allowed in art studios, laboratory science, mathematics, elementary and intermediate Hawaiian and foreign languages, creative writing, English composition, physical education, speech and other performance courses, or in classes where they might displace credit students.”

²¹⁷ Marvlee Naukana-Gilding, “Ohai Class Enrollments,” Compiled by Marvlee Naukana-Gilding, Honolulu, HI, November 16, 2012.

²¹⁸ Kamakākūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies (KCHS), “A Celebration of the Life of Kumu Ohai,” Honolulu, HI, March 14, 2012. Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, one speaker during the memorial service, was the director of KCHS during the time that Levon was hired to teach lā‘au lapa‘au.

²¹⁹ Louis Bergeron, “Isabella Abbott, world-renowned Stanford algae expert, dies at 91,” *Stanford News*, December 7, 2010. <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2010/december/izzie-abbott-obit-120710.html> (accessed November 22, 2012).

uses of cultivated and wild plants.”²²⁰ Al Keali‘i Chock of the Botany department submitted the paper work that renamed this class Ethnobotany.²²¹ In 2005, Levon and Dr. Will McClatchey produced a 58 minute video²²² used in the Ethnobotany curriculum for its section on “Traditional Hawaiian Herbal Healthcare”; the class discussion of the film segued to a lā‘au lapa‘au cultural practitioner sharing and demonstrating the use of the herbs. Other lā‘au lapa‘au related courses are HWST 285 (UHM, WCC, and Kaua‘i CC), HWST 295 (Kaua‘i CC) and HWST 298H (KCC); as Levon lived on Kaua‘i he taught both HWST 285 and HWST 295 at Kaua‘i Community College. The 295 course description bears some resemblance to Mānoa’s HWST 385 Lā‘au Lapa‘au II: Advanced Medicinal Herbs. The HWST 298H currently offered at Kapi‘olani Community College is listed as an “Equivalent or similar courses offered in the UH system” next to the HWST 285 course (UH-Mānoa).²²³ All lā‘au lapa‘au related courses previously mentioned, and others are listed in Figure 4 below.

²²⁰ University of Hawai‘i, “Hawaiian Studies Courses.” In University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa; 2011-2012 Catalog, October 15, 2012 <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/courses/departments/bot.htm>

²²¹ Al Keali‘i Chock, “History of Ethnobotany at the University of Hawai‘i,” (Powerpoint Presentation) *Open Science Network in Ethnobiology (OSN)*, Honolulu: non-published, 2012, slides 4, 5 & 10. Per an email dated October 6, 2012 from Will McClatchey and Al Keali‘i Chock, there has been a set of overlapping courses going back to the early 1900s that were in the Ethnobotany field. In his public presentation “History of Ethnobotany at the University of Hawai‘i” for the Open Science Network in Ethnobiology (OSN) October 6, 2012, Al Chock noted one particular course. It was called Botany 1 *Phenogamic Botany*. Botany 1 was the first ethnobotanical class at the College of Hawai‘i in 1908. “This course considers the general morphology, physiology, and classification of the seed plants, with special reference to those common in Hawai‘i. The instruction is designed to give the student training in observation and scientific reasoning. An endeavor is made to acquaint the student with the economic significance of the plants studied, with references to agriculture. Lectures, recitations, laboratory exercises, and excursions. 1st semester, 3 credits.” When Al Keali‘i Chock first started teaching Economic Plants of Hawai‘i (1961-1963), he applied to have the course name changed to Ethnobotany; thus Botany 105: Ethnobotany.

²²² Dave Reedy M.S., (currently a Ph.d. candidate at UHM’s Botany department) was a former lā‘au lapa‘au student of Levon in 2005 (see Table 3. HWST 499 Students with Levon Ohai from 2005 until 2010). Mr. Reedy worked as the first cameraperson, audio production [engineer], and editor of the film.

²²³ Kalani Meinecke, Keliko Hoe, and Kalawai‘a Moore, University of Hawai‘i Community Colleges Proposal to Initiate, Modify or Delete a Course/HWST 285 Lā‘au Lapa‘au I: Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs, Kāne‘ohe, HI, December 2, 2009.

Figure 4. Lā‘au Lapa‘au related courses in the UH system.

College/ University	Course Name	Course Descriptions
UHM UHOW KCC Kaua‘i CC WCC MCC	BOT 105 Ethnobotany	Plants and their influence upon culture of Hawai‘i and Pacific; uses of cultivated and wild plants.
HCC	HWST 105 ²²⁴ Mea Kanu: Hawaiian Plants and Their Uses Cross listed ²²⁵ as BOT 105 Ethnobotany	This course explores the cultural uses of plants by humans in the Hawaiian archipelago and elsewhere in Polynesia. Focus will be upon those plants that were originally found in Hawai‘i when early settlers came and those plants that were brought by them.
LCC	HWST 105 Mea Kanu Hawai‘i: Ethnobotany	An introductory course studying the role of Ethnobotany in cultures across the Pacific with special emphasis placed upon uses of Hawaiian plants.
HawCC	HWST 105 Hawai‘i Plant Culture	An introductory course to the study of Hawai‘i plants, and their functions and uses within a Hawai‘i cultural context. Learners are expected to participate in multi-sensory learning.
HawCC	HWST 125 Hawaiian Plants and Their Uses	The identification of Hawaiian plants and the study of their preparation and Hawaiian cultural uses especially for medicine, dyes, crafts rituals; beliefs and practices; the deities.
UHH	HWST 211 Hawaiian Ethnobotany	Hawaiian herbs and plants: their identification, their place in the heritage of the Hawaiian people, their medicinal properties, and other practical uses; extensive use of Hawaiian terminology. ²²⁶

²²⁴ University of Hawai‘i, “Botany Courses,” In University of Hawai‘i: University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa: 2011-2012 Catalog. n.d. <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/courses/departments/bot.htm> (accessed October 15, 2012).

²²⁵ University of Hawai‘i. UH System Course Transfer Database. October 7, 2012. <http://www.hawaii.edu/transferdatabase/ex?campus=MAU&subj=BOT&course=BOT%20105&title=Ethnobotany> (accessed October 7, 2012). “Courses designated as ‘equivalent’ have been judged to have highly similar content such that two campuses treat the classes as essentially the same class. However, a designation of equivalency does not mean the two courses will satisfy the same requirements at different campuses. For instance, two courses may be designated as equivalent but only one of those courses has also been approved to be a Writing Intensive course with an additional instructional focus on writing.”

²²⁶ University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, “HWST 211: Hawaiian Ethnobotany,” University of Hawai‘i at Hilo 2012-2013 Course Catalog. <http://hilo.hawaii.edu/catalog/hwst-courses.html>.

Figure 4. (Continued) Lā‘au Lapa‘au related courses in the UH system.

MCC	HWST 211 Hawaiian Ethnobotany	Identifies endemic, indigenous, and Polynesian introduced flora of Hawaii. Examines the many uses of Hawaii’s flora by the indigenous people. Reveals the relationship of gods/plants/man, and connects belief and practices with the intentional migration of specific plants.
Kaua‘i CC	HWST 285 Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs I: Lā‘au Lapa‘au²²⁷	An introduction to Hawaiian medicinal herbs including the basic philosophy and strictness in adhering to protocol, with discussion, identification, and utilization of various methods and techniques of extraction used by Hawaiians in preparing native and hānai herbs (hānai: exotic herbs adopted into the culture) for curing diseases.
Kaua‘i CC	HWST 295²²⁸ Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs II: Lā‘au Lapa‘au	Advanced study and preparation of Hawaiian and “hānai” herb combinations to address health and wellness.
KCC	HWST 298H²²⁹ Lā‘au Lapa‘au Medicinal Herbs	Study of the traditional native practice of lā‘au lapa‘au or the use of traditional Hawaiian medicinal herbs that symbolizes the native people’s relationship to the land and sea, and the art of traditional healing practices. This course will introduce the student to the basic Hawaiian Medicinal plants, how to identify them by name, color, smell, taste and sight, and to properly prepare them for application.
WCC	HWST 285 Lā‘au Lapa‘au I: Hawaiian Medicinal Herbs	Presentation of Hawaiian medicinal herbs including basic philosophy, identification, utilization, and preparation of such herbs for human ailments.
WCC	HWST 385 Lā‘au Lapa‘au II: Advanced Medicinal Herbs	Advanced study and preparation of Hawaiian medicinal herb combinations.

²²⁷ HWST 285 (at Kaua‘i CC) has been listed in the course catalog since 2004; however, it has not been offered since the Fall semester of 2010, according to the online class availability lists.

²²⁸ HWST 295 (at Kaua‘i CC) is listed in its course catalog as early as 2005.

²²⁹ The current instructor for this course is Kahelelani Clark a student of Levon and faculty member at Kapi‘olani Community College. Mary Kalikolani Correa was her predecessor.

Listing these other lā‘au lapa‘au related courses outside of the Mānoa circle is essential to documenting the growing interest in personal health, traditional healing modalities, and the environment. This can be measured by comparing the current offerings of these courses to when they first started to appear in the course catalogs. This can be connected to the valuable experience and knowledge that Native Hawaiian practitioners like Mary Kawena Puku‘i, Richard Paglinawan, Isabella Abbott, Levon Ohai, Henry Auwae, and the Kanaka‘ole ‘ohana have brought to the table during the proposal and creation phases of many Hawaiian related courses in the UH system. An equal reflection of their commitment to kānaka maoli was seen in the establishment of the Hawaiian Studies program in the 1970’s, the 1987 action of the UH Board of Regents in creating a Center for Hawaiian Studies for the Hawaiian Studies Program²³⁰ under SHAPS (School of Hawaiian, Asian Pacific Studies), and the recent establishment of HSHK (Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge) in 2007 under which Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies is now housed. In addition to the long lasting influence of practitioners are the many UH boards, councils, committees, Task Forces, and people in the community that were influential in recruiting these masters in the Hawaiian arts, including lā‘au lapa‘au. The ideals they valued are today expressed in HSHK’s mission, “to pursue, perpetuate, research, and revitalize all areas and forms of Hawaiian knowledge, including [. . .] its political, medicinal, and cultural practices.”

Graduate Courses

The graduate level courses Levon was preparing were the final key component classes for his vision of “restoring the standards and usage of traditional Hawaiian and hānai medicinal herbs to its proper place in today’s 21st century.” This vision was expressed in the

²³⁰ These courses speak to the efforts of individuals who through their efforts established a baseline understanding of the status of Native Hawaiians in the University of Hawai‘i system. The results of their work as the Hawaiian Studies Task Force created the Ka‘ū report.

SLO's (Student Learning Objectives) that he planned for these courses to achieve. These classes were:

HWST 610 Lā'au Lapa'au Practicum: Applied Medicinal Herb Health Education

HWST 611 Lā'au Lapa'au: Laboratory Formulation in Herbal Medicine

HWST 612 Lā'au Lapa'au Practicum: Hospital Environment

The titles explain the purpose of each course but the actual course content was not complied by Levon during proposal phase due to numerous legal issues regarding liability, and the lack of established Memorandums of Understanding/Agreements with organizations, groups, and individuals that were going to be associated with the courses.²³¹ The implied research, however, reflects what Levon saw as the minimum for the practice of lā'au lapa'au at Hawaiian Studies.²³² Collectively, these course titles establish the base of knowledge from which he taught. In his draft of a 2007 proposal to the Hawaiian Studies curriculum committee regarding the establishment of a certificate program specific to lā'au lapa'au, he reviewed the question: "How will the effectiveness of the [lā'au lapa'au courses or] program be demonstrated and measured? How will student learning be assessed?" He wrote,

For the short term the effectiveness of the program will be demonstrated and measured first by a personal change that will occur in diet and lifestyle of the student; more awareness and support for a healthier diet, more spiritual balance accompanying the cognitive learning of the classroom; the understanding of the importance of following a code of conduct and personal code of ethics that should improve their nature and way of life; always seeking to do good and be in the service of others;

²³¹ Rochelle "Pi'ilani" Ka'aloa, Personal Communication to Keoki Baclayon, Helping Levon Ohai Write Syllabi (August 13, 2012).

²³² Levon also withheld certain aspects, and particular points of his practice from the university, since these should be taught in a more culturally appropriate wā and wahi.

being mindful that the objective is not the accumulation of wealth but rather the perpetuation of one's name through one's work.

Levon's description of how effectiveness is demonstrated and measured is indicative of the reality of poor health he saw around him and the result of what he believed lā'au lapa'au could do with human potential. Making changes in diet, lifestyle, spirituality and having a heart of service to others are not easy things to do from Levon's perspective; however, because of the "need" for increased health and the longevity of life, his practice is seen as an effective answer to this disparity. Further, the assessment that is identified in the question above relating to student learning refers to methodology. Levon had an acute knowledge of what the standards for his lā'au lapa'au practice required. This informs us that not just any kind of work that a practitioner student completes is acceptable; in fact, superior work is the standard because "the perpetuation of one's name through one's work" will be remembered not only by the person that is helped, but also by the instructor. From the university standpoint, qualifying and quantifying the things that Levon was seeking would have been a part of his course work in the projects/practicums they completed.

From Certification to Licensure

The next step after certification is licensure, a bridge that allows a person trained and certified to be introduced into conventional healthcare. Historically, the movement toward government issuance of a license to qualified kahuna lā'au lapa'au began in 1868 can be traced to the 1863 ascension of Lot Liholiho Kapuāiwa Kalanimakua Kalanikupūpaikalaninui Ali'iolani Kalani-a-Kekūanaō'a to the throne also known as

Kamehameha V (1863-1872).²³³ It was on June 23rd 1868 that Act 139, the licensing of kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au took affect.²³⁴ When Act 139 became Kingdom Law it recognized the traditional medicine and practice of Native Hawaiian kāhuna; secondly, it created the first ever oversight committee that regulated all traditional kāhuna; it then required all practicing kāhuna to apply for a license, and established a set of laws that all kahuna were required to follow in order to protect the public from “quacks and superstitious people”²³⁵ or kāhuna ho‘opunipuni—false kāhuna.²³⁶ Never before in Kingdom history was an entity ever established to regulate all traditional healers. The impetus for Act 139 stemmed from individuals claiming to be kahuna who charged enormous amounts of money and or caused the death of the person they were working on.

One of the principal causes for the excessive mortality is the practice of the native kahunas—under the Act of last Session, fourteen applicants for licenses have received them from the Minister of Interior, on the recommendation [hō‘oia or verification/affirmation] of the Hawaiian Board of Health, it is hoped that the experiment will have a good effect, more especially, in the possibility of obtaining evidence in a Court of Justice, sufficient to convict offending parties, by whose practices [hana ho‘omanamana or superstition] and poisons given under the name of

²³³ Malcom Naea Chun, *It Might Do Good: The Licensing of Medicinal Kahuna* (Honolulu: First People's Productions, 2009), 8. King Kamehameha V's signing of the act to establish a Hawaiian Board of Health for licensing kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au is also found in the Hawaiian Gazette, 7/1/1868, p. 2, col. 5.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

²³⁶ Collette Leimomi Akana, “Kahuna Ho‘opunipuni Letters of 1863,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 36 (2002): 1.

medicine, hundreds of their countrymen are annually hurried into extremity [make or death].²³⁷

Licensure required healers to document the treatments they conducted on their patients. After obtaining a license to operate in the Kingdom of Hawai‘i from the Hawaiian Board of Health (1868-1887), kāhuna kept records much as modern doctors do today because the law required it for accountability; however, it was also to weed out any false practitioners of the art.^{238, 239}

During the reign of King David Kalākaua, lā‘au lapa‘au thrived under the inauguration of his [re]established Hale Nauā. (In the 1880s, it was a contemporary secret society that sought to shadow its ancient predecessor organization, which was also similarly named).

King Kalākaua founded the Hale Naua [sic] Society in September 1886 in the midst of a decade of incessant political and social turbulence in the Hawaiian kingdom. From the early 1880s Kalākaua sought to increase the number of native Hawaiians in government positions, hoping to reverse the domination by foreigners that began a half-century earlier . . . While seeking to revive many elements of Hawaiian culture

²³⁷ Chun: 11.

²³⁸ In the Hawai‘i State Archives are several record books, belonging to kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au J. Kua‘ana, J. Umi, and G. Helemanu. J. Umi operated the least number of years, from 1870 to 1871. J. Kuaana operated one more year from 1870-1872. The longest licensed practitioner was G. Helemanu, from 1870 to 1876.

²³⁹ Chun: 45-46. [Citing Section 4 of the Act that established the Board of Hawaiian Health on June 23, 1868], “Every physician thus licensed shall keep a written record of all his business setting for the nature of the disease, medicine used, number of cures effected, number of deaths, names, sexes and places of residence of his patients; which book of record shall at all times be open to the inspection of the Hawaiian Board of Health, or the Minister of the Interior, or his agent.”

that were slipping away, the king also promoted the advancement of modern sciences, art, and literature.²⁴⁰

Kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au were asked to contribute their knowledge to the society as a way of preserving it for the future. Kalākaua’s motivation for the group of ali‘i who now formed the Hale Nauā was to center on legitimizing and revitalizing the cultural practices of the Hawaiian people in a contemporary context.²⁴¹ However, despite his many pro-Hawaiian efforts to revitalize his people he was made to involuntarily sign a new constitution. In 1887, “the Bayonet Constitution” was forced upon King Kalākaua by an armed militia—the Honolulu Rifles.²⁴² Signing under protest, the new constitution overtly diminished Kalākaua’s power as the reigning monarch. It was an ostentatious act by the power hungry missionary party and its supporters. In 1893 under the rule of Queen Lili‘uokalani, the Hawaiian Kingdom was illegally overthrown by the same group of men and in 1894, they instituted a new constitution for the Republic of Hawai‘i, under the presidency of Sanford B. Dole.²⁴³ Through these actions, Kingdom law ended, the licensing of kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au ceased, and the government mandate that allowed the knowledge of lā‘au lapa‘au to survive

²⁴⁰ Frank Karpel, “Notes & Queries: The Hale Naua Society,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* (The Hawaiian Historical Society), 204.

²⁴¹ Ty P. Kāwika Tengan, “Hale Mua: (En)gendering Hawaiian Men” (PhD diss., University of Hawai‘i, 2003), 56.

²⁴² Lili‘uokalani, *Hawaii's Story By Hawaii's Queen*, (Honolulu, HI: Mutual Publishing, 1990), 180-181, 375.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 394-395.

openly disappeared.²⁴⁴ The licensing of kāhuna did not resume again until 1919; the laws that made it possible were then repealed once more by the Hawai‘i State legislature in 1965.²⁴⁵

A shining example from the licensing era between 1919 and 1965 was Dr. Alexander Friedenburg Ka‘ohi‘ai Ka‘ōnohi (1905-1959). In the 1930’s he was a medical professional who served his community as a western trained medical doctor and lā‘au lapa‘au healer. He successfully managed to integrate elements of his lā‘au lapa‘au tradition into his medical practice. This practice served as a hō‘ailona to other healers for the treatment possibilities resulting from housing traditional and modern medicine under one roof. Today, Kaonohi’s actions are still looked to for inspiration because he effectively treated both Kānaka Maoli and haole, allowing the patient to choose the healing treatment: traditional Hawaiian or conventional. An award ceremony named after him, and conducted by Papa Ola Lōkahi, provided the following brief biography:

Dr. Kaonohi [sic] was graduated from the ICS School of Pharmacy and the Standard College of Chiropractic and Naturopathic College in San Francisco. He came from a long line of kāhuna lā‘au lapa‘au and was trained in Hawaiian healing arts. He pioneered the integration of tradition of traditional and western healing practices to provide care for native Hawaiians [. . .] [c]ombining his pharmaceutical training and his traditional knowledge of lā‘au, Dr. Ka‘ōnohi

²⁴⁴ Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina/Living Hawaiian Culture*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 108. These healing kāhuna in the early 1900’s were still being called upon by members of the community, and especially kua‘āina in places like Hāna, Māui. Kua‘āina in the country relied on lā‘au lapa‘au as their primary health care, since very few western doctors would travel to the area.

²⁴⁵ A.L. Donlin, “When All the Kāhuna Are Gone: Evaluating Hawai‘i’s Traditional Hawaiian Healers’ Law,” *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal* 12 (2010): 218–220.

classified more than 240 herbs found in Hawai'i for use in naturopathic healing.²⁴⁶

Dr. Kaonohi's method of making available two types of medical services that were simultaneously accessible to the public was innovative and original. In Levon's opinion, the task of arriving at the same point of practicing lā'au lapa'au was not far from being achievable either. Practitioners simply needed to become certified and licensed as lā'au lapa'au practitioners to help in providing healthcare services to the community; however a process needed to be developed. Currently, the certification and licensing process for medical students involves many years of education: (including volunteering at hospitals or clinics on their off-time) students are required to graduate from a pre-Med program or school usually encompassing four years of education; take the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test) complete four years of medical school, and residency training. Another similar discipline that requires certification and licensure are the schools of Nursing and Dental Hygiene at the university.

In 2009, Levon sought to pursue licensing by the drafting of SB1527/HB1618²⁴⁷ that was submitted to the 2010 Hawai'i state legislature via senators Clayton Hee and Suzanne Chun Oakland. The bill suggested enacting law authorizing qualified, proficient persons in the lā'au lapa'au tradition to receive a license issued by an Herbal Therapy Board after examination. Despite this push for licensure, Levon's bill did not get passed the committee hearings. Simply, the circumstances surrounding the issue in 2010 were different from those in the 1930's and the 1860's.

²⁴⁶ Papa Ola Lōkahi, "Ka'onohi Awards," Papa Ola Lōkahi, accessed July 6, 2012, <http://bniphoenix.wordpress.com>.

²⁴⁷ SB1527/HB1618—Senate Bill 1527/House Bill 1618.

Committee members who were aware of this sensitive issue of licensing Native Healers purposefully revisited history and accented the political and cultural battles that were fought to keep lā‘au lapa‘au free from the meddling of the state in Hawaiian healing, traditions, and practices.²⁴⁸ This was evident in the culturally deep undercurrent of the committee’s conversation regarding the protection of traditional healers and their practice, as well as the citing of “The Kāhuna Statement.”²⁴⁹ In being made aware of the fissures Levon’s 2010 proposal created in the traditional healing community, he reexamined the bill. After many meetings in 2011, Levon revamped the proposal excluding all references to Hawaiian, Native Hawaiian, traditional Hawaiian, kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au, lā‘au, kānaka maoli, and kānaka ‘ōiwi.²⁵⁰ He did this to protect the healers’ birthright, its integrity, from state regulation, scrutiny, and interference. After, a new bill was prepared that addressed the establishment of licensure for the “non-traditional contemporary herbal therapist and homeopath.” [See Appendix B for the 2012 Draft Herbal Therapy Bill]. The bill suggests that certified students from various herbal therapy disciplines would be eligible to apply for licensure under this bill. In 2012, Levon’s draft of the bill was not introduced during the first part of the legislative session, as the committees engaged in its preparation still needed to collaborate with other interested herbalist and homeopathic professionals in the community. Despite the work ahead, Levon has raised the hopes of other herbalists that they someday may legally engage in the work of healing the body in the State of Hawai‘i.

²⁴⁸ The “Kāhuna Statement,” is a document authored by Native Hawaiian healers indicating the special relationship that they traditionally have with Akua and that the state of Hawai‘i has no power or authority to make any judgement concerning who is certified or licensed to be a healer.

²⁴⁹ Hawai‘i State Government, “Hearing HWN-CPN 02-07-11: (Notice of Hearing-SB1527, HB1618).”Hawai‘i State Legislature, February 7, 2011, http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2011/hearingnotices/HEARING_HWN-CPN_02-07-11_.HTM (accessed October 8, 2012).

²⁵⁰ Alyce Dodge, “Herbalists Licensing Meeting,” 2010 Meeting Notes, Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland's Office, State Capitol, Rm 226, Hawai‘i State Government, Honolulu.

CHAPTER 5
LEGACY OF HEALING

A LITTLE LESS THAN A MILE MAUKA OF KAPA‘A HIGH SCHOOL IS LEVON OHAI’S HOME. HE AND I ARE SITTING AT THE KITCHEN TABLE. CARS AND TRUCKS COULD BE HEARD PASSING ON KAWAIHAU ROAD—A MAIN THOROUGHFARE IN KAPA‘A. THE KITCHEN TABLE IS COVERED WITH SOME READING MATERIAL, A ROLL OF PAPER TOWELS, BOTTLE OF WATER, A CUP, SPOON, LARGE FLUID DROPPER, AND A LARGE DARK AMBER COLORED BOTTLE FILLED WITH AN HERBAL MIXTURE. HE IS PREPARING HIS LAPA‘AU TREATMENT FOR HIS CANCER.

L: Five ounces.

OHAI SHAKES THE LARGE AMBER COLORED BOTTLE.

K: So this is part of your treatment?

L: Yup. Half of the treatment.

OHAI SAYS SOMETHING, POOR RECORDING

L: . . .Very simple as it is and aloe is in my diet. That’s it.

K: What is that inside there?

L: Heh?

K: What is this inside the bottle?

L: Uh, jus, natural herbs mix.

K: Oh. And you have a dropper.

L: I’m gonna dry it out.

LEVON TAKES A PAPER TOWEL AND DRIES OUT A CUP THAT HAD DROPLETS OF WATER ON THE INSIDE AND FILLS IT WITH SOME WATER

L: So, rules must be followed like the curriculum.

A BROWNISH GREEN MIXTURE IS DRAWN OUT FROM THE AMBER COLORED BOTTLE TO A SPECIFIC LINE ON THE DROPPER WHICH HE SQUIRTS INTO THE CUP

L: When you write the rules, then, even so-called masters-to-be need to follow.

HE CHUCKLES, SMILES AND THEN SAYS:

L: Practice what you preach.

PICKING UP THE CUP, THE LAPA'AU IS MIXED UNTIL THE SOLUTION RESEMBLES THE SAME COLOR OF WHAT CAME OUT OF THE DROPPER, ONLY SLIGHTLY LIGHTER.

L: Right there, mix it up. Medicine already been blessed. Drink.

SHOWING ME, OHAI VISUALLY INSPECTS THE SOLUTION OF MEDICINE BEFORE HE DRINKS IT DOWN SLOWLY. ON THE LAST SWALLOW, HE PURSES HIS LIPS TOGETHER AND SUCKS IN THE RESIDUAL LAPA'AU OFF HIS LIPS.

K: Ono?

L: Not bad tasting.

L: Okay.

K: Alright.

L: There it is.

K: And, what else do you have to take, nothing else?

L: That's it.

K: Oh, wow.

OHAI LEAVES THE TABLE AND WALKS OVER TO THE LIVING ROOM TO AN OPENED CONVERTIBLE COUCH-BED TO SIT DOWN WITH FEET STRETCHED OUT. THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS AND TROPHIES ON TWO TALL SHELVES. NEARBY ARE A COMPUTER, DESK, FAN, AND LAMP TABLE.

I REALIZE THAT THIS IS WHERE HE SLEEPS, RESTS, PRAYS, THINKS, AND HEALS.²⁵¹

Ma Ke Kulanui: At the University

The Spring semester at UH Mānoa began on Monday, January 12, 2009 with business as usual. Long lines snaked through the hallways as students tried to add or drop classes. In Levon's case, students were trying to add one of his three classes: HWST 285, 385, and 485. The students would give him their student number, and he would then add them to the class roster. For the HWST 285 class, many of the students during the first week of class showed signs of excitement and anticipation, as they were about to embark on a journey they heard so much about from former students—the infamous nīoi, or chili pepper, the eye drops and the life changing mimi lab.²⁵² From the very beginning, Levon captured the attention of his students by introducing various medicinal herbs and health related guidelines to live by. He took them to the Pali Lookout on a Saturday so that they could be exposed to the environment in which the plants had to survive naturally without the assistance of man.

²⁵¹ Levon Ohai, "E Kū Makani: Oral History Interview with Levon Ohai" Interview by Keoki Baclayon. Transcription, September 2011, 3-4.

²⁵² Mimi (urine) lab- This lab is especially dedicated to the traditional uses of mimi as medicine.

Ka Ho‘i ‘Ana: The Returning

Nearly a month after the semester started, Carlos Andrade, the Director of Hawaiian Studies, noticed that Levon was not doing well. While visiting Levon at his office, he suggested that he might want to go home and rest. Levon confidently indicated that he was okay and that he was getting ready to teach another class. At that point, Andrade suggested again that he needed to go home and take care of himself because he really didn't look well. Despite his flushed skin, Levon continued to refuse to go home, saying that he was okay. At that time Andrade, who had been a long time friend and colleague, went over to him, patted his shoulders and said "It's okay, Levon. Just go home. I'm sure the classes will be fine." Levon reluctantly agreed. As he walked away from his office, he looked back at students and waved good-bye. His expression was that of reluctance, and of feeling powerless.

Ka Ho‘omau ‘Ana: Carrying On

"Personal hardship" and "family emergency" were just two of the reasons given to students for why Levon had suddenly disappeared. Aunty Ethel Mau,²⁵³ whom many were already acquainted with, was now teaching the HWST 385 and 485. For the HWST 285, it was now Krista Steinfeld instead of Levon. Those who did not see what had transpired at the office were left to wonder whether or not he was okay. Their suspicion that something was wrong with Levon was verified when his name was written on the board for the opening pule. The explanation was still "personal hardship" or "family emergency," and the students in each of the classes bowed their heads to give a silent pule for those reasons. Since his name stood out on the chalkboard among names in need of Akua's divine help, the lā'au

²⁵³ Aunty Ethel Mau had been trained in Levon Ohai's lā'au lapa'au tradition and was qualified to step in and take over his classes.

lapa‘au lessons began to emphasize more the spirit of the practice. On February 24, 2009, his name went up on the board again, for pule.

By late March, Aunty Ethel was alluding to the fact that Levon was sick, but never told the students the actual illness he had. She did however report that he was getting better. It was difficult for everyone to hear that the man who represented the epitome of health, strength, and vigor had become one of the sick and afflicted. His students were faithful in their pule for him, and Aunty Ethel and Krista carried the load of teaching. One day in March, all their efforts were rewarded with a brief surprise visit by Levon. He had come back to say hello while the class was being taught, and to give his support to the students and teachers. And then he left.

Ha‘o ‘ia: Missed

By April 2, 2009, Levon had appeared several times. He looked much healthier than he had in mid-February. Although he would casually appear in the classrooms to the surprise of everyone, he never stayed very long. Aunty Ethel and Krista continued to teach the classes until the end of the semester. The “tot” for the 485 class on April 2, 2009 was “Smile when picking up the phone. The caller will hear it in your voice,” Aunty Ethel recalls. The expressions on students’ faces as she continued to talk about him showed that they missed him dearly.

I Mua: Forward

While away on Kaua‘i recovering, Levon continued to push his initiatives in support of his vision for lā‘au lapa‘au. One was establishing a council of practitioners that would perpetuate his practice outside of the university. In a phone conversation on April 2009, he

instructed me to contact a list of people for a meeting on Saturday, May 1, 2009 to establish a lā'au lapa'au council under his direction.

The following people were called:

Ethel Mau

James Frizzel

Patricia Fifita

Emmalani Foley-Makepa

Jaridan Choy

Alexandra Pualilia Coelho

Sydney Kapuahīnano Coelho

Mary Kalikolani Correa

Krista Steinfeld

Dana Ka'iulani Lacy

Keoki Baclayon

‘Uala Lenta²⁵⁴

According to Levon, “I did not choose dem. Akua chose dem, and I agreed.”

These were men and women who had showed a strong love for Akua, lā'au lapa'au, and his practice. The purpose of the council was to achieve Levon's vision of lā'au lapa'au:

To restore the standards and usage of traditional Hawaiian and hānai medicinal herbs to its proper place in today's 21st century. A rebirth and restoration of our sacred herbs in secret places from darkness and obscurity into the light of education and

²⁵⁴ Kahelelani Clark officially joined the council December 8, 2012.

science must occur in order for them to support, strengthen, and enhance the science with the art of healing, and to revolutionize personalized medicine.²⁵⁵

By the first practitioner meeting in May, Levon's health had returned, and soon he was standing in front of a group of people again, teaching about his practice. He had written on the board his agenda for the meeting:

Agenda

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Intro. of Major
- 3) Purpose
 - a. forming practitioners group
 - b. Intro. basic philosophy and objectives
- 4) Classes/present situation
- 5) Study/practice
- 6) Presentations—campus/ community/ Nation—ova seas

The council met twice collectively: first in May and then in October of 2009. At each meeting, Levon, led and taught the council together, imparting specific teachings and instructions related to his practice. Another important facet of these meetings was the reporting on projects being carried out together as a group of practitioners or individually. Levon's creation of the council so soon after his illness suggest that he was concerned about the future of his practice and the groundbreaking work that so far he had accomplished nearly on his own.

²⁵⁵ Levon shared his vision with many people; most notably, with those he was working with or teaching. These included people associated with Mobile Native Hawaiian Health Inc., the UH-Mānoa student organization 'Ahahui Lā'au Lapa'au; Levon's lā'au lapa'au council on O'ahu, and his students.

Ke Kai E‘e: The Mounting Sea

Levon returned to teaching at UH in the Fall of 2009, and continued until the Spring semester of 2011. He seemed to come back with a health and vigor that was unseen before. Using *lā‘au lapa‘au* to restore his health, he had regained his weight and muscle tone, and appeared ready to teach and inspire. He once said, “It doesn’t matter what the challenges are. You have to be the warriors. Warriors weep as much as they fight.” Levon was a man of faith and commitment, who often said in his classes that when fighting a disease, “you must give *all*, to receive more.” The return of his health at this point was a result of this very teaching.

May 4, 2011, was the last day of the Spring semester, and the last time that Levon would ever teach at UH Mānoa’s Kamakākūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies. Nearly a month later, he shared with me that he had been feeling “woozy.” He monitored himself for the time being, watching for any other symptoms. It was not until the last weeks of June that he made an appointment to see his doctor. After a series of tests, the results came in confirming to medical staff on Kaua‘i that he had cancer. The news was given to Levon and Jackie, and the professional medical consensus was that he had two months left to live—until August of 2011. He shared with me that the doctor had offered him conventional medicine, therapy, and radiation, but that he had politely declined, and informed the doctor that he would be treating himself. On July 3, 2011, Levon began his treatments, diligently keeping a record of what herbal medicines he was using. He did cleanses, took herbal mixtures, and followed a strict diet to heal himself.

At the end of August 2011 I spoke with Levon over the phone, and he told me “I’m out and about watering the plants in the sunshine and I’m getting better.” Levon anticipated returning to teaching the following spring of 2012. When August 3, 2011 passed, the date by

which the doctors had predicted he would die, many people were relieved. By holding strong, he was proving the efficacy of lā‘au lapa‘au in preserving life. The doctors were surprised that he was still living.

Ke Koa: The Warrior

While on Kaua‘i treating himself and healing at home, Levon was directing his practitioners on O‘ahu to draft the herbal licensing bill before the beginning of the Hawaii State Legislature in January 2012. He strongly felt that this needed to be accomplished. He also encouraged others to continue practicing lā‘au lapa‘au individually. In short, he remained active, despite the separation and his battle with cancer.

Levon had created an aggressive plan for treating the effects of cancer. During one of his treatments he had fasted for 16 days, did stomach cleanses every morning and continued to increase his dosages and frequencies of herbal medicines. This regimen came after much pule. Family assisted him with herbal remedies, and he consulted with Western doctors. Whatever the specifics of his treatment, in or outside of Wilcox Hospital, it had kept him living.

By January 2012, many were receiving reports that Levon was no longer accepting visitors at his home on Kaua‘i, and was no longer returning calls himself. His wife and family were relaying messages instead and gave updates on his condition. Over the next couple of months, he gradually became weaker as the cancer took over his body. Lā‘au lapa‘au, the fail-safe that had preserved his mind and body past the presumed “two months left to live” notice by the doctors, was now administered by his family instead. In February, Levon was hospitalized at Wilcox Hospital on Kaua‘i. As the news continued to spread about his worsening condition, visitations became limited to only immediate family members and a

few guests. Encouraging messages were sent to the family, and prayers were offered on his behalf during group and individual vigils. Friends continued to network and share new information on Levon's status. It was a time of great sadness for many people as they waited for the news of his passing, for they knew their kahuna lā'au lapa'au was slipping away. Practitioners know that Akua has all power over life, and grants the strength of the herbs' ability to heal; but they also know that if Akua calls you home, He calls you home.

Ka Hō'ailona: The Sign

On March 3, 2012 the sky slowly darkened with thunder clouds that suddenly wept great drops of rain relentlessly for three days. No matter where you went on O'ahu, the rain was thick from the eastern end of the island to the west. An online news report from the *Star Advertiser* announced that the National Weather Advisory Service had issued a flood advisory for Kaua'i on March 3, 2012.²⁵⁶ To many people in the community, it was marked as an hō'ailona, or a sign of his passing.²⁵⁷ He died surrounded by loved ones.

On March 17, 2012, hundreds gathered at The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints, Līhu'e Chapel for his funeral and burial services. Many flew in from the other islands as well as from out of state. The funeral services honored Levon with song, and speeches by family and friends. The pews were filled to capacity; there were more people than seats available. People stood in the doorways, outside of draped veneered windows, and in the hallways to attend a great leader's funeral. The speakers included Levon's siblings, children,

²⁵⁶ Star Advertiser Staff, "Rains slam Kauai, closing highway and forcing evacuation," *Star Advertiser* Mar. 3, 2012. <http://www.staradvertiser.com/news/breaking/141290123.html?id=141290123> (accessed July 11, 2012).

²⁵⁷ Advertiser, "Obituaries: Benjamin Ohai," Advertiser, Kapa'a, HI: Advertiser, March 16, 1961. Levon's passing was close to that of his tūtū-man (Benjamin Ohai) March 14, 1961, 50 years earlier. After his passing, Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies followed its protocol, as it had at the passing of Dr. Kanalu Young, and draped the customary black cloths with tī leaf mounted on the hallway pillars. The kahu for this act of respect and mourning was Auntie Pua Kauila, one of Levon's first lā'au lapa'au students in 2001.

grandchildren, and myself, representing his students of lā‘au lapa‘au. Speakers unfolded memories about Levon telling of how he influenced them. A common theme heard throughout the funeral service was his love for Akua, his ‘ohana, Hawaiian medicine, and the phrase that marked his renowned character, “E Kū Makani.” This collage of stories covered many parts of his life. In attendance were his wife Jackie, his three sons, David, Ben, and Jesse, and their wives, his grandchildren, and other immediate family members. It was a gathering that celebrated his life and legacy.

E Kū Makani: An Iconic Phrase

“E kū makani” literally means to stand in the wind; it has also been interpreted as “stand against the wind.” My first recollection of Levon using this phrase was in the 1980’s, when I was passing by the Kapa‘a High School weight room. Peeking inside, I heard Levon encouraging some football players to push themselves to give maximum effort while lifting weights. He told them that when they reached the point when they felt like giving up, when the weight was just too heavy, they had to dig deep, find within them “the warrior,” be like the ‘a‘ali‘i plant, and “e kū makani”—stand against the wind, be strong, and never give in. Years later, I learned that “e kū makani” was also familiar to Levon’s students at UH-Mānoa, when I heard it once more while sitting in HWST 285. After the “tot” of the day, the teacher Krista Steinfeld, did something similar to what Levon would do by making a fist with her right hand and placing her arm in a downward 90 degree angle position while saying, “e kū makani.” Levon would say this phrase whenever he talked about difficult circumstances that people encountered in their lives: he would encourage them never to give up. Said many times during classes, it quickly became the iconic phrase of Levon. In a letter to his

practitioners he wrote, “Whenever you are down and feeling low remember your training, pule, and “Kū Makani.” With you always, Ohai.”

‘A‘ali‘i—A Metaphor for Warriors

The ‘a‘ali‘i (*Dodanea Viscosa*) is a shrub that can grow anywhere from 6 to 12 ft. tall, with a bark varying between reddish-brown or blackish gray.²⁵⁸ Its wood is very dense, and its pointed leaves are elliptically longer than wide; they are also glossy and green, growing to about 4 inches in length. The midribs of the leaves as well as the stems can also have a reddish color. The ‘a‘ali‘i has an incredible ability to grow in the most difficult environments, including cliff faces and dry-arid areas, where there is very little water and an overbearing amount of sun. The most pressing dynamic of its environment is the wind (ka makani), which continuously buffets and challenges the ‘a‘ali‘i every moment of the day, trying to uproot it from where it is planted.

The struggles and difficulties that this plant faces are the source for many life lessons only fully learned by understanding the various relationships of the plant with the elements of its environment. I ka wā kahiko (in ancient times), the ‘a‘ali‘i plant figuratively represented warriors, who trained fiercely and fought valiantly for their chiefs—never giving up, and never compromising. Ka makani—the wind, in the metaphor of the ‘a‘ali‘i—represented any opposition, challenge, or difficulty encountered by the warrior, including enemies.

The only way that an ‘a‘ali‘i plant can survive the daily push and pull of the wind is by constantly developing a strong root system that reaches into every notch and crevice of earth and rock. Metaphorically, being well-rooted can be linked to holding high moral standards. When a circumstance arises, a person will choose to do what is right despite the

²⁵⁸ University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa/College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. Hawaiian Native Plant Propagation Database. October 9, 2001. <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~eherring/hawnprop/dod-visc.htm> (accessed November 13, 2012).

unpopularity of the choice. Being well-rooted also can mean not to give up: to dig in, and to find the drive to finish what you have started. Levon also taught that being well rooted like the ‘a‘ali‘i meant to be rooted in the knowledge of lā‘au lapa‘au better today than yesterday, signifying a commitment to take the necessary steps towards perfection on a daily basis.

An ‘a‘ali‘i plant’s root system has main branches like the veins and arteries of the human heart. Extensive intermediate roots branch off into capillary-like rootlets that can bind themselves onto solid rock. Resilient in the most arduous conditions, it is almost impossible to separate the roots and rootlets from the earth once the plant has bound and imbedded itself. Its stubbornness in preventing anything including the wind, from removing it is what distinguishes it most. This tenacity can be compared to that of the heart of a warrior, who will fight his enemy until his last breath. This persistence continues even after ‘ula‘a, which means to uproot; it also refers to the difficulty encountered when someone is trying to uproot an ‘a‘ali‘i.

He hina nō ka ‘a‘ali‘i kū makani, he ‘ula‘a pū me ka lepo.

The wind-resisting ‘a‘ali‘i falls, [but] is uprooted together with the dirt.

This is said of a strong warrior.²⁵⁹

Mental, physical, and spiritual strength paired with his limitless supply of aloha were some of the more noticeable attributes of Levon that were developed throughout his life. Much of the credit can be ascribed to those ‘a‘ali‘i-like individuals who imparted a great deal of influence upon him and to whom he looked towards for guidance, teaching and inspiration. These ‘a‘ali‘i-like individuals were people such as his grandfather Benjamin Ohai, his parents, and his aunties and uncles. He took the best of their qualities and teachings

²⁵⁹ Mary Kawena Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, A poetical saying was included as part of the definition to better understand the context of its use in Hawaiian language.

and made them his own. These examples in his life nourished the finer sinews of his character, much like sunlight, the water that falls from the sky, and the earth. The ‘a‘ali‘i absorbs these and transforms them into food for sustenance, strength, and tissue development. As an ‘a‘ali‘i, like others before him, Levon grew and branched out to “e kū makani,” stand against the wind.

Pā Makani Ka Pali: Wind-blown is the Cliff

Levon stood against many winds, including his own cultural traditions. In August of 2001, he formally brought his practice of lā‘au lapa‘au within the university system, and taught it to anyone who desired to learn, regardless of race, gender, or creed. He was mocked for sharing sacred knowledge with haole (foreigners), and was thought to be sacrilegious for his pursuit of licensing lā‘au lapa‘au.²⁶⁰ Standing before other people, he defended what he felt and knew Akua had called him to do. Regardless of these winds, Levon, a strong ‘a‘ali‘i, stood immovable and steadfast, his roots deep into the bedrock of his faith, never letting go of the earth he knew to be of sure truth.

Ka ‘Ula‘a ‘Ana: The Uprooting

Levon’s toughest winds came during the end of his life, as he battled cancer. He was determined to live, and resolute in persevering. He gathered daily strength by using the knowledge of his practice. Levon’s willpower to prolong his life gained him seven months beyond what doctors predicted. But in the spring of 2012, the ‘a‘ali‘i could no longer stand against the fierce winds of cancer. The end was approaching, and the embattled ‘a‘ali‘i was slowly taken from its place. Its roots losing their strength, it could no longer stand and bend

²⁶⁰ Levon shared in personal conversations the discontent of members from the Hawaiian community with his openness in sharing lā‘au lapa‘au knowledge with other people outside of the traditional circles. One encounter in downtown Honolulu was with a Hawaiian community leader, who publicly scolded Levon for teaching university students; another time was the frank honest comments of his fellow healers in Wai‘anae that pursuing licensing as a lā‘au lapa‘au healer was not pono.

itself against the wind. Levon took his last breath during a final blowing of the wind. The once strong ‘a‘ali‘i and its earth-covered roots were pulled upward into the arms of his ‘ohana, nā ‘aumākua, and Akua, the Great ‘A‘ali‘i.

Nā Pulapula: The Seedlings

Today, nā pulapula, the ‘a‘ali‘i seedlings of Levon and his work in lā‘au lapa‘au, are budding because of his example. These pulapula are the teachers, the ‘a‘ali‘i council, the Mobile Native Hawaiian Health, Inc., Université de la Polynésie Française (University of French Polynesia), and his ‘ohana. Each of these promote and sustain his vision for lā‘au lapa‘au.

Nā Kahu: The Practitioners

Levon knew the importance of passing his ‘ike on to the next generation, and as he taught his classes, he acutely watched for those with the right character and desire. From the moment that Levon began teaching in 2001, he was preparing individuals to become future teachers. Over the next ten years he created a group of people who could assist him in teaching his classes. Levon encouraged all practitioners to teach HWST 285 as an initiation and a challenge. This training ground tested the skillset, proficiency, dedication, heart, and sense of duty to the calling of the kuleana placed on them to ho‘omau the ‘ike and ensure its imperishability. Presently, a core group of practitioners within the Universities and Colleges teach lā‘au lapa‘au. These include:

Krista Steinfeld, at Windward Community College and UH-Mānoa

Kahelelani Clark, at Kapi‘olani Community College

Keoki Baclayon, at UH-Mānoa and BYU-Hawai‘i

Other practitioners have taught in past semesters. These include:

Mary Correa, Kapi‘olani Community College

Sydney Coelho, UH-Mānoa

‘Uala Lenta, UH-Mānoa

Sean Chun, Kaua‘i Community College

Another qualified practitioner who may not possess a formal master’s degree, but who is qualified culturally as an expert in Levon’s lā‘au lapa‘au practice is Aunty Ethel Mau, Levon’s longest standing student on the island of O‘ahu. She as well as other practitioners extend the umbrella of Levon’s influence and legacy.

‘A‘ali‘i Council

Another pulapula is the council of practitioners. Organized by Levon on May 1, 2009, it has taken the helm in perpetuating his practice of lā‘au lapa‘au. Since Levon’s passing in March 2012, the council has held monthly meetings. Its seventeen members all desire to perpetuate Levon’s vision of lā‘au lapa‘au, and collaborate on problems they face in healing disease and illnesses. They also review the fundamentals of lā‘au lapa‘au knowledge. The council further expands Levon’s vision by dividing into committees that concentrate on community service, researching plant efficacy, data collection, community seminars, archiving, and legislation.

Mobile Native Hawaiian Health, Inc.

Located on Kaua‘i is another pulapula: the Mobile Native Hawaiian Health, Inc. (MNHH). A non-profit organization established in 2008, it was organized by Levon, Wilma Holī, and Leihinahina Sullivan, who shared a common interest in providing healthcare services to the Hawaiian Community. The mission statement of MNHH is “to provide direct

health care services to underserved areas of Hawai‘i Nei and eliminating the healthcare (primary care) provider shortages.” Its vision is:

To provide direct healthcare services to rural areas of Hawaii nei, promote interaction, cooperation and communication among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander health agencies and organizations with a goal of sharing and leveraging health-related technology and resources that will improve quality and delivery of services to beneficiaries of such educational agencies and organizations.

Levon dreamed of establishing a healing center through MNHH that utilized the medicinal herbs to heal and prolong the lives of the sick. He also envisioned it as a place where university students could actually gain hands-on experience in treating other people.

Université de la Polynésie Française

Levon also had opportunities to promote his practice in Tahiti at the Université de la Polynésie Française (University of French Polynesia). By 2010, Levon had made several trips to Tahiti to network with interested professors, and to discuss the possibilities of introducing lā‘au lapa‘au courses that would count towards a degree. In a conversation with me in his office at Kamakākūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies in January 2009, Levon said their faculty encouraged and supported having lā‘au lapa‘au classes, and that they wanted to include them in their degree programs. Levon felt their response was genuine. The Tahitians as a whole saw the value in reintroducing lā‘au lapa‘au into their culture, as there were very few herbal healers left to learn from.

Despite the enthusiasm, there was a slight problem; Levon did not speak French or Tahitian. This made it difficult for him to completely share his knowledge with them, as he had to use an interpreter with the hope that all would have been communicated properly.

Because of this language barrier, Levon thought of another idea that would still make it possible for UFP to have its lā‘au lapa‘au teacher. He shared that Tahitian students could come to UH-Mānoa on an exchange program to learn English while simultaneously learning about lā‘au lapa‘au. The plan was that eventually these students would return home and teach the lā‘au lapa‘au courses at the UFP. This option has yet to be explored, developed, and proposed to both UH-Mānoa and UFP.

E Po‘ohala: Carry on the ‘ike

Other pulapula are family members who for years have known the importance of their lā‘au lapa‘au heritage. At Levon’s funeral services in March 2012, his family talked about how he would always take opportunities to share plant knowledge. Levon’s eldest of seven grandchildren, whom he called “Kuku,” shared her treasured memory of her grandfather:

I have many memories of my Papa [. . .] when we would come to Kaua‘i to visit, Papa would always teach us something about plants or plant parts. Once he took us to a mountain and explained what the uses of that particular plant or herb was used for. He taught us this so that we could use this information in our lives.²⁶¹

Akua: The Source

With the many pulapula on various islands, and within universities, communities, and homes, later generations have the opportunity to perpetuate what Levon knew Akua had given to him. Levon always acknowledged a greater being. Akua was always in his language. When people were healed by medicinal herbs, he let them know that he was only an

²⁶¹ Kulukulu Ohai, “Papa: Levon Ohai,” Funeral Service Program for Levon Ammon Ohai--March 17, 2012, Līhu‘e, HI: Mobile Native Hawaiian Health, Inc., March 17, 2012.

instrument in the hands of Akua. When people were discouraged, he let them know about Akua and His love for them.

In any formula that he was inspired to teach us, one or more foundational herbs addressed the illness directly. Without these herbs, mixtures would neither fully work nor perform the desired function. This principle of having the necessary foundational herb is central to Levon's belief that, "Akua is the foundational herb."²⁶² Making Akua the dominant medicine allows for other medicines to perform properly as intended.

Do all you can,
Through all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as you can.²⁶³

Written by Neal A. Maxwell, this thought was one of Levon's favorite quotations as shared by his family. It talks about the need for inner strength, and for endurance, to perform to the best of one's knowledge and ability. This inner strength drove his determination to follow Akua. It was Akua who gave a young boy at seven years of age the desire to follow the example of his grandfathers. After years of studying and learning, Levon became a master in his practice. After this careful acquisition of knowledge, it was Akua again who led him to gain further understanding by guiding his hands while he prayed, gathered, mixed, and

²⁶² Note from HWST 485 taught by Levon Ohai in Spring 2009, 5.

²⁶³ In his Funeral Service Program, his family shared one of his favorite quotes.

prepared lā‘au for the sick. Levon recognized that it was Akua who led him to the university to teach his practice, giving many more men and women the opportunity to learn about lā‘au lapa‘au. Additionally, Levon knew that it was Akua who led him to combine certain herbs that prolonged his life against cancer. But, Levon also knew that if death took a person’s life during sickness, regardless of herbal treatments, that it was Akua’s will as well—even if that life was his own.

APPENDIX A

District Board of Kaua'i

Presiding District Board:

Moses Ekau	Chairman
Keawe Aipoalani	1 st Councilor
Edward H. Kahui	2 nd Councilor
Charles Ki'ilau	Recorder

District Board:

Sam Tsuya	Asst. Recorder
Joseph F. Moa	Priesthood Supervisor.
Lizzie Aipoalani	Relief Society
Philip P. Kaona	Sunday School
Anacleto Battad	M.I.A
Lily Shigematsu	Primary
Louis K. Kilauano	Genealogy
Benjamin Ohai	Welfare
Louisa P. Sheldon	Music

APPENDIX B

First Page of Levon's Draft Senate Bill (SB1527/HB1618)

THE SENATE
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE, 2012
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that herbal therapists
2 are persons with knowledge, skills, and experience in the direct
3 personal health care of individuals based on herbal practices,
4 including the utilization of herbal formulas and a restoration
5 process to improve health and wellness. Herbal therapists'
6 knowledge, skills, and experience are acquired through direct
7 practical association with a qualified instructor and through an
8 accredited university or certificate program.

9 The legislature also finds that the practice of herbal
10 therapy does not replace existing forms of healing but is
11 intended to be an alternative source to Western medicine. The
12 objectives of herbal therapists are to promote the practice of
13 herbal therapy in the State, accommodate Hawaii's growing demand
14 for alternative sources of medicine, and to address the
15 deteriorating health of the State's residents.

16 The legislature notes that this measure is not intended to
17 prevent health care professionals who already utilize herbs in
18 their practice from doing so in the future. Rather, the

2012-0039 SB SMA-2.doc



APPENDIX C

The following is an adapted list of certificates awarded by the UH Community College System from the book *Fifty State Systems of Community Colleges: Mission Governance, Funding and Accountability*²⁶⁴ and the document *UHCCP (University of Hawai'i Community Colleges Policy) No. 5.203 Program Credentials: Degrees and Certificates*.²⁶⁵

1. Certificate of Achievement (CA): A college credential for students who have successfully completed designated medium-term technical-occupational-professional education credit course sequences, which provide them with entry-level skills or job upgrading. These course sequences shall be at least 24 credit hours, but may not exceed 45 credit hours (unless external employment requirements exceed this number). The issuance of a Certificate of Achievement requires that the student must earn a GPA of 2.0 or better for all courses required in the certificate.
2. Certificate of Completion (CC): A college credential for students who have successfully completed designated short-term technical-occupational-professional education credit course sequences which provide them with entry-level skills, or job upgrading. These course sequences shall be at least 10 credit hours, but may not exceed 23 credit hours. The issuance of a Certificate of Completion requires that the student must earn a GPA of 2.0 or better for all courses required in the certificate.
3. Academic Subject Certificate (ASC): A college credential for students who have successfully completed a specific sequence of credit courses from the A.A.

²⁶⁴ Rick L. Garrett, Terrence Alfred Tollefson, and William G. Ingram. *Fifty State Systems of Community Colleges: Mission Governance, Funding and Accountability*, (Johnson City, TN: Overmountain Press, 1999), 142-143.

²⁶⁵ University of Hawai'i to UH System (UHCC, UHM, UHH, UHWO) UHCCP) Memorandum #5.203 Program Credentials: Degrees and Certificates.

- curriculum. The sequence must fit within the structure of the A.A. degree, may not extend the credits required for the A.A. degree, and shall be at least 12 credit hours. The issuance of the academic Subject Certificate required that the student must earn a GPA of 2.0 or better for all courses required in the certificate.
4. Certificate of Competence (CO): A college credential for students who have successfully completed designated short-term credit or non-credit courses which provide them with job upgrading or entry-level skills. Credit course sequences shall not exceed 9 credit hours. The issuance of a Certificate of Competence requires that the student's work has been evaluated and determined to be satisfactory. In a credit course sequence the student must earn a GPA of 2.0 or better for all courses required in the certificate.
 5. Certificate of Attendance: A document issued to students who have attended credit or non-credit courses or activities which do not meet the requirement for other certificates or degrees. This certificate does not reflect academic performance and no performance evaluation is implied by its issuance.
 6. Advanced Professional Certificate (APC): A college credential for students who have successfully completed the associate-level degree, designated medium-term credit/non-credit career-technical education courses, or the equivalent which has provided [sic] the student with skills and competencies for gainful employment beyond entry-level positions. The certificate is designed for transfer directly into a baccalaureate program or for industry professional seeking industry/occupation-specific skills. Credit course sequences shall be at the upper division course level and contain at least 18 and no more than 30 credit hours. The issuance of an Advanced

Professional Certificate requires that the student's work has been evaluated and stated competencies have been met.

7. Certificate of Professional Development (CPD): A college credential for students who have successfully completed designated short-term credit or non-credit career technical education courses that provide them with industry specific job upgrading or entry-level skills. The issuance of a Certificate of Professional Development requires that the students' work has been evaluated and stated competencies have been met. Credit course sequences shall be less than four (4) credits hours.
8. Certificate of Participation (CP): A document issued to students who have participated in non-credit courses or activities, which do not meet the requirements for other certificates or degrees. This certificate does not reflect academic performance and no performance evaluation is implied by its issuance.

PAPA WEHWEHE ‘ŌLELO: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The *Hawaiian Dictionary* by Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert (1986) provides the definitions of Hawaiian words and phrases in this thesis. Certain words or phrases may be represented, defined, or used differently, due to the context of the use and user.

<p>‘ahupua‘a. land division usually extending from the uplands to the sea, so called because the boundary was marked by a heap (ahu) of stones surmounted by an image of a pig (pua‘a), or because a pig or other tribute was laid on the altar as tax to the chief.</p>
<p>‘āina. land, earth; that which feeds.</p>
<p>Akua. God, deity; Jesus Christ; supreme being. akua. traditional pantheon of gods or goddesses, deities; also chief.</p>
<p>akule. (<i>Trachurops crumenophthalmus</i>) Big-eyed or goggle-eyed scad fish.</p>
<p>‘alaea. red ochreous earth rich in iron.</p>
<p>aloha. love, kindness, affection, mercy, compassion that shows sympathetic concern for others, sympathy, pity, kindness, sentiment, grace, charity.</p>
<p>‘Amelika. America; also Maleka.</p>
<p>‘amene. amen; to say amen.</p>
<p>‘ano. kind, variety, nature, character, disposition.</p>
<p>‘aumakua/‘aumākua. god’s angels; family or personal gods, deified ancestors who might assume the shape of an animal, especially a shark.</p>
<p>e kū makani. “Stand against the wind,” or “stand in the wind.” It was a phrase used often by Levon to denote having the spirit, mindset, and wherewithal of a warrior to stand strong in the midst of adversity and be unyielding. The saying, “E kū makani” is synonymous with an indigenous plant ‘a‘ali‘i (<i>dodonaea viscosa</i>) in that it can be found in harsh environmental conditions where there is little water, and places of high wind.</p>
<p>mo‘opuna. grandchild.</p>

hālau. meeting place; however, word is mostly used to mean “a group” or “class.”
hānai. to adopt, or to be adopted. Levon’s use of the word hānai in reference to plants is related to the word ‘ āpono , which means to approve of, consent, accept, endorse, and adopt, i.e. he endorses the use of foreign herbs in healing. However, the way he views plants as friends is symbolic of the type of personable relationships we have with people. Thus his use of hānai alternatively over ‘ āpono in relationship to plants is closer to the truer meaning of hānai than we think, which is to adopt a <i>foster</i> child.
haumana/haumāna. student(s).
hō‘ailona. a sign, or signal manifested in nature, or through the occurrences of voices, dreams, and visions.
honu. sea turtle.
hō‘ola lāhui. heal the nation.
ho‘oilō. winter or rainy season in Hawai‘i that begins in November and ends in April.
ho‘okē ‘ai. to fast, to go without food or water for the purpose of becoming more spiritually attuned to the spirit.
ho‘oponopono. to fix or correct that which has fallen out of harmony with the whole. The practice of meeting together as family members to restore stained relationships.
Hua. name of the thirteenth night of the lunar month. A monthly taboo on the nights of Mōhalu and Hua.
HWST. University of Hawai‘i designation for Hawaiian Studies. It is usually followed by a numerical number i.e. HWST 285, HWST 385 etc.
‘ike. to see; knowledge, awareness, understanding, comprehension.
inu. to drink.
kaona. hidden meaning or concealed reference to a person, place or thing.
ka po‘e kahiko. the people of old; ancestors.
kākou. we (inclusive, three or more).
kālika. garlic.
Kaloa. Three nights were sacred to the god Kanaloa, Kapu Kāloa, monthly taboo nights of ‘Ole Pau and Kāloa Kū Kahi.
Kamakakūokalani. meaning “upright eye of heaven”; also the name of the building

Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies located on the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa campus. It was named after ‘Ainoa K. Brandt who was known as the first female principal in Hawai‘i’s public school system at Kapa‘a High School on Kaua‘i; she was influential in the building of the Center for Hawaiian Studies while serving on UH-Mānoa’s Board of Regents from 1983 to 1989.
kanaka/kānaka [plural]. person.
kanaka ‘ōiwi/kānaka ‘ōiwi. native person
Kāne. name of the 27th night of the lunar month. Kapu Kāne monthly taboo nights of Kāne and Lono; also kāne. male, husband, man.
kapakahi. messy, crooked, lopsided; bent. Levon uses kapakahi in place of mōkāki which means scattered, littered, disheveled; disorder, untidiness, mess, chaos.
Kapa‘a. land section, town, and beach park, Ka-wai-hau district, Kaua‘i.
kapu. prohibited, forbidden; sacred, holy, consecrated; no trespassing, keep out.
kāpulu. labeled by lack of attention or thoroughness; careless, untidy, and unkempt.
kauna‘oa. dodder (<i>Cuscuta sandwichiana</i>), a leafless, parasitic vine, growing densely on other plants.
Kekūhaupi‘o. the favorite warrior of Kalani‘ōpu‘u, who saved young Kamehameha’s life in a Maui battle and later became Kamehameha’s teacher in the arts of warfare. <i>Lit.</i> , the standing [of the] arched <i>hau</i> tree.
kino. body.
kōkua. help, assistance, relief, assistant, associate, deputy, helper.
Kū. name for the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth days of the month, usually called respectively Kū Kahi, Kū Lua, Kū Kolu, Kū Pau; ancient Hawaiian god of war.
kuahiwi. high hill, or mountain; area near the summit.
kūkū. see tūtū.
kuleana. right, privilege, concern, responsibility, authority.
kupuna. grandparent, ancestor, relative or close friend of the grandparent’s generation, grandaunt, granduncle; kūpuna. plural of kupuna.
lā‘au. plant, herb, medicine, medical.
lā‘au kāhea. a type of faith healing of all ailments, but, most especially broken or crushed bones or sprains. <i>Lit.</i> , calling medicine.

lā‘au lapa‘au. medicine. <i>Lit.</i> , curing medicine.
lapa‘au. medical practice; to treat with medicine, heal, cure.
lepo pālolo. clay, hard sticky mud used in traditional medicine.
limu. seaweed.
lōkahi. unity, agreement, accord, unison, harmony.
Lonopuha. medical practice; to treat with medicine, heal, cure.
lua. second, secondary, twice; A type of dangerous hand-to-hand fighting in which the fighters broke bones, dislocated bones at the joints, and inflicted severe pain by pressing on nerve centers.
mahalo. thanks, gratitude; to thank.
mahi‘ai. farmer.
mahi lā‘au lapa‘au. cultivator of healing herbs.
makua. parent.
mana. power, authority; authorization; privilege, spiritual.
mana‘o. thought, idea, belief or opinion.
Mānoa. a large valley in Honolulu.
mimi. urine, or to urinate. Urine was sprinkled to repel evil.
mōkākī. scattered, littered, disheveled; disorder, untidiness, mess, chaos.
mo‘opuna. grandchild.
na‘au. intestines, bowels, guts; mind, heart, the seat of thought, and affection.
nāoi. any kind of red pepper (<i>capsicum annuum</i>).
‘ohana. family, relative, kin.
‘Ole Kū Lua. eighth and twenty-second nights of the month.
‘o‘opu. (<i>Eleotridae, Gobiidae, and Blennidae</i>). Goby fish often found in fresh water streams or brackish water.
ōpū. belly, stomach, abdomen.

pa‘akai. salt.
pharmacopeia. list of medicinal plants used.
pono. moral, fitting, proper, righteous, right, upright, just.
pule. prayer.
pule hāmau. prayer in silence.
pule ho‘omana‘o. prayer of remembrance (or gratitude).
pule ho‘opōmaika‘i. blessing through prayer.
pule ho‘ouluulu ‘ai. prayer to make food grow.
pule huikala. prayer to cleanse the body; prayer to cleanse the spirit.
pule ‘ohana. family prayer.
pule kāhea. prayer calling on ancestors for healing and assistance.
pule kala. protective prayer shielding from harm or danger.
pule mahiki. prayer for expulsion of a spirit from a person or place.
spirit. the spirit of Akua; ‘uhane hemolele, [Biblical] Holy Spirit.
tūtū. grandparent, also kūkū.
‘ūniki. graduation from a traditional school of learning i.e. hula, and lua.
wā. time, occasion, season, age.
wahi. place, setting.
wahine/wāhine. wahine (singular) for woman/ wāhine (plural) for women.
wai. water.

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