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Hiki Mai Ka Wana ao
(Coming of Dawn)

Artist: Sean Browne
Materials: styrofoam and acrylic
from the Kapi'olani Community College Faculty Art Exhibit, 1999

Artist's statement: In this possible model for a larger earth work, I was exploring forms and ideas that interest me. I was trying to capture the moment at sunrise when the sun's rays hit the clouds, touching them with pink. In this piece, the color of the forms move from darker blue to a streak of pink.
I opened the heavily laden door that shut the cabin of the tugboat from the open aired deck. Just eight miles outside of the soft lapping coast of Waikiki, the phosphorescence of city lights began to wane. Over the dark ocean, sounds flew by reminiscent of the first uau (petrel, or sea birds) that made their way through salt-sprayed air currents to settle in nests up high in the mountains. We were on the Uaweke, a tugboat carrying a cargo of diesel fuel to be deposited on Lana'i. All the fuel that Lana'i received came from this lone cargo-tug. The Uaweke would make overnight trips back and forth to this cove, depositing diesel fuel into giant underground holding containers right next to where the coastline rocks and tidal swells met.

At night away from the distracting aura of the city, the sky was marvellous, pinned with resplendent points of light. When it was cloudless, I could see satellites as they silently sped away. Falling stars came often and in clusters. I lingered when this happened, pausing from my work in the hopes of seeing a few more.

I quickly made sure that all the booms used to keep fuel or oil from spilling overboard were not lying on the deck where they could be easily washed away. Returning to the cabin, I shut the door. Soon the ship would be heading through fifteen-foot swells. The lashing water always made the monster-sized rubber tires that were used for bumpers crash heavily against the metal hull.

Having no engineer on board, I received the honor of checking all the readings down in the engine room. The violent rocking of the boat made it difficult to navigate the heavy door leading down to the engines below. Learning to time the opening of the door with the oncoming swell was a crucial skill. It wasn’t uncommon for a crew member to suffer a broken arm or leg from getting caught between them, as they slammed shut. Besides this, the decibels that the engine ran at were unbearable. The industrial-sized ear protectors barely provided protection from the roar. So instead of the routine half-hour engine inspection, I would venture down to read the gauges about every three hours, sleeping and resting on a bench that behaved like a seesaw throughout the majority of the trip.

Around four in the morning we came within the five-mile mark of Lanai. Returning to the deck, I began to prepare the eight-braid line that was to be used to tie the boat to the pier. The dark sea on both sides of the ship glowed an incandescent blue. Neon sprays carried little specks of shimmering phytoplankton onto the rigging and my clothes. I began to think of all the splendid faces that resounded from the ocean’s surface. At night it was black ink. In the morning, it turned from gray to orange in scattered streaks that looked as though an impatient painter hadn’t the time to keep up with the oncoming dawn. By noon it was platinum, a sea of liquid mercury only accessible through a hand sheltered squint. By three o’clock the ocean often times matured into a blue deeper than laughter. So many times, salt-caked and chapped, I hated the ocean. It was an isolating entity. Other times I thanked it for swallowing my spirit.
"Sumimasen, excuse me." This ship is very crowded, ten more minutes until we get off such an awful place. Did I make the right decision to marry a man I hardly know? I really miss everyone at home, especially obaasan; I want to go back home. But I know I can't, I don't have a future back home. All I know is that Masato is a good man and a handsome one too; he will take good care of me. Maybe I can even go back to school. With all the money that Masato makes, he can surely afford it.

"Excuse me, sumimasen, please stop pushing." This is such a crowded place; I can't wait to get off this ship. Buuuuuuuu, buuuuuuuu. We are here, I will soon meet my husband and start a new life.

"Chotto matte kudasai! Please wait a moment! I need to give you instructions before you leave the ship. Follow Sato-san and he will take you to immigration station. Then to another area where you will need to stay until further notice. Don't even think of trying to run away, follow my instructions. This way please."

Well, this is it, I can't seem to move my feet; I have frozen in one place.

"Akimoto-san move it!"

My heart is pounding so fast, I feel like I am about to faint. My knees are getting weak. Well, here I go. So this is Hawai'i. Looks similar to Japan, so many Japanese people. He is very dark; I wonder what he is? What language is that I hear? What is that smell? So many different things here in Hawai'i. It is now my turn to check in.

"Passport please."

"Yes, here it is. Yes, I am Eiko Akimoto. I will be marrying Masato Tagawa today. Domo arigatto, thank you, good-bye."

Where do I go now? I believe the man said go down the hall and enter the first room on the right. These are some of the girls from the ship. This must be the place. I need to sit down. I feel so tired, I smell, and I look dirty. Masato, I only wish for happiness in our lives. I will be a good and loyal wife. I will give you children, and you will not regret the day you married me.

"Iguchi-san, is that a picture of your husband? He is a good-looking man. This is my husband-to-be, Masato Tagawa. Thank you, he is handsome. He works on a plantation and he makes a lot of money. I am very lucky to have found him.

"Iguchi-san, do you know how long we have to wait? Another hour? I wonder if they will allow us to go to the bathroom and clean up before they allow the men to come in? I would really like to smell good and look good for Masato before he sees me for the first time.

"Excuse me sir; is there a bathroom nearby for us to freshen up?"

"Yes, across the hallway, but we need to wait for all the women to come in and I will check off your names as you go in and out to the bathroom."

It has already been an hour and a half, and the men are still not here. I hope everything is all right, I can't go through another disappointment. I have already been through too many hardships in my short life.

Father and mother, hope you are with me today. Father, hope Masato is truly a good man like you were. And mother, I hope to be almost as good a woman as you were.

The men are coming in! I will close my eyes, and when I open them, Masato will be in my sight. Where is he? Did he change his mind about marrying me? I can't find him!

There he is! He looks even more handsome in person; I guess he came a little late. Should I go up
to him? But I don’t want to seem anxious. I’ll wait here for him to walk up to me. “Be strong Eiko,” I tell myself, “you can do this, and everything will be fine.” Here he comes, it’s getting hot all of a sudden, and I’m starting to sweat. Breathe in slow and deep. Breathe out, that’s it.

“Arigatto gozaimasu, yes, I am Eiko Akimoto. Are you Masato Tagawa?” I looked at him as he said, “Yes.” I was so nervous; all I could do was look at him as he looked at me.

All the couples partnered up with one another and the ceremony began. As the man read the vows we were about to take, I started to think about the life I left behind. I thought about my sisters, Yuki and Kana. I never even had a chance to say good-bye. If I have any children, I will name my girls after my sisters so they will always be with me. I thought about grandmother, obasan, how she took care of me the best she could. I suddenly became sad and tears came from my eyes. Next thing I knew, I missed the whole ceremony except for the part we all said, “I do.” My sadness soon turned into happiness as I heard Masato say, “I do,” too.

Masato asked if I was crying because I didn’t want to marry him. I told him I was not disappointed and that I was actually happy to be married him. After we signed the papers to legalize our marriage, Masato took my hand and brought me outside to a car that was similar to the one that was in the picture he sent me. We got into the car as it took us to my new home, our new home.

I thought my journey of a new life began when my parents died and I went to live with obasan. I was wrong. I thought my journey was sure to begin when I got on the Furu as I made the long trip to Hawai’i. I was wrong once more. My journey began when I made the commitment to Masato, to be his wife forever, when I said, “I do.”

Throughout my life, I went through many obstacles that I could not control, obstacles that kept me from going forward. As I vowed to be Masato’s wife, I was in control, I could say yes or no. This is where I begin my journey, a journey that I start on my own, of course with the help of Masato, my husband.
Thoughts of a Queen

June 20, 1856
Dear Diary,

Yesterday I married Alexander Liholiho, my best friend. It was such a beautiful day, even the weather cooperated. Much to my delight, the day was declared a public holiday. There were so many people along the streets on the way to the church, waiting to see the procession of carriages pass by. I have to admit I was nervous, but then when I saw Alexander looking so handsome in his Windsor suit, I was so excited. We have known each other for so long that I could tell that he was nervous too, even though he kept his royal composure.

Kawaiaha‘o Church was filled with guests and so many more were outside. I was a little surprised that no one commented on the Anglican service. Maybe they were commenting, just not to Alexander or to me.

Later in the evening we attended the reception. We invited 500 guests, and it looked as though they all came, maybe with a friend or two. I believe that everyone had a great time. We danced until very late. The only troubling time of the night was when Monsieur Perrin kept asking me to dance. He just did not want to take “no” for an answer.

The evening ended with beautiful fireworks. We all stood outside and marveled at the glorious sight. I enjoyed the entire day and will never forget the loving and supportive comments I received from our friends and family. I hope that the people of Hawai‘i will accept me as their Queen, considering that only a few weeks ago, even my own cousin was questioning whether I was worthy.

A Hui Hou,

Emma

August 19, 1857
Dear Diary,

Today my father came to visit. As I mentioned in days prior, I have been feeling nauseated. I wasn’t sure if maybe I had some sort of stomach flu; however, my father confirmed that I am with child. I haven’t told anybody yet. I asked my father not to tell mother yet, as I’d like Alexander to be the first to know. I almost feel better, just knowing that it is a good kind of sickness. It is so hard to believe that a life has started inside of me. I have many engagements this month, so I must be at my best.

Alexander’s asthma has been bothering him again, so we will spend next week in Nu‘uanu at Hanaiaakamalama. I look forward to the relaxation. I can’t wait to walk down to the stream and sit under the hau tree. I hope that the Lokilani is still in bloom. I love the fragrance that blows in with the breeze. Alexander should be home shortly. I must prepare to give him the wonderful news.

A Hui Hou,

Emma

March 18, 1858
Dear Diary,

There is no doubt in people’s minds that we are expecting a child. I’m getting bigger every day. The people seem very excited to welcome the heir to the throne. But no more excited than Alexander and I. We spent all day yesterday discussing the nursery. Alexander has commissioned the cradle, and all he will tell me is that Wilhelm Fischer is making it. I am excited to see it, as he is a wonderful craftsman.

I received a letter from Queen Victoria today. She is so happy about our news and has graciously agreed to be the godmother to our child. She has
Queen Emma
Photographs courtesy of Queen’s Medical Center

become such a dear friend and confidant. I long to see her again and think of her often. I only wish she could come for a visit. I would take her to Nu’uanu and maybe we could even take a trip to Mau’i. She would love Hawai‘i in all of its beauty.

My friend Elizabeth Pratt stopped by this morning and stayed for tea. It was wonderful to see her. She shared with me some of the plans that the town in making in preparation for the royal birth. I am amazed at the outpouring of excitement displayed by those around me. All of their hopes are on this child. Oh, Lord, I pray that this child is a boy!

A Hui Hou.
Emma

June 13, 1858
Dear Diary,

Little Albert is almost four weeks old. Today I spent almost one hour just staring at him while he slept. O beautiful child from my womb, what will you look like as a young man? Will you be kind and gentle? Or will you be a stern leader? Whom will you take as your wife? Oh I must stop myself from thinking too far ahead. I am enjoying every moment with my son. He is so beautiful and healthy looking, I must add. Today there was a special event at the Palace. A group of foreign children and their parents came to visit the young prince. I was too weak to go downstairs to greet them, but I watched from the window as they entered the Palace grounds. Such a proud parade of children, and so finely dressed. The girls, all in white, were pushing a beautiful baby carriage adorned with flowers. My nursemaid told me later that they were led to the reception room where the beautiful koa cradle was placed in the middle of the room. My nursemaid came in with Prince Albert and placed him in the cradle. She told me everyone moved in for a closer look at him. I wish I could have greeted the children, but getting down the stairs is still difficult for me. Alexander did give a short speech in honor of the guests.

I had a dream last night that I was riding my horse. How I long to be back out riding with Prince Lot and Princess Victoria. I have missed that the most. My father says that maybe by the end of the summer I’ll be well enough to ride. Until then I will just enjoy my maternal duties.

A Hui Hou,
Emma

6 Horizons 2001* a journal of international writing and art
July 17, 1860
Dear Diary.

Today was a splendid day. The cornerstone was laid for the permanent location of the hospital. It was a nice celebration. Alexander gave the most eloquent speech I’ve ever heard from him. The crowd was so quiet. The contractors estimate the completion date to be sometime in November. Alexander and I are so happy to finally see our longtime dream fulfilled. All of those months of going door to door to collecting funds for the construction were not in vain. There are so many supporters. However, very few Hawaiians came today, I noticed. I’m sure that it is because we had to reschedule on such short notice.

A Hui Hou,
Emma

October 21, 1862
Dear Diary,

Today is bittersweet. Bishop Staley baptized me in the Anglican faith. It should have been Albert. Today was supposed to be in his honor. My cheeks are stained with tears for my baby son. It has almost been two months since my son died. How is a mother supposed to prepare herself for such a tragic event. Children are supposed to bury their parents; it should not have been this way. My heart is empty and my soul cries out to God. Bishop Staley has been very close to me these past ten days since his arrival.

My emotions are so confusing. I am happy that the Anglican Church is finally being planted here in Hawai‘i. I feel happy for my people. Now I can share my faith with them. However, my happiness is clouded with deep sorrow.

My dear Lord, please watch over my only son. Please tell him I miss him and how I love him so.

A Hui Hou,
Kaleleokalani

February 4, 1864
Dear Diary.

Yesterday we buried my beloved husband and closest friend. It has been nearly sixty days since his sudden passing. I am still in disbelief. I am exhausted, having spent every day in the throne room praying over his coffin. I arrived at Hanaiaakamalama this morning. I couldn’t bear to spend one more moment in the Palace where every room brings memories flooding back into my mind. I have already asked the men in the house to move my bedroom furniture into the dining room. I know they must think I’m crazy; I couldn’t bear to tell them my reasons. From the dining room I can hear the kitchen and the servants in their quarters, and the laughing and singing gives me comfort.

I am twenty seven, and my child and husband have died. I am desolate altogether, with nothing left but the hope of a meeting in the hereafter. I must write to Queen Victoria and tell her of my unhappy plight. Maybe I should plan a trip to visit London. It might do me good to leave Hawai‘i for awhile. I shall consult with my ladies in waiting.

Lot wrote me a letter. He wants to meet with me when I return to the Palace. I know that he is concerned for my well-being. He has asked me to stay at the Palace. It is just too difficult for me to stay there all day. I expect to see my husband walk into a room and occasionally I hear him talking. I am so lonely.

A Hui Hou,
Kaleleokalani

March 5, 1867
Dear Diary,

I have been home for six months since my year and a half of travels abroad. Today was a new beginning. We have laid the cornerstone for the first Anglican cathedral. Lot gave a nice speech, and although he is not of my late husband’s faith, or mine, he was very respectful. He has been very inspiring to be these past six months since my return. He has encouraged me to continue fulfilling the dreams that Alexander and I shared. The will of my Lord is becoming clearer each day. Today I could feel Alexander’s presence. I know that he is smiling from the Heavens. He shares this accomplishment with me.

I will begin working on the development of the Anglican schools that Alexander and I envisioned. My travels in England gave me many ideas and I await the arrival of the Sisters that will come to help me establish the schools.

It is good to be home. I have missed my dear friends. It has been five years since I lost my son and four years since I lost my husband. My heart is
Finally beginning to heal. Although I think of them and miss them everyday, I now try to focus on our dreams and on my wonderful memories of them both.

A Hui Hou,  
Emma

Author’s Note:  
When Queen Emma signs her diary as “Kaleleokalani,” she is using the name given her by her husband after the death of her son. The name means “the flight of the heavenly chief.” One year later, when her husband, King Kamehameha IV died, she pluralized the name and made it “Kaleleonalani,” the flight of the heavenly chiefs.

Works Consulted

Three royal gifts to the people of Hawai’i Nei

King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma are well remembered for their legacies to the people of Hawai’i. One of them is the establishment of the Episcopal Church. During their visits to London, they became interested in the Church of England, and in 1860, the King asked Queen Victoria to approve the establishment of the Church here.

Bishop Thomas Staley was sent in 1861. On October 12, 1862, the first service of the Reformed Catholic Church was held in Hawaiian in a small chapel.

The king gifted land in Queen Emma Square for the church; for St. Andrew’s Priory, a school for girls established by Queen Emma; and Queen’s Hospital for the Hawaiian people.

Because the treasury was empty, the king and the queen personally raised $13,530 to build a hospital by going door to door to solicit contributions. In 1859 an 18-bed hospital was opened, and within a year, a 124-bed hospital was built on the current Queens Medical Center site. Its name honors Queen Emma.

After the king’s death, Queen Emma and Queen Victoria raised $30,000 in England to build the cathedral. Construction began in 1866, and the cornerstone was laid on March 5, 1867. King Kamehameha IV, who wanted the cathedral built in the style of the Church of England, never got to see it, for he died on the Feast of St. Andrew, November 28, 1863.

Prince Lot, who became King Kamehameha V, named the cathedral St. Andrew’s. The royal couple are remembered each November 28 in the Feast of the Holy Sovereigns.

Information provided by the Rev. Richard Vinson, Interim Pastor of St. Andrew’s and by the Queen’s Medical Center. For additional information, see the Queen’s site <http://www.queens.org/qmc/about/history/misshist.html> and the St. Andrew’s site at <http://www.saintandrews-hi.org/History.htm>.
TAPA

ORIGINS OF TAPA

The making of barkcloth or tapa was widespread throughout Polynesia, with its origins dating back to 6th century B.C. China. Reports also mention the use of barkcloth in the 3rd century A.D., where people of the Yangtze Kiang used to beat the bark of the *fu* or paper mulberry to make cloth. There, as in other parts of the Pacific, the source of the highest quality tapa was from a species of the family *Moraceae*, *Broussonetia papyrifera* or paper mulberry tree. This species is not indigenous to the Pacific but to Asia, where it grows throughout the continent. From China, tapa-making spread to Vietnam, Burma and Thailand, making its way through Indonesia and, by way of traders and immigrants, throughout Polynesia. Cuttings of the paper mulberry also traveled with migrants and were then cultivated primarily for the manufacture of tapa.

In addition to the paper mulberry tree, the *Artocarpus* or breadfruit tree, which was introduced into Polynesia in prehistoric times, was also used as a source of bark for tapa making. Two *Ficus* species were utilized as well; however, the tapa produced from these trees was of lower quality, making the paper mulberry generally preferred. The *mamaki* of the *Pipturus* species was also popular for use in Hawai‘i.

The term *tapa* is used to denote Polynesian barkcloth and was originally limited to the areas of Hawai‘i and Mangareva. In Hawai‘i, the word *kapa*, from the traditional Hawaiian vocabulary, is used. It also means edge, border or boundary. Similar translations into native language are found in Samoa, the Marquesas Islands, Tahiti, Fiji and Tonga as *siapo*, *hiapo*, *ahu*, *ngatu* and *masi*, respectively. Tapa was originally introduced in the early nineteenth century as the general term used by whalers collecting items acquired while in Polynesia and has been generally accepted as the word for barkcloth from this region as well as from Indonesia, Africa and South America, where barkcloth was also manufactured.

Although the climate did not necessitate the wearing of clothing in many parts of this region, it was used as protection from the wind and rain and warmth in cooler seasonal conditions and elevations. It was also used in a variety of manners from clothing and bed coverings to decoration for masks and ritual objects, depending upon the region or island. Primarily made by women, tapa thrived as a means of creative expression, and while it had once been looked upon as little more than a craft, tapa has been recognized as a truly respected art form.

As tapa-making spread throughout Polynesia, the manufacturing techniques shared many common elements. However, it is with the designs, patterns and uses that the similarities end and the differences among the regions begin.

MANUFACTURE OF KAPA IN HAWAI‘I

The Reverend William Ellis described the women of Kailua-Kona making kapa in his “Narrative of a Tour Through Hawai‘i” published in 1826. He wrote, “The fabrication of it shows both invention and industry; and whether we consider its different textures, its varied and regular patterns, its beautiful colours, so admirably preserved by means of the varnish, we are at once convinced that the people who manufacture it are neither deficient in taste, nor incapable of receiving the improvements of civilized society.

Wauke, or paper mulberry, was cultivated for making kapa. It produced some of the finest-quality tapa known. Mamaki was also used, as it grew wild in Hawai‘i; it was not available on other islands in Polynesia. The kapa it produced was not as soft as that produced from the wauke and was, by and large, used for making traditional garments.

After the wauke trees had grown to a height of
6-10 feet, they were cut. The outer bark was removed, allowing the inner bark to be scraped and then soaked in a sea-salt bath for about 10 days, or until the material was soft enough to work with. While soaking, the material also acquired the desired white tint. Unlike the wauke, mamake was soaked in fresh water and did not have the same white shade.

The bark was removed from the water, and at this stage was called mo'omo'o. It was given an initial beating with a round, club-shaped mallet (holo'a) on a stone anvil (kua pohaku). The long, wide strips that were the result of this process were then combined into groups of about five and soaked for an additional amount of time.

Special houses (hale kua) were used for tapa making, and out of respect to the gods, were considered kapu (taboo) to anyone not involved in the kapa-making process. The tools included the square tapa beater (i'e kuku) and the anvil, of which there were two kinds: stone, used during the first phase and wood, used for further processing. The wooden anvil (kua kuku) was generally 6 feet long, with a hollow underside that, when pounded, was highly resonant. As kapa could not be washed, it was in steady demand and was therefore always in the process of being made.

Aurally, it was a constant in the lives of indigenous people, not just as a noise but also as a communicative activity. The beating sound produced could be heard for a great distance. In fact, in Hawai'i the legendary character Kamoeau was said to be able to learn everything about a woman merely from having heard her beating.

The beaters were made from wood with round handles and small grooves on each of the four sides. Depending upon the point in the beating process, the beater used was either coarsely grooved or finely grooved. Beating macerated the fibers together, insuring the fusion of the layered strips.

During the 19th century, kapa making in Hawai'i reached its highest technical level. Hawaiian woodcarvers utilized newly acquired metal tools to make the beaters, carving them with a wide variety of designs which were used to watermark the surface of the kapa. This watermarking technique was unique to Hawai'i although it did have its counterpart in the eastern Indonesian Island of Sulawesi, where a heightened level of technical advancement was also taking place. When finished, the kapa was spread in the sun to dry or bleach.

**Decorating Kapa: Coloring and Scenting**

The vast quantity of flora available to Hawaiians afforded them a wide range of colors with which to decorate, making their kapa unique for this reason. The dye was prepared either as a liquid or powder, depending upon the species being used. The bark of the kukui or candlenut tree (*Aleurites moluccana*) was the main source of brown dye, and black dye was also obtained from the kukui root, nuts and rind. The koka tree (*Bischoffia sp.*) was also a source of brown dye. Shades of yellow were obtained from the fruit pulp of the *nanu* (Gardenia remyi) and tumeric or *ōlena* (*Curcuma longa*). Red dye was provided by the bark of the kukui, the bark of the noni (*Morinda citrifolia*), leaves of the *pala'a* (*Stenolome sp.*) and from the lipstick tree (*Bixa orellana*). Noni, in particular, was used for coloring a special kind of tapa called *maluna*, which was reserved for chiefs and therefore made under conditions of strict kapu.

To these basic colors they added green, blue and gray, which were obtained from vegetable sources. A shade of light lavender was obtained from the sea urchin (*'ina*). Three additional colors, unique to Hawai'i, were used in post-contact Hawaii. They included the juice of the *'akaka* or endemic raspberry (*Rubus hawaiiensis*), which produced a rose shade (as did lime mixed with roots of noni); *ma'o* leaves (Hawaiian cotton) which produced a light green shade; and blue, derived either from mixing lime...
with 'uki'uki berries (an endemic species of lily) or from various parts of the 'ōlapa (Cheiro dendron trigynum). Generally, the dyes were applied not by total immersion but rather as a paint or ink after the kapa had been watermarked and dried.

Scented kapa is another unique characteristic of tapa manufactured by the Hawaiians. This was accomplished by either adding perfume during the dying process or perfuming the finished product. Plants from a variety of species with fragrant elements were used for this purpose. They included 'ōlapa bark, niu flowers, laua'e leaves, kupaoa leaves, mokihana fruit, maile leaves, sandalwood and kamani flowers and sap. Some of the plant materials were often used to scent the storage containers that held the kapa.

**DECORATING KAPA & TECHNIQUES OF ORNAMENTATION**

Several methods of applying dye to the natural white color of kapa were used in Hawai'i and they include painting, overlaying and cord snapping. However, the technique most unique to Hawaiian kapa was block printing or stamping, which produced a more sophisticated decoration.

**Kapa Stamps**

The first blocks or stamps were carved from pieces of wood and whittled down with stone tools. Bamboo ('ohe) quickly replaced wood when it was discovered that it could easily be split and carved. The width was determined by the thickness of the bamboo, generally no wider than .75 inch. The length was usually two-three inches long.

These stamps were called 'ohe kapala ('ohe, bamboo, and kapala, to stamp). A geometric design, one of chevrons, circles or triangles, was carved into the inner surface. The stamps produced a very large number of patterns and variations. A pattern would be applied carefully in an unbroken line creating continuous repetition. This technique of block printing was unique to Hawai'i although there is record of it occurring, like the watermark technique, on the Indonesian Island of Sulawesi. Although less common, the ends of kalo petioles and hala drupes were either dipped in ink or dye and used for creating small semicircles or dots or used as small paintbrushes.

**Kapa liners**

Bamboo or kanila wood was used to make the instruments for printing straight lines on kapa. They range from a single-line liner to multiple-line liners, with a blade divided into five prongs. Unlike pens, these liners were first dipped in the dye, then pressed, like the bamboo stamps to create a variety of patterns and parallel lines, often producing a plaid design.

Kapa decoration and manufacture reached its zenith following contact with the West, when Hawaiian women were exposed to European woven fabrics. The kapa manufactured after 1778 was delicate and gauzy compared to kapa that was produced prior to that time. Techniques were developed to imitate a lace-like kapa, which is now very rare. To achieve this look, fibers were pushed apart; creating holes in the kapa, and unlike other styles, was not dyed but kept a natural cream-white color.

**DIVERSE USES OF TAPA IN HAWAI'I**

In ancient Hawai'i, life had few aspects in which bark cloth was not used in some form or another, and therefore kapa made in huge quantities. One of the three most common clothing garments for which it was used was the malo (loincloth) of which there were various kinds, each having its own name which was sometimes related to the patterns and motifs printed on them. Certain patterns, such as kupeke and puiali, which is translated as "compressed," "constricted in the middle," "slender...
abdominal stalk on a wasp’s body,” suggests that the puiali motif consisted of the hourglass figure. The color often determined the name of the malo, such as the malo kua ula, literally “red bark,” whose red material was obtained from the bark of the noni.

As an example of ceremonial importance, a kapa malo, worn by the king, played an important role in the initiation of the heiau or sacred place to the god Ku. This ceremony was called the kaioloa, because the malo had been bleached in salt water or kai­oloa. Female chiefs would carry long strips of the king’s malo, which were therefore imbued with his mana, into the heiau, where it would be wrapped around a figure of Ku. Thus, the loincloth of the ruler, which bore his mana, truly made the heiau a sacred place.

Kapa was also used for pa’u (skirts), which were dyed and printed in a fashion similar to malo, the name referring to the particular color or pattern of the kapa. For example, pa’u kamalena referred to the skirt that was dyed with tumeric. These were worn as ordinary day clothing. Additionally, there were two ceremonial pa’u worn— the pa’u hula, for hula ceremony and a long pa’u worn by high-ranking women, which had been known to reach up to 1000 feet in length.

The third most common garment made of kapa was the kihei, which was a cape worn over the left shoulder and fastened with a knot on the opposite shoulder.

A large percentage of kapa was manufactured for bed coverings or kapa moe (moe, to sleep). Often, these consisted of several layers of kapa stitched together on one side but open on the other, allowing the user to adjust the layers needed depending upon the desired temperature. Generally, the upper layer or kilohana was the only one decorated.

Other practical uses of kapa included house partitions, protection against mosquitoes (sheer kapa was beaten to serve as nets after mosquitoes were introduced), floor coverings (the thicker variety) and wicks for stone lamps. Bandages and kites were also made of kapa, and it was used as book binding during the early missionary days. A sheet of kapa was placed over the bride and bridegroom at the marriage ceremony (ho’ao) of young ali’i.

**TAPA IN POLYNESIA**

While it is true that tapa was generally made by women to fulfill the constant demand for clothing, to say that tapa was primarily a domestic, decorative feminine art form would be a highly exaggerated and narrow oversimplification. The process of manufacturing tapa varied little throughout Polynesia, with more variation seen in decoration than in its uses, which were distinct and diverse.

Its most common use was as cloth for a range of garments, yet tapa has been associated with the life­cycle, kinship, ceremonial exchange and ritual. In Fiji, for example, its use in ceremonial presentation, such as marriage, flourishes today. Large-scale production of tapa took place in Tahiti, where groups of several hundred women would manufacture large pieces of cloth for ceremonial presentations. In this case, a special highly bleached, undecorated tapa was made and subsequently

**Closeup of tapa with rust-colored blossoms**
*Gift of Mr. John Warriner, 1928.
*Courtesy of the Honolulu Academy of Arts.*

**Section of Fijian tapa.**
*Courtesy of Nelda Quensell, Assoc. Professor, UH-Kapi'olani*
stored in the homes of chiefs, to be used to decorate his body upon death. Likewise, in Tonga, mainly people of high status used this special undecorated tapa, usually as turbans.

In western Polynesia, the ceremonial practice of exchanging valuables highlights another particularly important manner in which large pieces of tapa were used. In Fiji, the ceremonial presentation of tapa would occur at marriages, and at births for swaddling infants. Shamans would induce spiritual possession by wrapping themselves in long pieces of the bark cloth. These large-scale pieces were looked upon in a collective context, as representation of a group's joint participation.

On Easter Island or Rapa-Nui, wooden or wicker-frame deities would be wrapped in tapa, believing it provided a vehicle for the deity's access or presence and was used presumably for ritual purposes. Wrapping the corpse of leaders or chiefs was also a common use of tapa, as seen in Hawai‘i, where the bones of the ali‘i were wrapped in special tapa before burial. Another example of the significance of tapa in rituals can be demonstrated by a ceremony in Samoa during which bark cloth is utilized during the defloration of a virgin bride. These examples make obvious the importance of tapa used during progression from one phase of life to another.

The Decline of Kapa Making in Hawai‘i

Two important factors contributed to the demise in kapa-making in Hawai‘i: the enthusiasm with which cotton was received after its introduction by Europeans, and the function of tapa in ceremony and religion, which was severely attacked by the missionaries. The only remaining function of tapa, identifying those of rank, did little to sustain its production and soon it became a lost art. Only recently has kapa-making in Hawai‘i been revived, and still only marginally. The many beautiful examples of this traditional art are now only available to merely be admired in museums, reminding us of tapa’s historical importance in the lives of the Hawaiians and other indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Editor’s Note: The Master to Apprentice Program sponsored by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts is encouraging the revival of tapa making. For an example of tapa created today under the auspices of this program, see the photograph on the back cover of this journal.

Works Consulted


Lori Admiral, Ethnobotany Honors 202 13
The story of the Hawaiian cowboy or paniolo began with the gift of five longhorn cattle to King Kamehameha the Great by Captain George Vancouver in 1793 (Edgy Lee video). The cattle were let loose into the lush forests and wet lands to flourish. The King then put a kapu on the cattle so that the Hawaiian people could not touch them. By 1819, the cattle population had become uncontrollable (Cowan-Smith 15). Kamehameha III sent one of his high chiefs to California, which was still a part of Mexico, with an invitation to several vaqueros (cowboys) come to Hawai‘i to teach the Hawaiians how to handle large herds of cattle. But it was not until 1832 that two vaqueros were sent to Hawai‘i. They brought with them fancy Spanish-rigged saddles and cow ponies.

The Hawaiians called the Mexican Vaqueros paniola which meant “Spanish” or “Spaniard.” Years later, the term, paniola, was changed to paniolo. The Spanish paniolo brought to Hawaiian culture their clothing, culture, and music, and the result was the Hawaiian paniolo (16). The paniolos of today still wear cowboy hats, bandanas, chaps, flannel-type long sleeved shirts and boots. On certain occasions like ranch parties, some of the paniolos sing and play the ukelele or guitar.

The new Hawaiian Paniolo took to cowpunching, becoming the best and most daring, even winning in rodeos on the mainland (Lee video). The Paniolo training not only required that the Hawaiians learn how to ride a horse, but that they learn to make their own braided ropes from rawhide, which they also learned to use. The Hawaiians were also taught the art of saddle making by their Spanish teachers (17). Today saddle making is still practiced, but there are only a few people on Mau‘i that I know who still continue this unique and wonderful art, partly because it would take a very long time for someone to learn this skill. Many find it easier to order one from the mainland.

After having learned the basics, the paniolo’s next task was learning to capture the wild “pipi” or cattle. The Paniolo had to become an expert with his rope, because tackling wild steers over dangerous terrain demanded split-second teamwork between horse and rider. Only the best horses were selected because of their much needed speed and stamina, for roping a wild bull was a challenge.

If the best horses were to be used, they needed to be maintained by the rider. These maintenance skills were a tradition. Shoeing and training of horses were among the important skills. First and foremost, every rider had to know how to shoe a
horse because if he didn’t, he would not be able to ride on the lava. Without horseshoes, the horse’s hooves would be badly damaged, causing the horse to go lame for months. My father learned traditions like shoeing and training horses from his father. My grandfather started shoeing at the age of fifteen for Kanololu Ranch. At the age of eight my father started gaining more and more experience by accompanying my grandfather and helping him. Also, at the age of fifteen, he, like his father, shod his very first horse by himself.

My father explained how it is done:
Before I do anything I put on my leather apron and examine the feet of the horse and how he’s standing. I start with the front hoof. I pick up the hoof and clean it with the hoof pick, taking out all the excess dirt and stones, whatever loose material that is stuck in there. Once that is done, I take my nippers and cut off the excess of the hoof and the long points of the hoof (just like your fingernails). Then with a file, I smooth and shape the hoof to the proper angle that the horse should be standing on.

Once I get it the way I like, I use my hoof gauge to check the angle of the hoof. This will determine if the horse is standing correctly. If angle is correct, I take the horseshoe and shaping hammer and shape the shoe on the anvil to fit the hoof. If the nail holes are distorted from the shaping, I take the hole punch and widen it. Now I line the shoe up on the hoof to put it in the correct place. I want to make sure all the edges of shoe are lined up with edges of hoof. Just like grandpa would say, “You make the shoe to fit the hoof, not hoof to fit the shoe.”

I grab the hoof between my legs. Looking at the tip of the nail, I place it in the correct position so that the nail will come out of the hoof wall at the designated angle. If you nail it in the wrong way, the nail will go into the horses flesh causing it to go lame. I drive one nail in on the left, make sure shoe is straight, then drive the other nail in on the right. I break off the tip of each nail that I drive in for safety. I now take the hoof and place it on the hoof stand, smooth off any excess hoof left, and take off any sharp parts on the nail with the file. Then I take my clincher and tightly bend the nails down on the outside wall of the hoof. This same procedure is done on the back hoofs also (Rezentes).

My father started training horses at the age of thirteen and has been doing it on and off for twenty-five years. Training a horse takes about two years. Once a colt is born there is a process called “imprinting.” Imprinting involves handling a colt from birth to get it used to a human. The colt is touched everywhere – in its ears, around its behind, legs, face, feet, and nose. Doing this makes the training process a lot easier. Once the colt reaches one to three months old, it is time to put the halter on and start teaching the colt how to lead. “Lead” means a colt is able to follow you with rope and halter on its neck. One of the best ways of teaching
a colt how to lead is putting a rope on its behind and pulling at the halter, which will make it go forward to follow you. You constantly lead it a little everyday until it gets used to it, then you can stop.

When the colt is about a year old, a blanket (saddle pad) and a light saddle is used so the colt can get adjusted to the feel and weight of a saddle. At this same point in time the colt is tied to a hitching-rail to get it used to being tied up and to teach it discipline. Enough slack is left on the rope so the colt can move its head freely and so it can stay in a safe position without getting hurt. When the colt is about two years old, the bridle can be used. The bridle consists of headstall, bit, and reins.

Once the colt has gotten adjusted to bridle, saddle, and being led, it is now ready to be ridden. One of the common ways for the colt to learn is to have someone riding the colt while another leads it by foot or on horseback. That way the rider on the colt will be able to teach it the commands of turning left, right, forward, and back. These commands are carried out by leg and hand movements and also by voice. Once the colt has learned these skills, it can be used as a pleasure riding horse and with further training a cattle, or rodeo horse (Rezentes). Soon after the paniolos gained these skills, they were put to the test.

In the early 1800s, cattle were secondary to sandalwood for island trading. Queen Ka‘ahumanu grew worried about the precious wood becoming scarce, so she ordered a kapu on the cutting of sandalwood. Hides, salt, and tallow became in demand. The trading business was so good that between 1840-1844, the King reinstated kapu on the killing of cattle to have them multiply. With herds building, skilled Paniolos were in great demand (Cowan-Smith 20).

With the demand for beef rising, raising tame cattle was far easier than hunting wild cattle in the mountains. A number of early ranches were formed and privately owned. (22). The paniolos were now working cattle from small holding pens called corrals. These corrals were easier for the paniolo to move and separate the cattle. William French, who established a herd of domestic cattle, realized the need to update agricultural and ranching methods for the survival of the cattle industry. French hired John Palmer Parker to tend his herds. While working for French, Parker began to establish his own herd of cattle. Although he owned no land of his own, he started his herd and created the Parker Ranch that exists today (25).

By 1840 cattle were being shipped two hundred miles across the ocean from the Big Island to Honolulu. The paniolos would drive the cattle down the mountain slopes to the beach, which took several hours to accomplish. They would drive them over the black lava fields which were unbearably hot, so they started early in the morning A pier was not built until the 1900s, so cattle were brought out to the ships anchored in the harbor. The paniolos roped the steers and ran in full gallop out to the boats, which could hold sixteen head of cattle at a time. A hoist was used to lift cattle up on the ship (25-27).

My father describes herding cattle:

When I was a young boy growing up in Kula, the ranches never used cattle trucks or trailers to move the cattle to different pastures or slaughterhouses. They would herd the cattle on the paved and dirt roads. Many or almost all the houses along the roads had fences and gates to the driveways. The reason for this was the paniolos had to keep the cattle on the roadway out people’s property. So the paniolo would go in front and close the gates before the herd would arrive and paniolo at the end of the herd would reopen them.

The paniolos would herd a thousand head of cattle on one drive. They would herd them from the Haleakala Mountain to the midlands of Kihei. Wintertime the paniolos would drive the herds to the lower lands because if we had a good winter the grass would be plentiful in the lowlands. The cattle would do better down there because it was warmer. It was better for the cows to have their calves in a dry area because the mountain would be too cold and wet. Also, besides the nice green buffalo grass, the cows could feed on the kiawe beans, which were plentiful. Nowadays ranchers do a lot of moving of cattle by trucks and trailers. They don’t need as many paniolos because cattle dogs like order collies, Australian shepherds, and kelpies are used instead. The need for paniolos has dwindled down to a dozen, if not less, on each ranch.

Within the past five years Haleakala Ranch has gone back to the old ways of herding cattle on the road. It would cost the ranch too much money to truck a thousand head of cattle. It would also be too time consuming. I have
experienced this first hand in 1995 when I was asked by Peter Baldwin, the ranch manager, to help on the drive. We would herd the cattle from lowlands to highlands and back again from highlands to lowlands. The drive took place through my own property and onto the main road. This experience brought back memories of seeing how the old paniolos used to move the herds.

With the establishment of the ranches in Hawai'i, the paniolo became responsible for fencing, rounding up of cattle, roping, maintaining of personal equipment, and ranch property. Their days were long, and the work was hard. Paniolos who worked for the ranches were paid 50 cents a day, some even had houses to live in and all the beef they could eat. Today ranching in Hawai'i is still flourishing. The Paniolo work eight-hour shifts and make decent wages. It's a little easier in today with new technology such as tractors, which can replace the hands of men in digging postholes. But the paniolo have kept their tradition alive. Their drive is to do an honest day's work, take care of their families, and enjoy the land and nature. The paniolos keep alive the traditional skills of rope making, saddle making, horse training, shoeing, as well as the paniolo culture of a good song and friendship.

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Editor's Note:
Big Island paniolo, Ikua Purdy, was elected to the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City in 1999. Until that time, the skill and contributions had gone unrecognized. Purdy, and fellow paniolos Archie Kaaua, and Jack Low, competed in the Cheyenne Frontier Days in 1908. Purdy won first place in the steer roping contest; Kaaua, second; and Low, sixth. Recently, a statue honoring Purdy and the Hawaiian Cowboy tradition has been proposed.
The Ukelele

The *ukulele* is part of our culture and is unique to our upbringing in Hawai'i. It can be heard on almost any radio station and seen and talked about in all our forms of media. Hawaiian culture would not be the same without the ukelele. I have grown up around the ukelele, and enjoy playing it. My mom is a avid ukulele player, and I often reminisce when hearing songs that she played while I was growing up.

My key informants were Chris Kamaka, foreman of Kamaka Hawai'i Inc.; Keali Alapai, his assistant; and Ted Nakama, an employee of Easy Music Center. He is an avid ukelele player who is knowledgeable about the topic. My Big Island neighbor, Pat Bento, whose hobby is woodworking, and more recently, ukeleles, provided information on the best woods used for making the ukelele.

Although many might think that the ukulele was invented by the Hawaiians, it was actually the Portuguese that introduced the ukelele to Hawai'i. It was on the afternoon of August 23, 1879, when the ship *Ravenscrag* arrived in Honolulu. On the ship were 419 Portuguese immigrants from the island of Madeira, contracted to work in the sugar cane fields. The immigrants aboard this ship had traveled for four months over 15,000 miles. They were very excited to finally be in Hawai'i, and so upon their arrival they began to celebrate. A man aboard the ship by the name of Joao Fernandes borrowed his friend's braguinha (the Portuguese name for the instrument) and began playing folk songs. The Hawaiians were very impressed by the quickness and speed of his fingers as they jumped across the fingerboard. They called the instrument a "ukulele" which translates into English as "jumping flea" (Bounty Music).

That is only one of the stories of how the instrument got its name, but its seems to be the most favored and popular one. The Hawaiian people took a liking to the instrument and within 10 years it was Hawaii's most popular instrument. Its popularity can be credited to Fernandes, who was said to have spent much of his time walking around Honolulu strumming his ukulele. The Hawaiian people were familiar with other stringed instruments like the guitar, but took a strong liking to the ukulele because it was easy to play and very portable. King David Kalakaua became a avid player of it. It also said that Queen Emma, Queen Lili'uokalani, Prince Leleiohoku, and Princess Likelike played the instrument. With all this royal involvement in the instrument, it was inevitable that the ukulele would be accepted by the people. From taro farmers to the King and Queen, the ukulele reached all Hawaiian classes. Soon there began to be a demand for them.

Not everyone could make a ukulele. Of the people who came on the *Ravenscrag*, three men — Augusto Dias, Jose do Espirito Santo, and Manuel Nunes — were able to make ukeleles. In 1884 Dias opened up a small shop on King Street that specialized in repairing musical instruments, especially guitars and ukuleles. Four years later, Santos and Nunes opened up shops. Of the three, Nunes seems to have been the most successful. He continued making ukuleles well into the 1930s (Bounty Music).

Making ukuleles then was a painstaking process, requiring long hours because everything was made completely by hand. In 1910 production increased because of more modern equipment. The cost of a ukulele at this time was somewhere around three to five dollars which doesn't seem like much until one considers the fact that the average wage for a common person in this time was five dollars a month. Many people could not afford ukeleles so they improvised, making them out of coconut shells or cigar boxes. In Hawai'i in the 1920s, at the height of the ukulele boom, there were approximately fifteen ukulele manufacturers, including Kumalae, Nunes, and Kamaka. Predictably, the boom even-
actually tapered off and all of these companies went out of business, except for Kamaka Hawai'i.

The Kamaka Ukelele

It was in 1916 that a apprentice to Manuel Nunes named Samuel Kaiai'i Kamaka decided to go off on his own and start his own business, the Kamaka Ukelele and Guitar Works, in the basement of his Kaimuki house. There he turned out about a dozen ukuleles per week and sold them for five dollars a piece. Within ten years Kamaka was the only ukulele company still in business. One thing that made it possible for Sam and his company to outlast his competitors was his development of his pineapple-shaped ukulele. He made this creation in 1916 with the idea of making a smaller ukulele with a warmer, fuller sound. It also happened to be a lot easier to make, because the sides didn't have to be bent. These old models tend to be collectable items, especially the ones that were painted like pineapples. Today Kamaka Hawai'i, Inc. produces about 3,000 instruments per year; and according to Chris Kamaka, they have a backlog for twelve months. They export ukuleles to the U.S. mainland, Japan, Canada, Europe, and the South Pacific. The ukuleles are highly prized, and Kamaka is considered to be the premiere ukulele manufacturer.

One thing that makes the company unique is that more than half of the employees are deaf. But it turns out that this is not a handicap when making musical instruments. These ukulele makers are able to use their heightened sense of touch to determine the exact thickness that the koa wood should be, by thumping the wood and feeling the vibrations with their fingers (Kamaka).

There are many other companies that are in the ukulele production these days. They, are often started by someone who began making ukuleles for him/herself and turned that passion into a business. Many of these companies offer unique and exquisite ukuleles. Many of them offer quality ukuleles, but none are as well known as the Kamaka Ukulele.

Chris also mentioned that nowadays many ukulele players are experimenting with making ukuleles themselves. High school students in wood shops are a good example. They make their own and then get better and better and soon branch out and start selling some of their ukuleles. Then they often make it into a small part-time business. Making ukuleles at home can be a good learning experience, but can also be a painstaking process because of lack of access to the tools that the factories have. Making one at home can take months, while at the factory, Kamaka workers take about five to ten days to make a batch of ukuleles, definitely more efficient.

The structure of the ukulele

While the ukelele looks like just a smaller version of a guitar, there are several differences that separate the ukulele from the guitar and other stringed instruments. First of all, the body of the ukelele is usually made with koa wood. According
Major ukelele models

To Chris, koa is the best because it's a very workable wood; it is bendable and pliable. The process of making a ukulele involves bending and shaping the wood, and a hard brittle wood would just not do. Spruce or mahogany can be used, but koa wood also has a nice finished look, which was evident when I saw some of the most prized and expensive koa ukuleles at the Kamaka factory. For the neck of the ukulele, many types of wood can be used because this part of the ukulele requires less bending than the body. Kamaka usually uses koa for the neck, but often experiments and uses other woods. The fingers come into contact with the fingerboard a lot, so this part often gets worn down faster than the rest of the ukulele. A wood that is durable and has a nice look is chosen because this part of the ukulele is often visible when playing (Bento). Kamaka uses rosewood because it fills both of these requirements at once.

The strings of the ukulele are often made of nylon, as with many stringed instruments. Ukuleles can be made with steel strings also, or a combination of the two. Kamaka produces a ukulele which they call the Tiple. It is a ten-string, all-steel string ukulele. The sound of this ukulele is very distinct from the usual ukulele sound. It is a lot fuller and lower, more like the guitar. Most of their designs are made with nylon strings.

Types of ukuleles

There are many different types of ukuleles out there. Many companies experiment with new designs — different shapes and sizes, different materials, trying to reach that perfect sound. But in general, the ukulele can be divided into four major categories, which are determined by size. They are the standard ukulele, or the Soprano. The Soprano is the smallest of the four. Its entire body measure is usually 21 inches in length. It usually has four, nylon strings. Its price range can go from $15 for a ABC store generic model, to easily $1,000 or more for a Kamaka model. Its main distinction is its smaller size when compared to the other four. The second model is the Concert or Alto model ukulele. It is a little bigger in size when compared to the Soprano model. Its entire body length measures 23 1/4 inches from top to bottom. It sounds almost identical to the Soprano, but in fact, it has a slightly fuller sound. It is the second smallest of the four types, and its price range can vary also. The Tenor is a little bigger than the Alto, and its entire body length measures at 26 1/4 inches. According to Chris, it is the most popular model, possibly because of its versatility. The Tenor is the ukulele model that is often made in four, six, and eight string models. It is the second biggest of the four models. The sound of the Tenor is definitely a fuller and preferred sound by many. Kamaka gets the most orders for custom designed Tenors. Kamaka Tenors sell from anywhere from $380 for a standard Kamaka model, to a couple of thousand dollars for a custom-ordered Tenor model.
The Baritone is the biggest, and deepest and fullest sounding of the four. Its four strings are the bottom four of a guitar and they are tuned the same. It is expensive and sometimes harder to find.

**Caring for your ukulele**

Buying and owning a ukulele is one thing. Taking care off it another. Chris provided some important tips on taking care of your ukulele and prolonging its beauty and performance: Always try to keep the ukulele in room temperatures; do not expose it to any extremes. Being in the hot sun for a prolonged period can often cause the ukulele to become warped. It should be wiped down after every use with a clean rag. Oils from your hands and the things you touch can sometimes be bad for the ukulele. You should also leave it in a safe area where nobody can step on it or wreck it. Chris said that I would be surprised at how many ukuleles they have to fix because of simple, stupid mistakes like leaving it in vulnerable areas.

**Hawaii’s ukulele stars**

Hawaii has had a long history of famous and successful ukulele players. They often become successful artist producing hits. One of the earliest successful ukulele players in Hawaii was Ernest Ka’ai. He was an important figure in the Hawaiian music world in the quarter of this century. He was a successful and very talented violin, guitar and steel guitar player. At one time he had as many as twelve bands. He helped to promote the ukulele and Hawaiian music on the mainland. He is credited in making the ukulele a featured part of Hawaiian groups. He also published the first ukulele instruction book titled, *The Ukulele, A Hawaiian Guitar*, in 1916. Another famous ukulele player that helped to establish the ukulele as Hawaii’s premiere instrument was “King” Benny Nawahi. He was born on July 3, 1899. By the age of twenty he was a full-time player of the ukulele, steel guitar, and mandolin. He ended up going to the mainland where he amazed audiences by playing with one hand. He became blind in 1935, but that did not stop him. Another famous artist, John Kamealoha Almeida, blind from the age of ten, composed over three hundred songs in his life. He became known as the “Dean of Hawaiian Music.” He composed famous songs like “Green Rose Hula,” “Roselani Blossoms,” and perhaps his most famous, “Pua Tuberose.” Almeida can be credited for launching the careers of other greats like Genoa Keawe, Julia Nui, Joe Keawe, and Alvin Issacs.

In 1944, a small boy went down to the KGMB studios in downtown Honolulu to play his ukulele, for the radio station’s “Amateur Hour.” He took home the first place prize. He again went back the next week and won the first prize once again. He went home a third time and they sent him home. They said that he was just too good and it wasn’t giving the others a fair chance. The boy’s name was Herb Ohta, he later became known as Ohta-san. He later met a older and famous ukulele player named Eddie Kamae, who taught Ohta-san some difficult techniques and told him to practice hard. Now, 50 years later, Ohta-San has 30 something albums, and is recognized as one of the world’s top ukulele players.

There are also many newer, very younger players. One who is very successful and is recognized as one of the best ukulele players in the world is Jake Shimabukuro, of the former band called Pure Heart. Jake, who is only 23, was also a KCC student. He has won many awards for his superb playing techniques. He is also known for experimenting with his ukulele playing often playing it like a electric guitar and using many electrical techniques to achieve new sounds.

There are various styles of playing the ukulele that have developed here in Hawai’i. There is the...
older, traditional style of playing, which is still popular today. There is also the Lounge feeling sound, the kind of sound heard in a lot of old Hawai‘i movies. There also is a classical sound which is very interesting to hear and very complicated and intricate to play. The Hula type of sound, according to Chris, is distinguished by a specific certain kind of strum, and is often sound played along with many hula songs. There is the New Age style, which is extremely popular today, especially with the younger generations. This sound can be described as a Reggae, Jawaiian sound. It’s heard with popular bands like Three-Plus and Hoonua. This style is often heard on popular Hawaiian radio stations.

With the new age of technology there are many ways ukulele players have found to improve their sound and find new sounds for the ukulele. One technique is electric ukuleles. By using a electrical hookups, players can use foot pedals and mixers to produce never before imagined sounds on the ukuleles. I was at a party in Kona, on the Big Island, where a punk band was playing their set. They played their songs and then took a half-hour break before continuing. One of my friends had his electrical plug-in ukulele in his car. He told me “wait here.” I did, and when he came back he had his ukulele. He knew the guitar player of the band, and asked him if he could plug his ukulele in. He did and plugged it through the distortion foot pedal and into the amp. He gave his ukulele a strum and everyone at the party got a sample of the most raging ukulele they’d ever heard. The sound was surprisingly clear, and we were all impressed. Everyone cheered my friend on while he played a punk, distorted version of Van Morrison’s “Brown Eyed Girl.”

All in all the ukulele is a vital part of our Hawaiian culture. It’s part of our history as a state and as a people. Whenever people from the Mainland think of Hawai‘i, they think of tropical weather, palm trees, surf, and sun. The ukulele fits right in there. The ukulele brings music to Hawaiian families and music brings people together. Times of going to the beach, singing, and playing songs on the ukulele is something that most families can relate to. I can. It was part of our daily routine on the Big Island. We would go to a certain beach every Sunday and meet a lot of other families there. We’d pot luck together, surf together, and make music together. The uncles would play the ukulele, someone would play the bass bucket, and I would sometimes play the guitar. These things are part of my culture and part of me. Hawai‘i without the ukulele would be like Scotland without its bagpipes.

Works Cited
Carrie Shklov

A Life Beyond the Sea

The author uses the voices of Japanese writer Kenzaburo Oe and Maori writer Patricia Grace in this fictional exchange. Oe, enraptured by the Maori culture after reading Grace's *Potiki*, starts a correspondence with her, but via a letter to Roimata, a character in the story. Oe is inspired by the intrinsic value of land that encourages family and community values. Grace, fascinated by the role-play, responds in Roimata's voice with exuberance.

Oe was named Nobel Laureate in Literature in 1994. His writing explores how individuals, confronted with tragedies, overcome humiliation and other trials to move on with dignity. In "A Personal Matter," he wrote about his son, who was born with a brain injury. Grace has also won numerous awards. *Potiki*, published by University of Hawai'i Press, was the winner of the New Zealand Fiction Award in 1987.

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Dearest Roimata,

I stumbled upon the Maori lifestyle and I am completely fascinated with its earthly, luxurious pleasures. From the ashes of the land a family is fed, from the land a generation is built and many memories are left behind. These memories are swept away by the sea, a cleansing of the land so that new memories can be made. But before the gray sea takes these memories, they are made into stories. It is these stories that educate the Maori people. So from the sea and the land, all that is alive lives for an eternity. Where there is a sea and land there will always be stories for the Maori people.

You once wrote so eloquently:

It was a new discovery to find that these stories were, after all, about our own lives, were not distant, that there was no past or future, that all time is a NOW-time, centered in the being. It was a new realisation that the center being in this now-time simply reaches out in any direction towards the outer circles, these outer circles being named "past" and "future" only for our convenience. The being reaches out to grasp those adornments that become part of the self .... (39).

Carved into wood is the story of the ancestors who have birthed a new generation of Maori people. These ancestors are not forgotten because who they are who you are. You teach this to your children and they teach their children. Through the preservation of the land, self-identity and cultural identity is also preserved. Ancestors don't die and fade away, only to be remembered in withered photo albums. Their spirit and knowledge live through the womb of trees that are carved into poupou. This is the secret that the modern culture of developed countries such as Japan and the United States have forgotten. With the loss of ancestral veneration, modern society has to search through the rubble of concrete and electrical impulses to find its heart — its soul.

From the ashes modern man struggles to survive in the fog of carbon monoxide. The pulse of the city is electrical and man-made. Blazing neon lights set the thruway on fire and many are crammed into living vestibules. His image is duplicated, as he is mass-produced in a government assembly line like paper dolls, flimsy with no backbone. He is expected to live like the majority with so called "ethics." Of course the majority, which is usually the educated class, defines "ethics." Education begins in concrete buildings with many books. Teachers speak to pupils about history from one cultural perspective, usually not shared by the ethnic perspective. There is much pressure to succeed, as the young dream of prosperity that grows in bank accounts. As the city grows more pavement and metal arches, the land becomes scarce. Trees are dying, lacking the luster of the womb enriched by the mahogany of its sticky sap. The sea is becoming polluted with too many hands that take and do not replenish. The Dollarman has already arrived like a disease that kills. In this case, the modern population calls it...
technology for advancement.

Patient Watcher of the Skies, I too have birthed a son with a certain “crookedness.” My son was born with a protruding brain. He looked like he had two heads; many called him a monster. I wrote a novel describing my experience with trying to conform to Japanese society. In this novel, the character Bird is encouraged to let his son die. The doctor with years of medical training even advised Bird how to sabotage his son’s health. But your son, Toko, was thought to be a gift, despite his “crookedness.” Your people cared for him and treated him with the best of care. He was thought to be the Potiki, a Demi-God. You, his mother, knew that he was a gift that would be taken away, but his presence would last for as long as there was land and sea. Toko knew he was a gift; while he was alive he had a special knowing:

And what I have known ever since then is that my knowing, my own knowingness, is different. It is a before, and a now, and an after knowing, and not like the knowing that other people have. It is a now knowing as if everything is now. My mother Roimata knows about me. On that night she said to me, “You knew didn’t you, Toko? You knew” (52).

Where did Toko come from? He was birthed through Mary, but who was his father? Joseph Williams was blamed for the impregnation, but the prologue suggests a lonely carver as the maker of Toko. Everything about Toko is a mystery: his “crookedness” and his knowingness. He just appeared to come from the sea. The people of the village accepted him as he was. There was some anger and confusion, but then they accepted him as the gift that he was. Oh, Patient Watcher of the Skies, how could you watch while the machines came from the hills to take away the loved ones of yesterday? How could you sit as still as a rock while you knew Toko would die soon. I, like Tangimoana, do not understand the passivity you had chosen to take. I weep for your loss, Yet I realize that you see something that I do not see, just what is it?

Kenzaburo

Dearest Kenzaburo,

I have received your curious letter with delight. You are indeed a traveler longing for the answers to a personal spiritual journey. Potiki is, as it is written, not really different from your A Personal Matter.

Roimata

Roimata, Hemi, Tangimoana, James, and Mana all face their own metamorphosis as the machines come from the hills. They must face the interdependency of an evolving culture. Our land becomes raped, as yours has. The future generation of Maoris faces the seduction of the Dollarman; he will no surely manage to pillage as he has in your side of the world. Class and education will no sooner divide my people. For now I practice forbearance like the patient watcher that I am. I have nowhere to go, but to the land. As Toko once said:

My father Hemi said that the land and sea was our whole life, the means by which we survived and stayed together. ‘Our whanau is the land and sea. Destroy the land and sea, we destroy ourselves (99).

Tangimoana was not the only one who cried for the death of Toko. It wasn’t even the death of Toko that was so hurtful, but the way that he died. “The manner of his death, that is where the pain is — the manner of his death, and the brokenness and suffering of the little bird” (159). It is like I said, the stories will come as long as there is land and sea. I will teach the young the lesson of The Dollarman coming. They will have to choose what is right for them. There is no need to resist, when destiny finds its way regardless of what we do. Not every story will have a happy ending. Sometimes the stories have darkness to them. But it matters that we tell about that darkness.

‘Light is a gift too,’ she said, ‘A gift of the sky, which is something that the earth knows. But the dark, the dark is a gift also because in the dark there is nurturing. These things are known to the earth as well as the sky (174).

I know where I stand. I have always known, and yes, I appear as still as a rock that will not change. The metamorphosis of stories will keep coming, as I am willing to share. I do not know what is in store for my family or my people of Maori blood, but I know where I stand. If my story seems to ask the answers that you seek, it is because there are no real answers. There are many answers as you can tell. Each person had a different answer when the story changed. Maori culture is mysterious because we take from all perspective to put it into one. It is like the sea, the ebb and flow of the tide that brings new shells to color the sands. Or like the land that produces a new crop every season. Life is constantly changing like our stories.
Introduction
The word tattoo comes from the Polynesian word, tatau. The Samoan tatau is a body tattoo of ancient design that starts at the middle of the torso, continues down around the lower back and waist covering the anterior and posterior areas, and around both legs to just below the knees. The tatau’s greatest contribution to Polynesia in general and Samoa in particular was the strengthening of cultural core values, beliefs and attitudes. The tatau ritual in Samoa personalized the core values of Samoan culture more deeply than normal village socializing. It required a very high personal commitment to traditional ideals and a willingness to sacrifice one’s blood in the support of those beliefs. According to Papalii Dr. Failautusi Avegalio, the tatau was not only a unique form of living artistry and a record of ancient culture not fully understood, it was a bridge of physical pain and personal sacrifice to revitalize, through culture, spiritual connections to a greater universe.

Tatau Samoa
O le te tatau, the art of tattooing, was highly respected in Samoa and throughout Polynesia until the late 1920s. In the Samoan archipelago, approximately 70 percent of the women in 1899 were tattooed, as were men, with few exceptions. In 1930, in Tutuila and the Manu’a islands of American Samoa, the practice was outlawed by the naval administration. The deaths of three young men in the village of Aua in Pago Pago Bay were attributed to health complications caused by excessive bleeding and infection resulting from unhygienic conditions where the tatau ritual was performed. The various religious institutions had also worked to stamp out the tā tatau ritual in American Samoa during that period. But in 1980, three young American Samoan men, in defiance of local laws and Christian beliefs, brought in a Tufuga Ta Tatau (tattoo master) from Upolu and were tattooed in the traditional manner in the village of Nu’uuli. Similar small groups also emerged in the villages of Aua, Afono and Fagatogo when word got out that the great master Tufaga Ta Tatau, Fa’alavelave of Samoa was in Tutuila. Interestingly enough, all of these select and small groups were composed of young heirs of Samoan chiefly titles. Their actions, ridiculed by their contemporaries and threatened with sanctions by government and church, engendered a renaissance of the Ta Tatau in American Samoa. Presently, there are over two hundred males and females from Samoa, American Samoa and Manu’a whom have since adorned their persons with the Tatau and Malu of Samoa.

In Samoa (former Western Samoa), the missionaries and colonial government were less successful in their attempts to destroy the ancient practice of Ta Tatau. Not only did the Ta Tatau practice survive colonial edicts and over zealous missionaries, its practitioners and guardians, the Tufuga Ta Tatau, have restored the ancient ritual in American Samoa and throughout Polynesia where the practice had been successfully eradicated. They have been invited to revive, teach and help restore this ancient Polynesian tradition among the extended family of Polynesia residing in the various island groupings from Hawai‘i to Aotearoa. As a race, Polynesians owe a great debt to these silent and resilient stewards of the tā tatau. They had, in spite of overwhelming foreign power and influence targeted at
bringing about the demise of the ancient practice, prevailed. Their triumph has enabled the preservation and perpetuation of a gift from the ancients to posterity. Malo lava le onosa'i male le fa'amatagi.

Papalii Dr. Failautusi Avegali, a Samoan ali'i with the traditional tatau of Samoa, graciously agreed to share his experience of receiving the tatau. His interview provides a unique perspective that reconciles for him his Western education and his Samoan heritage. Papalii is not only a Samoan ali'i but is also the first Polynesian to serve on the faculty of the University of Hawai'i College of Business Administration. He was one of three American Samoan men who in 1980 decided, in defiance of government prohibition and religious bans of the time, that the tatau is every Samoan's birthright. The other men were Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin, former Lt Governor and currently a congressman of the U.S. House of Representatives representing American Samoa, and Asaua Fuimaono, an attorney in private practice in American Samoa and former Assistant Attorney General of American Samoa. Fa'amafi Utu (deceased) of the Department of Procurement ASG joined the group later as the fourth member.

**Personal Reflections**

by Papalii Dr. Failautusi Avegali

**Events Leading Up to My Tattooing**

*Why did you get your tatau?*

I think a lot of it had to do with my grandfather To'omalatai Lau ole Fiso, eldest son of Malietoa Fa'alataita'a o Sapapalii and Fagasavali, taupou of the village of Matautu Tai, Upolu. In the short time that I got to know him, he regaled me with the magnificence of our heritage and history. He also prophetically told me that we lose things only because we allow them to be lost. His dignified demeanor, traditional beliefs, sage advice and kindness impacted my youthful impressions more deeply then I realized at the time. When I completed my college education and returned to Samoa, I was approached regarding a promise made years before about getting a tatau. Why I did it? I suppose it's simply a matter of deep pride instilled in me by those who helped define who, what, and why I am from an early age. My genealogy of ancestors defined who I am. It also defined the Samoan I am, fused with Fijian and Tongan. The why? That's simple too. It is to preserve and protect in perpetuity the core values that are the basis of my culture and who I am. It is my belief that Polynesian Samoan social organization has a basis in the power of Alofa and Fa'aaloalo that makes it saliently effective among all other forms. To not have engaged in this ancient ritual of my people, knowing and feeling the way that I did, would have made me feel like an accomplice to something terrible.

*What was the attitude and reaction of people in American Samoa when your group underwent the tatau ritual?*

When we started, it had been about 50 years since the prohibition of the tatau by the U.S. Naval Administration in 1930. An entire generation of American Samoans grew up under the influence of new Western values. Western institutions of church and government had become firmly entrenched by the advent of World War II, and it is noteworthy that finding a Soga'imiti (traditionally tattooed male) among American Samoan males born in the 1930s was rare. During WWII, practically all able-bodied American Samoan men were recruited into the U.S. Marine Corps native contingent. They subsequently joined the regular U.S. military, in particular the Navy, precipitating the greatest Samoan migration out of the Samoan Islands since the end of the ancient voyages of discovery two thousand years earlier.

This generation was impacted greatly by the largess of the military presence up to 1950. Inundated with Western materialism and fueled with the desire to satisfy new appetites, my generation wanted to emulate and adopt as many Western-like behaviors as possible. They had been inculcated in the belief that the practice of the tatau was illegal, unhygienic, primitive, backward and pagan, practiced only by those still in the dark ages. Many traditional practices had been diluted, altered or, in the case of the tatau in American Samoa, discontinued. The American dollar had made such an impact on American Samoans that they were referred to (derisively with more than a touch of envy) as the “Polyester Polynesians” This is evident when a malaga (village or family visitation journey) from Samoa to American Samoa, or vice versa interacts along traditional lines. The American Samoans would have heaps of material gifts but were limited in the traditional oratorical and ceremonial protocols for the occasion, while in contrast the Samoans from Upolu and Savaii would
At the time of your tatau, how did you deal with your job?

Our request for leave from the government was denied. We still went to work, as we weren’t allowed time off for this stupid, pagan or shameful practice. We were tattooed from as early as 3 a.m. to 7 a.m. and returned for the second sitting from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. After each morning session, we hobbled to a shower located behind the house. There, we bathed in cold water and squeezed the excess ink and blood from each other’s wounds, dressed in our lava lavas and went to work with wounds oozing. That sequence continued for three weeks, broken intermittently by the Tufuga’s absence to work on other small groups that had also chosen to follow the path that we took. Otherwise, the tattooing was incessant.

The more pleasant memories I recall were the reactions by older Samoans in their sixties on. It seemed the older they were, the greater their exclamations of joy and support. I recalled catching a bus from Utulei village to downtown Pago Pago and sitting next to an elderly man who stared at me as I entered the bus until I sat down next to him. As the bus pulled onto the main road, the elderly man reached for the hem of my lava lava at the knee, and pulled it back, exposing my very swollen thighs up to my hips. I was so surprised that I almost could not grab my lava lava in time, barely saving myself of being stripped of my lava lava and exposing more than just my thighs. I remembered him calling out, “Auwe! Auwe!” and in Samoan exclaimed that he was so happy to see a ritual so important to our people resurface before he died. I can still see in my mind’s eye the teary-eyed old man with his big smile, clapping as I got off the bus and calling out, “Fa’afetai! Fa’afetai! Malo lava! Malo toa!” (Thank you! Thank you! Well done! Well done warrior!)

You mention Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin often. Was there another person besides him and your grandfather that influenced you?

As a matter of fact, the two who influenced me prior to subjecting to the Tatau were Eni and High Chief Fuimaono. I met them both for the first time in Washington D.C. in 1970 when I was a government scholarship student to Kansas State Teachers College (since renamed Emporia State University of Kansas). As a sophomore, I was elected student representative to Washington D.C. by the Kansas State Student Lobby. Eni was the administrative assistant to American Samoa’s first Delegate at Large, A.U. Fuimaono. My memory of Fuimaono during that visit is still wonderfully vivid. This proud man wore his traditional formal Samoan lava lava to Congressional sessions and meetings with the nobility that his title represented. It was very impressionable to a young Samoan college student visiting the nation’s capital for the first time.

Eni and I talked deeply on how we felt about our culture the day before my return to Kansas. We were both saddened by the deterioration of Samoan traditions and rituals, and rejected the notion that it was inevitable. We both felt a compelling need to take some kind of action or stand, as futile as it may have seemed at the time, in making a statement as to our deep beliefs. We talked of the tatau and how it is a powerful symbol of our Samoan heritage. We both concluded with a pact that should the opportunity present itself to undergo the ta tatau, the person with the opportunity promised to contact the other as Soa (tattoo brother or companion who shares the pain).

At the time, it seemed like the fantasy or wishful thinking of two idealistic and homesick young Samoan men. Sixteen years later, Eni, then Deputy Attorney General for the Government of American Samoa, called me at my office with the Department of Education, instructing me to bring fine mats to a location in Nu’uuli village, Tutuila, American Samoa. There he would be waiting with a Tulafale (talking chief) to represent us.

I arrived there at the appointed time to discover that the master Tufuga Tā Tatau from Samoa (formerly Western Samoa), the renowned Fa’alavelave himself, was waiting within the guest house for our traditional entry. Still stunned by the timing and rapid course of events, I inquired as to when the ta tatau process was to begin, thinking perhaps after these traditional preliminaries, it would be about several more weeks or at least a month. The master Tufuga Tā Tatau Fa’alavelave replied in a very matter of fact way that the instruments would be ready to sing at 4 a.m. that very next morning. The shock kept me from sleeping very well that night.

The Tatau

What is your understanding of the origins of the Samoan Tatau?

There are several versions but they all seem to converge on Fiji. I had even asked the same question of my Tufuga Tā Tatau, Fa’alavelave, who
am of the opinion that my genealogical ties to both Fiji and Tonga are not much different than those of most indigenous people from that South Pacific triangle. I also saw block prints from the early 1800s in the Fiji, National Museum in Suva that showed tattooed Fijian women. Samoan oral tradition credits Fiji as the origin of the Samoan and most likely Tongan tatau also.

Two Samoan ladies of chiefly status returning from Fiji after visiting relatives, learned the chant of tattooing from their Fijian hosts to take with them to Samoa. In Fiji, it appeared that only women of high chiefly status were tattooed. The tattoo was on the abdomen between the umbilicus and the mons veneris. This area is called the punialo tattoo in Samoa. It is just below the belly button and just above the genitals.

On the return journey to Samoa, a large wave flipped the canoe of the two ladies, causing both to be driven deep into the ocean depths. Upon swimming back up to the surface and righting their canoe, both ladies tried to recollect the chant of the Fijian tatau. Possibly due to the effects of being capsized, the chant which called for the women to be tattooed was somehow reversed, calling instead for the men to be tattooed. Hence, the tatau ritual in Samoa started with men. As the tatau in Fiji was associated with ladies of nobility, the first Samoan men to be tattooed were ali’i. The tattooing of Samoan women of nobility followed much later. This is only one oral tradition’s explanation as to the introduction of tattooing to Samoa.

Is the Tatau a traditional rite of passage to manhood?

It’s my understanding that most men of Samoa until the 1930s sought the tatau as a desirable symbol of maturity, character, courage and rank. There are however, those who dispute the assumption that the tatau was a rite of passage which all males must subject themselves to. If such were the case, the assertion goes, then 100 percent of the young adult and adult male population at any given time prior to the 1930s would be tattooed. As many surviving block prints and photographs of early Samoan society (1840-1930) show, not all males in the photos and prints were adorned with a traditional tatau. Additionally, the malu or the tattoo for women was not considered generic in any sense. The malu was considered indicative of rank and associated with the daughters of chiefs, or ladies of chiefly lines, not necessarily womanhood. Though the tatau carried considerable meaning in Samoan society, numerous Samoan men in the villages and even more women were not tattooed to the extent one would have expected of a rite of passage.

What were some of the traditional ceremonies for the Tatau?

In early more traditional times, the tatau was cause for much celebration and activity. Most of the more elaborate traditional ceremonies which preceded the tattooing included war exercises, mock club and spear fighting, elaborate oratorical deliveries evoking past glories and the antecedents of the young men, feasting and the distribution of gifts. Today, groups of Soa tend to get together with a Tufaga in a private home and tattooing begins with little fanfare. Ceremony usually is insisted upon if the son or daughter of the chief is to be tattooed. As in the past, the Tufaga Tā Tatau is highly respected. Protocol, speeches and gifts are ceremonially presented and exchanged during the process of preparation which used to include the construction of a tattoo hut located some distance from the village to minimize the disturbance caused by the cries or moans of pain. Sons of chiefs, accompanied by his soas, are tattooed in the chief’s maota or guesthouse. Pandanus mats are plaited by the families for the young man to lie on. The guests, primarily relatives, friends and fellow villagers, gather in the guest house around the mats, awaiting the tap of instruments upon human flesh as the cue to begin singing and chanting.

Why is there singing and chanting during the tattooing?

The monotonous melody of the chants serves to calm the man being tattooed. I have always thought that the rhythm of the chants was an attempt to simulate the invisible rhythms of life of which the Tufugas in particular and Polynesians in general are culturally attuned to. My grandfather once told me of how old men would sit around certain trees in the jungle and chant when they were searching for one for boat building. I remember being confused as why they would chant to a tree as if they were talking to it. His eyes riveted me back to a respectful silence and he explained that, yes, it would appear that the old men talk to the trees.

“In a way they do,” he explained. “Like the Tufuga tau tai who connects by feeling and talking to the ocean as well as his sailing ship, the Tufuga
fau va’a connects by feeling and talking to the tree.” It was in college that the once funny perspective of a child became an astonishing realization of the profound capacities among my people. The new insights in physics regarding quantum mechanics and the interconnectedness of the universe by vibrations and energy rather than matter, caused me to reassess the wisdom of my ancestors with renewed respect. It dawned upon me that like the Tufuga Tau Tai and the Tufuga Fau Va’a, the chants established connections between the family of chanter and the member of the family being tattooed. It was a means of evoking the positive and supportive rhythms of the group and focusing them into the individual.

What instruments were used for the Tatau?
The ‘au is the principle instrument of the Tufuga. It resembles a hoe that has been reduced in size to approximately a foot and a half; its width differs according to the purpose. The implement has three parts: a serrated comb of needles, mallet, and the connecting toe, all tied together by coconut sennit, which is braided from the fiber of the coconut husk. The comb, which comes in contact with human skin, consists of tightly lashed needles made of bone. Human bone is considered the best for piercing the skin, but boar’s tusk or shark’s teeth are also used. The mallet is made from iron wood and is approximately nine inches long. It is connected to a handle by a “toe” which is usually made from tortoise shell or bone. The handle is made of cane or wood.

A complete set of tattooing instruments consists of 8 to 12 implements depending on the Tufuga Ta Tatau. The length of the instruments are fairly uniform, each being about a foot and a half in length. The instruments differ in the width of the comb. The narrowest one, with a comb width of up to nine tightly lashed bone needles, is called an ‘au mogo. It is used for detailed work and feels like a razor slicing deep wound lines in the skin. When this tool is used for isolated or stand-alone symbols such as location dots of various sizes and star crosses, the ‘au mogo feels like nails being driven into one’s body. This tool is used in the more tender regions of the body like the tender area directly behind the knees; the inner thighs near the scrotum; knee cap (The sound and feel of this area is very much like a nail being driven into bone, as only skin separates the needles from the knee cap); the buttocks area where the needles comes within a quarter of an inch of the anus; and the section between the navel and genitals. It is also used in difficult-to-access places like the connecting section of the inner thighs at the apex between the legs, the space that separates the genitals and the rectum.

The medium-sized ‘au is called the ‘au sogiaso. It has up to 26 bone needles in its serrated comb. It is used to set the overall design, within which the ‘au ono is used for detail. The widest comb, the ‘au tapulu, is used to tattoo large dark areas on the outer thighs and some sections of the back.

Other materials used for the piercing needles are boar’s tusk and shark’s teeth. The dye is made from the shell of the kukui nut. The oil from the nut itself is used for lamps, and the shells collected and burned for charcoal. The insides of the burnt shell are scraped off and put into a coconut shell, and the rest of the charcoaled shell is reused for fuel. The soot is mixed with water. Its dark bluish hue stands out starkly when driven into the skin by the ‘au. Its natural medicinal properties help to prevent infection. When the Ta Tatau ritual is conducted with the proper protocols validated over the centuries, the process is exceedingly clean, hygienic and free from infection and health risks.

The Tufuga Ta Tatau’s skill sounds remarkable. Can you elaborate?
I am not too sure I can, as you would have to interview a Tufuga Ta Tatau to get the more technical aspects of his craft. I can only share with you my experience and observations while undergoing this fascinating ordeal. I suppose I was a bit concerned when the Tufuga prepared his tools with no observable blueprint or some sort of measuring instrument with which to guide his hand. Masking my fear by feigning respect, (after all he controlled how hard that mallet comes down on the needles) I inquired as to how he kept the lines, patterns and such, in symmetrical balance? His response was that I will feel the answer. Naturally, that was the last question I ever dared to ask again of the Master Tufuga Ta Tatau.

What I did observe, however, was remarkable. The Tufuga was able to achieve an astonishing level of symmetry of detail that for me was mind boggling. The uncanny ability of the Tufuga to tap designs on one side of the body, turn with his back to that side and tap out the same design on the opposite part without even a backward glance, was incredible. My most startling experience was when
the inner part of my left thigh was being tattooed. With thick kapok-filled pillows bracing my back to hold me in position, my left thigh rested comfortably on the mat exposing the tender inside part of my thigh from knee to inner hip joint. I witnessed an unbelievable demonstration of attunement blended with artistry as the tapping began on the inner side of my knee joint.

Something about the tapping sound I'd like to share. The tapping of the mallet on the 'au is incessant and at times varies rhythmically. In fact, after hours of subjection to the various needles of the 'au, one develops the ability to identify and associate rhythms with designs (detailed or linear), patterns (tight or broad) and overlaps. The detailed work is heralded by rapid-fire tapping and constant movement of the palm of the Tufuga, which rests on a section of the body where the work is focused. The slower rhythms usually mean broad solid areas are being tattooed. The almost light tapping announces that the freshly tattooed section needs to be connected to the previous day's tattooed area to establish connections of patterns or design. This is the overlap. The pain of the 'au going over the previous day's tattooed area to link up is indescribable. Even as I think of it after so many years, my breathing still jumps a bit with the recollection. The shock of hundreds of punctures, and swollen to nearly twice the normal size, is unimaginable. Even as I think of it after so many years, my breathing still jumps a bit with the recollection. The sensitivity of the area, already subjected to the shock of hundreds of punctures, and swollen to nearly twice the normal size, is unimaginable. Even a light current of air touching this area would cause one to react as if shocked by electricity.

So there I lay with my inner thigh being worked on by the Tufuga. The overlap connected sections my outer thighs with the detailed lines on the newly tattooed sections of my very tender inner thigh. I recall fading in and out of semi-consciousness as the tapping continued, while the pain rolled in waves that caused shivering which at times was difficult to control. I remember looking down at my inner thigh covered with large splotches of blood mixed with the kukui ink and, delirious with pain, wondering what the hell I was doing there. Then I recall the 'au, under the skillful hand of the Tufuga, appeared to dance and dart in, out and through the mass of blood and ink that I knew completely obscured large areas of my inner thigh skin beneath it. I was too weak from agonizing pain to protest at what seemed to be recklessness. Almost angry at the thought of wasting my time, and feeling as if I were near death, I feebly tried to tell the Tufaga that there is no way he could see what he is doing because I couldn't see through all the gore. I was absolutely positive neither could he.

The Tufaga continued unperturbed for a few more minutes and directed his neophyte assistant to wipe the bloodied area with tapa cloth soaked in water. When the blood was wiped clean, in my astonishment, I momentarily lost all sensation of pain. The lines, patterns and design were not only connected, they were symmetrical! My mind told me at that time that it's impossible. But my eyes told me it wasn't. For the first time that day, I reflected often on what I witnessed.

My only conclusion is that like the master navigators and canoe builders, the Tufaga is guided by attunement, a feeling or seeing of things not immediately apparent to others, a sensing much like the manner in which trees were selected by canoe builders and island destinations "seen" over the horizon by navigators who "felt" the waves of the ocean. The art of the Tatau is incredibly ancient. I do know that to acquire the knowledge, ability, skills and wisdom of a Tatau takes a lifetime. Not surprisingly, describing the use of the 'au is academic. To transform the 'au into a connector to the universe takes much time, maturity and the acquisition of wisdom, something that people just don't seem to have time to do anymore.

**Does the Tatau reflect Chiefly Status?**

It reaffirms it. It does not necessarily reflect it. To understand the Samoan sense of rank and social status, it is essential that one understands the etiology associated with rank and status. Let me give you an example. When I was in Upolu searching for the village of my relatives who lived in the interior, I had to travel through jungle settings far removed from the modern roads along the coast. I had recently graduated from college at that time. Our little traveling group often encountered small settlements of traditional dwellings along the road, in which the absence of modern building materials was conspicuous.

In one such settlement we stopped to ask directions. A very dignified elderly man in his worn lava lava approached me and very eloquently, using the chiefly protocol language of Samoa, addressed me in the most honorific of manners, as to who I am and the purpose of my visit. I recalled being very moved by his oratory. His demeanor was awesome. I could easily have been in the court of a traditional king being addressed by a person of distinguished...
bearing. Yet, there I was in the middle of nowhere, being eloquently addressed by an old man with the bearing of nobility.

That encounter with the old man was a powerful example of Samoan ethos. He could have been any old man (or lady for that matter) in any of the isolated dwellings or villages along the way that would have engaged us in the same noble manner we had stopped for information. As a Samoan he knew his origins, antecedents, status, rank and protocol, a fact powerfully exemplified by his demeanor. Neither his humble dwelling nor modest dress diminished the air of his dignity. His poise, proud yet dignified, made all else secondary.

Unlike many other societies in which there are "commoners" with so-called "commoner behaviors" or social groupings of low status due to disparities in economics, profession, skills or possessions, traditional Samoans are, for the most part, unencumbered by such qualifications. Social status and rank, unlike many other places, is not a privilege in Samoa, nor is it a right. It is an inheritance. The greater the understanding of that inheritance, the stronger its intrinsic power and influence on a Samoan's behavior.

As remarkable as it may seem, imagine an entire society with that sense of inheritance. Hence, social status and rank are determined by internal qualities such as blood kinship ties, as opposed to the more external Western orientation which has its roots in economically based materialism. Most, if not all Samoans, can trace their genealogy to a chiefly line with connections to royal lineage. Hence, the social interactions of Samoans are very formal, and protocol is engaged in with the automatic presumption that one is interacting with a person of nobility. For example, intoning one's genealogy, which I consider an affirmation of that fact, is part of the protocol of social interaction in formal and informal gatherings of Samoans. Understanding that ethos of genealogical inheritance is essential, if Samoan behavior is to be understood.

**Are only Chiefs tattooed?**

No. However, the tatau among untitled men only makes them more conspicuous as heirs to titles. Only Soga'imiti (tattooed men) are traditionally allowed to serve chiefs. The rendering of traditional service to chiefs is required of all young heirs and serves as a means for teaching and learning the cultural protocols of proper behavior, oratorical speech, gift presentation, seating and serving protocol, preparation and presenting of ava, and such other chiefly matters associated with Samoan village governance and court. There is a Samoan saying that encapsulates leadership. "Le ala o le pule, o le tautua." (The road to leadership is through service.) Among the ali'i (high chiefs) and the tufa'ale (orators), the tatau is extremely important as a reaffirmation or validation of cultural knowledge, abilities and skills in addition to courage, maturity, character and cultural position.

An interesting tradition associated with the sons of chiefs being tattooed was the tacit expectation that the sons of the chief's tufa'ale (orators) of the same age would accompany the young chief as Soa to be tattooed together. Sometimes included among the Soas are relatives and close personal friends. In modern times a Soa does not necessarily have to undergo the entire tatau process. For example, my younger brother, an airborne ranger with the U.S. Army, flew home on leave for three weeks. During that time, he asked the head of our family for his blessings to seek a tatau. Upon receiving it, he immediately made preparations. As most of his friends were overseas, he could not find a Soa for purposes of respect for the tradition. My daughter, very close to her uncle, offered herself as his Soa. She was accepted. While her uncle underwent the full body tattooing, she had an ankle tattoo done. The fact that the ankle drew blood meant that the symbolism was satisfied. Soas are not restricted to males only. To become a Soa is an act of alofa that is difficult to understand unless one actually becomes one. The bond between Soas is a strong lifelong one.

**How important is a Soa?**

In traditional Samoa, it was a common belief that a man without a Soa will die horribly from agony and pain brought about by the tatau. The purpose of the Soa is to personally share the burden of the suffering and pain by actual participation in the tattooing itself. In essence, it is an act of Alofa (love). As horrible as the pain can be, it is the love and respect for and between loved ones that ultimately helps each individual through the various sittings that can last up to seven hours. As the tatau moves from body section to section, each section exceeding the agony and pain of the preceding one, two amazing realizations emerge: one focused on the self; the other focused on others.

For example, the bond between myself and my soa companions attained a level of friendship even
greater than what existed before the ritual. I still can recall feeling small rivulets of blood trickle down my inner thighs as they commingled on the mat with my dripping sweat. Often the pain was so great that I literally had to gasp for air from the strain of holding my breath to stifle a cry. At that particular moment, I was being tattooed on the inside of my left thigh from knee to hip. The tufuga had been working on it for over an hour, and blood flowed freely from the puncture wounds. Pain from the previous day’s section was excruciating as the new section overlapped it for continuity of pattern and consistency. I thought I was going to die.

It was suddenly bearable when my soa, himself wounded with hundreds of oozing punctures around his backside and waist, grasped my hand with his bloody one. He looked at me and smiled a silent yet eloquent encouragement. My other soa had pulled himself to his feet, leaving bloody streaks on the mats, to massage my left foot while helping the Tufuga Ta Tatu’s neophyte hold it from jerking each time a nerve was hit. I don’t think I could have loved my friends more than during that moment. That I would have given my life for them is how I recall that feeling. Their presence and the shared suffering between us made me stronger than I thought I was. Each time they were there for me in my moments of weakness, I was there for them during theirs. The need of the other was more compelling than the suffering of oneself. It was as if by concentrating on helping the suffering of others, your own suffering became endurable.

Looking Back: Reflections on the Tatau

Are there personal memories that stand out beyond the entire experience?

The entire process from the beginning to the present has been very meaningful and important to me. In response to your question, there were two experiences that I personally treasure very much. It involved my father and my young son of five at the time. When I committed to participate in the tatau ritual, few of my immediate family members came to the tattooing hut. Outside of my father, my extended family did not know what I was about in get involved in. My brothers and sisters were overseas; my wife was on the U.S. mainland completing her master’s degree with our then eight-year-old daughter. I was living with my father, younger brother and my two sons, ages five and two years of age in the village of Pavai’a’i. I recalled my father being almost confrontational in objecting to my getting a tatau. In my obstinate refusal to reconsider, and my insistence on proceeding as planned, my father suddenly broke off his diatribe and went into the house. That following morning I completed the first phase of the tattooing which went across the center of the back and down the entire width to just above the buttocks. I was really hurting and I just knew another confrontation with my father was imminent. To my surprise, my Father’s demeanor was completely the opposite from that of the previous night’s. From that time on my Father was very supportive and often came to the tattoo hut to support me. It was until much later (these things come with maturity) that I realized that my father was not objecting to me at all for getting tattooed. What he has always objected to is doing something without integrity. He wanted to push me to the point, that if he detected the slightest attitude or behavior of weakness or unwillingness to get tattooed, he would have stopped me. He was satisfied that I was committed to see it through. He, better than I, understood the sense of commitment and the depth of passion needed and the consequences I would have faced should I not have been fully committed to this process.

Once the ‘au drew blood, there was no turning back. It was his way of helping me help myself. The other time was when he brought my five-year-old son without my knowing. I had been lying on the mat for five hours and the pain had caused me to lose consciousness twice. Both times the Tufuga ordered his neophytes to quickly wipe my face with cold water, using a soaked tapa cloth for that purpose. The second time, he stopped until I had regained consciousness and gave me that inquiring look. His look of concern communicated exactly the question he had in mind without him having to ask it. Looking back, I think if there was a time that I would have quit, it was probably at that moment.

After the brief suspension of the tattooing to give me time to regain full consciousness I sensed that I had arrived at another critical crossroad. It was then, that I felt a small hand on my feverish and sweaty forehead. I felt right away, it was my son. I don’t know how, but when he touched me I knew it was he. I rolled my eyes up from my stupor,
know it was he. I rolled my eyes up from my stupor, smiled and seeing my Dad in the background, gave the Tufuga a look like, "What’s keeping you so long? Let’s get the show on the road!" My son sat there with his hand on my head until that sitting finished. He became my special little Soa at a time that I needed all the help I could get. I learned that when one focuses and connects with matters that are greater than ones self, one grows in capacity and becomes capable of enduring almost anything.

You said, there was a deeper insight for you in being Samoan. Can you explain?

Yes, the meanings that emerged from the Tatau experience had a profound effect and impact on my thinking, attitude, behavior and beliefs. It happened on the sixth sitting. By then, the backside from behind the knees to the middle of my back had been elaborately tattooed. Our sixth sitting required a lot of overlap tattooing over the previous day’s work which by then was inflamed and swollen. It also included the connecting of the inner sections of the opposite thighs between the scrotum and the anus. When I first realized what that meant, loss of consciousness is very understandable.

I was second in line of our group of four. Instead of sitting with the other two at the farthest point of the tattoo dwelling nursing wounds, I elected to stay and watch what was in store for me. I watched and held the hand of the leader of our group. The cries, moans, shrieks and shaking of his body caused by the tattooing as it progressed to higher levels of pain was visually and emotionally frightening. I recall feeling very faint when he was done. Five hours later when it ended, he couldn’t stand up without several of us helping him. He sobbed uncontrollably from the pain and his legs wouldn’t respond as he tried to stand on his own. Rubbing his legs gingerly and gently squeezing the newly tattooed areas, we were able to restore circulation and caused the excessive dye to exude out of the freshly wounded areas.

Being next, I was so very scared then and tried to slow my breathing as I was hyper-ventilating. When the Tufuga Tà Tatau called my name to lie on the mat, I thought I would faint. I believe if it weren’t for the presence of my five-year-old son, my frame of mind may not have allowed me to experience what followed. I was at the crossroads.

We were told before and reminded during the tattooing we could stop the process as a group or as individuals at any time and nothing will be said about it again by the Tufuga. Though we were half completed, this sitting was the most excruciating and feared. Pulling me in one direction was my sense of individual self-preservation. Yes, I thought, I am hurting. Why should I concern myself with others? I must do what is best for me. Besides, its my body and right now it hurts like hell.

Simultaneously, I recalled another emotional sensation that emerged and welled up as if billowing from a submerged depth. I remember experiencing a sense of being pulled as if by a current away from the feelings of I, Me, and Myself. Images of my aiga, my father, my son, my loved ones, my ancestors and my deceased mother appeared to float in my consciousness, silent in their presence and eloquent in their silence. It seemed at the time as if everything that I cherished and loved grew bigger in my mind. I remember the images growing to a point that I suddenly experienced a warm feeling, as if someone had poured warm water over my head. I thought I heard or felt a snap or cracking of some kind. I think it may have happened when I achieved the realization that those images and what they represented were more important than “I,” more important than anything in the world. With that realization came the conviction that I would do anything for their protection and security. That surge of emotion was so strong, that I vividly remember my willingness to forfeit my life at that very moment rather than to dishonor or disgrace them. I became a different person. My determination became fierce and defiant. I recalled loudly proclaiming in my mind that I would not quit; I would finish the tatau even if it kills me. By the time I lay on my back for the Tufuga to place the ‘au and its serrated comb of needles dripping with dye onto my inner thigh, I was determined to continue and prepared to die if need be.

As the pain began its upward spiral from dull to white pain, the thought of quitting surfaced, but only momentarily. My fear somehow disappeared and, as odd as it may seem, I no longer feared death. I even recalled daring death to take me as I refused to give in. Something bigger than myself was at stake. I also recall sensing the presence of a bird, a large white bird with long, outstretched wings and feeling an incredible sensation of warmth flowing throughout my body.

On reflection, the tatau helped me to understand, that life is more than existence. It begins when one realizes that one must be focused on
cance of life is rooted not so much in individual achievement, as it is in the understanding that we are an intimate part of a greater purpose and that we must work towards it. That there is a difference between pursuing that which is important and doing that which is meaningful. That perhaps some important things may be meaningful, but anything that is meaningful is important.

What do you feel is the cultural importance of the Tatau ritual?

From my perspective there are many. There is a very functional cultural outcome of the process that I believe is connected to the strengthening of our traditional core values. I sense that the traditional groupings of Soa was by design based on the social organizational needs of the village community. I suspect that traditional Samoans grouped the Soas not only along friendship and rank status lines, but also in terms of working relationships within the dynamics of the village itself. The sons of chiefs and the sons of orators were often grouped together with the sons of master navigators, boat builders and master fishermen, etc., key functions essential to the survival and welfare of the village system. What held the system together and fueled its growth, health and overall effectiveness were the two behavioral dimensions that are the cornerstone to Samoan social organization: Alofa and Fa'alalo (Respect). An enduring purpose of the system was to assure continuity of Samoan social values and effective Samoan social organization.

A critical value I learned during the ordeal is that you cannot do it alone, that it takes many hands to achieve a goal; and that love, respect, trust and the understanding that there are things greater than self go hand in hand. By collectively sharing each other’s agony and pain for weeks, days and hours on-end, it appeared to me that the bonding that resulted became the foundation upon which Samoan social organization is laid. That foundation is based on caring for each other and sharing in the shouldering of life’s burdens and joys as a collective social entity. It is not enough that we care for each other, we must also be responsible for each other. Hence, our responsibility to teach and perpetuate our values and beliefs through language, symbols, ceremonies and rituals.

I realized after the ordeal had been completed, that through the suffering I endured, my social concept of “Self” was diminished considerably. My consciousness of “Other” as in aiga (extended family), fa’i’a (connections), fa’a Samoa (Samoan way) and my understanding of the two cornerstones of Samoan culture; Alofa and Fa’alalo, achieved a greater depth and integration than ever before. The once incessant and troubling questions of a young Samoan man seeking meaning in a modern world through inquiries of; Who am I? What am I? Why am I? and Where am I from? I this, I that, faded and disappeared forever from my
consciousness. From this experience, I became not only a better Samoan, but a better human being.

**MY PARADIGM**

**Have you developed a particular perspective about the Tatau?**

Yes I have. When I was a young man being tattooed, my perspectives of it were mainly physical and emotional. As I left Samoa and learned more of the outside world, I began to see the significance of the Tatau in deeper and more broader terms. I began think more deeply as to cause and effect. For example, the ability of cultures to self organize into a facsimile of the original. That you can destroy a Samoan village and exile its people to another part of the world only to find Samoa again when you visit it a year later. It's the core values of cultures that allows for it to self-organize. There is a correlation between strength of core values and capacity to reorganize. The Tatau is a method through which Samoans have learned to strengthen its cultural core values in a highly personalized and meaningful manner. Core values such as alofa, kinship ties, respect, subordination of self for the group, connectivity and relationships are the foundation values of Fa'a Samoa.

**What is your philosophy regarding the Tatau?**

Well, I have one as it relates to wisdom. I believe that there is a difference between cultural knowledge and cultural wisdom. Anyone can study, research and read up on and become quite adept at cultural knowledge of any place or culture on the globe. It doesn't mean you have the cultural wisdom to be able to apply that cultural knowledge within the relevant cultural context. People often confuse cultural knowledge for cultural wisdom. As cultures undergo transition, it is imperative that we know the difference, that the essence of culture is more connected to the wisdom of cultures than to the knowledge of cultures. It is no accident that the ancestors used techniques and bits of information accumulated over thousands of years of ocean experience and survival, but they also had the capacity to be fully attuned to their environment. Hawaiian traditional navigator Nainoa Thompson

Wisdom in the Polynesian tradition is defined as the ability to discern the connected rhythmic patterns of life and the ability to conform the individual self to that pattern. Wisdom for a person begins with the acknowledgement of connections and relationships inherent in life and all things as the primary reality of the cosmos. One of the most important Polynesian belief principles is the notion that there is a design and control operating in the universe and that a cosmic spirit is animating everything, everywhere. We could call this the vibratory rhythm of life itself. If everything is a vibrated substance, as quantum physicists suggest, there is an underlying rhythm to the universal pulse of change. This rhythm is the tone, or the dance of life. This belief which I adhere to as a Polynesian Samoan, is the basis of wisdom.

As cultures, our ability to conform to life's rhythm is determined by how fluid and flexible we are to move in the directions that life indicates and how audible the music is. For many, whose attention has been occupied with the external factors in their lives, it often seems as though the less audible music of the dance is very distant, if indeed it exists for them at all. Hence, as Pacific Islanders become more westernized, the focus becomes more materialistic and external in orientation. For others like traditional master navigators, boat builders, fishermen, healers, kupunas and tufuga tā Tatau of Polynesia, the music is loud and clear. Their discernment of specific rhythms emanating from sources embedded deep in traditional memories, of the history of the Polynesian race on the planet and its origins of convergence with all things, are continuously felt by those who know how to listen, hear, commune and connect with the cosmos.

The rhythm of the cosmic music is not just a matter of playing with words. There is what we might call the music of the sphere, cosmic music, a rhythm which guides everything. Of course, our ancestors used techniques and bits of information accumulated over thousands of years of ocean experience and survival, but they also had the capacity to be fully attuned to their environment. Hawaiian traditional navigator Nainoa Thompson
Hawaiian traditional navigator Nainoa Thompson understood the value of the sixth sense and how the traditional navigator relied on that sixth sense to "feel" the cosmos and "hear" the music.

It would seem that we should continue to revitalize and strengthen our sixth sense capacities rather than being informed of the existence of such "newly discovered capacities" by modern scientists. This sixth sense is an inborn capacity that has its basis in the spiritual. The ancient Polynesians navigated through overcast nights on the open ocean by attuning to the rhythms of the waves, winds and the voyaging canoe itself. Western explorers till fairly recent times considered Polynesian voyaging against the winds impossible.

Kenneth Brower in an article in the Pacific Wayfinder cites an amusing condescension by Western explorers at the turn of the century whose judgments, like many today, are based on what is measurable and observable with fixations on the external manifestations of reality. One early Portuguese navigator into the Pacific, Fernandez de Quirios, declared that to do so (Polynesian sailing against the wind) required instruments of navigation and vessels of burthen, two things of which these people are destitute. De Quirios had met the Oceanic compass and astrolabe without recognizing it. In Polynesia the instrument of navigation was the navigator himself.

In the Pacific the incapacity to hear the music may not only be fatal at sea but debilitating on shore. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we are affected by it. Clearly, disturbance and chaos results if the dancers and the musicians pay no attention to the music. Much like the misalignment of island values in western urban societies. The emotional disturbance and behavioral chaos is a consequence of island behaviors rooted in sharing and collectivism failing to secure a foothold within the social norm of individualism and values of materialism.

Unlike sailing against the natural wind which was possible through centuries of developmental learning, the winds of western change overwhelmed our senses and easily ripped the sails from the masts of our sailing vessels. The music was drowned by the sound of machines. The tumultuous grinding of the mechanistic world often makes the sound of the music less audible and eventually drowns it all together as one is caught from within and swept away by its current. It is no different with respect to the whole range of life experience one has whose foundation is organic attempting to survive and adapt to a society driven by industrial paradigms that are mechanistic in nature. There is a precise rhythm to the dance, a precise rhythm to the music. Can we hear it? And, if we hear it, are we willing to coordinate exactly with it (the dance of life)? Or do we have other things going on in our minds and hearts?

The dance of the Tatau is ancient in its origin and is a response to an even older rhythm of cosmic music. It beckons and upon completion with requisite knowledge and wisdom, it comforts. It is more meaningful than it is important. It provides significance, meaning, vitality and vision. It enhances the core values of aloha, respect for all things, compassion, inner strength and passion for the fa'a Samoa which is the whole that organizes the different parts. Tatau is the dance that connects. The Tufuga Ta Tatau is the musician who hears and orchestrates the dance with his instruments. The music is heard by the master Tufuga Ta Tatau whose craft was traditionally kept strictly within specific family genealogies over the centuries. He or she who seeks the dance must cultivate the ability to hear and sense the rhythms over the distracting din of western noise. The tatau ritual connects the dancers, musicians and the timeless music. The tatau connects one with life.

Editor’s note:
The title of this interview, "Auwe!" has nothing to do with Dr. Avegalio’s reflection of his tatau experience. Rather, it is reference to his vivid memories of hearing “Auwe” moaned by those undergoing the process.
Rasa Fournier

Sanskrit: An Anachronism?

India is a vast land made up of numerous cultural groups, each with their own language. There are fifteen primary languages, each with its own script, as well as one hundred and seventy minor languages and over five hundred dialects (Bossert, 1974). These languages originated from one common source: Sanskrit. Sanskrit is one of the world's most ancient and complex languages, but threatened by the unrelenting juggernaut of modernity the future of Sanskrit is tenuous.

At around 2000 B.C. Vedic civilization was thriving in India (Cardona, 1990). At the top of the social hierarchy were the brahmanas or priests (Southworth, 1978). They lived a rigid life dedicated to ritual and prayer, the tenets of which were passed on orally from guru to disciple in a process called parampara (Protopapas, 1998; Gerow, 1973). During a period of one thousand years their philosophy on creation and their discourses on universal laws were compiled into a series of texts known as the Vedas and the Upanishads (Bossert, 1974).

The style of script used became known as Devanagari and the language is known as Vedic Sanskrit (Basham, 1959). This was a language so esoteric and protected that it was enshrouded with a certain mysticism and imbued with unearthly power. To use the proper grammar and pronunciation, and to utter the syllables in the correct order was to have even the gods at your command (Southworth, 1978; Brown, 1959). In certain cases an unsuccessful ritual meant death for the priest.

Vedic Sanskrit was never spoken by the masses but it acted as the common language for religious scholars throughout India (Southworth, 1978). In this way, despite the broad diversity of languages and cultures stretching across India, the brahmanas and their common knowledge of Sanskrit created a cohesive network that bound the entire country together (Bossert, 1974; Basham, 1959).

In time, as with all languages, aspects of Sanskrit grammar changed forming a new kind of Sanskrit called Classical Sanskrit (Bhargava, 1971). This was a language of art, producing literature, epics, poetry and drama. Still, only the elite had command of the language. Two world famous epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were written in these first centuries B.C. (Basham, 1959). The heart of the Mahabharata, known as the Bhagavad-gita or Song of God is a philosophical discussion on the purpose of life and acts as a Bible for the Hindus (Prabhupada, 1983).

In the fourth century B.C. a grammarian, Panini, wrote a thorough linguistic analysis on Sanskrit (Riencourt, 1986). This helped preserve the language that at several times in history was on the brink of extinction. In the sixth century B.C., during Buddha's time, Sanskrit had become a dead language. Buddha wanted his teachings spread in the language of the masses, which Sanskrit was certainly not. Vernacular forms of Sanskrit called Prakrits, which led to modern languages of India such as Hindi, became popular. Again Sanskrit suffered a sharp blow in the thirteenth century A.D. when Muslims converged on India and did away with priests and Sanskrit. A new hybrid descending from Sanskrit and Persian arose. This new language, known as Urdu gained popularity and but for Paninis Sanskrit grammar texts, the language would have vanished.

When the British arrived in India, they discovered the Vedic scriptures as well as Paninis linguistic documents (Riencourt, 1986). Europe was enthralled by the discovery. Linguists such as the prodigious scholar Sir William Jones, who had command of more than a dozen languages, noticed the resemblance between Sanskrit and other European languages (Basham, 1959; Chandra, 1980). According to Howard Resnick, a Sanskrit scholar and professor of Indo-European studies at UCLA, a controversy exists as to whether European lan-
guages were derived from Sanskrit or whether the languages are cousins (personal communication, October 2, 2000). The very origins of Sanskrit are in question. Did the Aryans bring Sanskrit to India when they arrived around 1500 B.C. or was Sanskrit already indigenous to north western India in the Kashmir area? The debate continues even today.

British curiosity over Indian culture instigated the translation of Sanskrit texts and helped them gain popularity both in the west and as a literary revival in India (Riencourt, 1986; Bossert, 1974). The British promoted Sanskrit study but ironically the higher class Indians saw this move as counter productive in progressing toward modernity, and they resisted exploring their traditional roots.

What quality of Sanskrit made it so compelling to Westerners? Why would anyone maintain an interest in Sanskrit in this day and age? For one, language and culture go hand in hand. Secondly, the grammar is rich and the philology intriguing to linguists. To study Sanskrit is to study an ancient system of life, one of the only cultures that has endured continuously into modern times (Basham, 1959). Although Vedic culture has passed its zenith, devout followers still congregate from all over India at places of pilgrimage, and the brahmanas though from north, south, east and west, can still communicate with each other via the language of the scriptures.

As aforementioned, linguists are intrigued by the beauty of Sanskrit. The language consists of twenty-five consonants, thirteen vowels, four semi-vowels, and several other signs (Cardona, 1990). The language is a cornucopia of derivational and inflectional affixes, including infixes, and they join together in numerous complex ways. A simple example involves the word madhumat, “sweet” (p. 460):

madhumat + tara quite sweet
madhumat + tama exceedingly sweet

As far as syntax is concerned, Sanskrit is an Indo-European language with structures much like German (Riencourt, 1986). Some examples of syntax follow (Cardona, 1990 p.467):

devadattat katham karoti
"Devadatta is making a mat"
Devadatta [a mat] [is making]

In the passive the sentence would be:

devadattena katham kriyate
by Devadatta [a mat] [is being made]

Not only are the technical aspects and scientific study of Sanskrit engaging, but even to a layman the script has aesthetic merit and the sound is fascinating. One unusual example of a Sanskrit verse consists of only one consonant (Basham, 1959 p.423):

**dadado**
**dudda-dud-dadi**
**dadado duda-di-da-doh**
**du-dadam dadade dudde**
**dad-adada-dado ‘da-dah**

“The giver of gifts, the giver of grief to his foes, the bestower of purity, whose arm destroys the givers of grief, the destroyer of demons, bestower of bounty on generous and miser alike, raised his weapon against the foe.”

The above example is one of many literary techniques that could never apply to the English language. Another example is in the area of compound nouns. In English a word might be composed of up to three, while in Sanskrit chains of twenty to thirty are not uncommon, as in this example:


This is one single word which refers to the emperor as “binding together the whole world by putting forth his strength and by [accepting] acts of service [from other kings], such as paying personal homage, the presentation of gifts of maidens, and soliciting his charter, sealed with the Garuda-seal, to confirm them in possession of their territories.” Sometimes in this type of form, a single sentence will stretch on for three typed pages.

The very thought processes and concepts behind the Sanskrit language make translating Sanskrit to produce its precise meaning in English not possible (Basham, 1959). Professor Resnick provided me with one small example of this. The Sanskrit counterpart of the English word “love” consists of more than twelve different words to express the sentiment. Because Sanskrit primarily deals with spiritual concepts, the terms of love have a divine connotation unlike our material understanding of the concept of love. Some examples of love:

**Sakhya-rasa** is love based on friendship.
**Santa-rasa** is neutral love.
**Dasya-rasa** is love in servitude.
**Vatsalya-rasa** is parental love.
Srnamara-rasa is conjugal love.

Madhurya-rasa is the deepest conjugal love.

There are yet more words to express further forms of love such as fraternal love, and love in the mood of happiness, compassion, anger, chivalry, dread, astonishment, lamentation, enthusiasm, and even ghastliness. This minute example of the possibilities of the single word ‘love’ is but the tiniest drop of the depth and complexity of Sanskrit.

There are numerous unique characteristics of Sanskrit, but most are covered by terminology that only an experienced linguist can decipher. As far as the alphabet, Vedic Sanskrit had a tonal quality expressed in accented syllables (Basham, 1959). This quality was not retained by Classical Sanskrit. The Devanagari consists of sets of consonants pronounced using phonology with which the speaker of English is not familiar. The characters:

- \text{ta th a da dha na}
- \text{ta th a da dha na}

are called cerebrals and are pronounced with the tip of the tongue at the roof of the mouth while:

- \text{ta th a da dha na}
- \text{ka and kha or ga and gha}

are dentals and are pronounced with the tongue against the teeth (Basham, 1959 p.387; Thakura, 1991 p.129). For an English-speaking person, these differences in sound are too subtle to discern (Basham, 1959). Also difficult for a foreigner to Sanskrit is the ability to distinguish between the consonant sound and its aspirated neighbor, e.g.

- \text{ka and kha or ga and gha}


These different examples provide a small taste of the study of Sanskrit. Thanks to Panini’s texts on Sanskrit grammar, Sanskrit is still available to us today and is avidly researched by people who are drawn to its linguistic appeal. In fact, Europe’s discovery of Panini’s book on Sanskrit grammar initiated the modern day science of linguistics (Riencourt, 1986; Basham, 1959). Even now in the west, universities offer Sanskrit as part of the curriculum. In India brahmans still congregate at holy sites for Vedic discourse, but this tradition looks bleak for future generations. The tide of modernization bulldozes everything in its path; thus traditional Sanskrit verges on obsolete.

Even in Varanasi, India’s cultural and academic hub, Sanskrit is being relegated to the sidelines while the emphasis is on more lucrative fields of study such as English (Protopapas, 1998). Government schools teach Sanskrit, but at best, students have only apathetic interest. To remove Sanskrit study from its twenty-four hour a day environment of minutiae and ritual that complements it, is to uproot the tradition. When students can wear Western style clothes and get a modern education, of what use to them is Sanskrit?

Some Hindu gurus remain optimistic nevertheless. Despite the blaring, sensuous cinema music wafting across the courtyard, traditional Sanskrit teachers instruct the young brahmacaris, students in gurukula (disciplined schooling). The boys live in the simple facility of the guru’s house and spend their days dedicated to Sanskrit study and the strict regiment which such study necessitates.

Sanskrit is integral to brahmanical culture, but with the rise in secular education in India, interest in Sanskrit is waning. Language and culture are inseparable, a phenomenon which is being recognized here in Hawai‘i regarding the Hawaiian language. Clayton Hee, a member of OHA (Office of Hawaiian Affairs), and concerned with the endurance of Hawaiian culture, proclaims, “I firmly believe that our language is our survival” (TenBruggencate, 2000). Similarly the Sanskrit language is the key to the survival of a great and ancient culture.

sarvasya caham hrdi sannivisto
mattah smtir jnanam apohanam ca
vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedanta-krd veda vid eva caham

“I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedanta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.”

–Bhagavad-gita (15.15)
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The first deity that mankind identified was the Earth Goddess. Paleolithic inscriptions reveal the earliest drawings and conceptions of her. Goddess worship has evolved over time, with the goddess assuming different names and faces, her characteristics reflecting the beliefs of her followers. To some she is the creator, the mother, the huntress; to others she is the healer, the protector, the nurturer. Basic aspects of the goddess are consistent throughout time and culture, such as associations with fertility and death. In most cases Goddess worship is a balance of both male and female deities. The Tantric religion worships only female deities, believing that she embodies both the male and female principles and is the supreme Divinity.

Tantra is by definition a form of Hindu and Buddhist religious practice. The central theme in Tantra is the realization of the macrocosm within the microcosm, represented in the human body (Kinsley, 51). The goal is to reach an awakened state of higher consciousness by incorporating all the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Tantrikas, those who practice Tantra, use a meditation technique in which they attempt to visualize each part of themselves in order to liberate it.

The female energy that is attempting to be liberated is represented by a coiled serpent (kundalini sakti) sleeping at the base of the spine in one of seven chakras, or centers. Through meditation and mental orientation, the serpent is awakened and travels up the spine through the other chakras. The final chakra is at the top of the head, the site of blissful awakening. As each chakra is opened, the sadhaka (aspirant) experiences different states of consciousness. All the thoughts in one’s mind can be utilized as a stepping stone to reach spiritual enlightenment, enabling one to transcend all earthly concepts and to see everything in divine function. High spiritual enlightenment is only reached when one learns how to harness every force in life (Blofield, 75).

The goddesses represent aspects of the cosmos that relate to human aspects, mental, physical, or both. The sadhaka works to identify a specific deity, and locate and awaken it within himself. The hope is that once the goddess has been awakened within, the sadhaka will then be able to awaken the quality that that goddess represents. Worship of the goddess, or pujā, occurs within the person once he or she has awakened her. Some of the qualities said to be discovered after invoking the goddess are wisdom, increased senses and perceptions, and magical powers (Kinsley, 51).

There are many different goddesses associated with Tantra, and almost all of them overlap with Hinduism. There is a group of goddesses, referred to as the Ten Mahavidyas, who are primarily associated with Tantric worship, and are explained by Tantric principles. Mahavidya means “great knowledge,” and vidya specifically refers to female deities.

The most important of these goddesses is Kali, the Black Goddess. Seen in Hinduism as the Great Mother, her name means “time.” She is the annihilator of all and anything that is not worthy of keeping. She is depicted with black or blue skin, a hideous face smeared with blood, and a necklace of dripping skulls around her neck. She has four arms, holding in one a weapon, in another a skull dripping blood. The other two are raised to bless her worshippers. Her tongue protrudes from her mouth and she dances naked upon the body of her husband, Shiva (Ions, 92). She prefers offerings of flesh and blood. Despite her dark depiction, Kali is revered as the primordial mother goddess and protectress. ‘She is the most widely worshipped goddess in India and her role in Tantrism is very important. She represents death, destruction, fear,
and independence. She is forerunner of the Mahavid because she symbolizes the fully awakened consciousness. That is, to acknowledge all aspects of life and view them as part of Divinity is the supreme goal of Tantric practice. Kali represents man’s greatest fear – death – and to confront her without fear is to make her a vehicle of salvation (Kinsley, 78-9).

Kali also conveys a strong sense of sexuality. Her body is described as young and firm and having a beautiful face. Her tongue suggests sexual gratification or desire. She represents independence from everything: life, society, boundaries. The depiction of her standing or dancing on top of her husband Shiva demonstrates freedom from men. She is the most widely worshipped and sought after because of her representation of the ultimate reality (80-84).

Two other goddesses who closely resemble Kali are Tara and Chinnamasta. Tara is adored for her protection from evil and the ability to overcome obstacles. Her name is derived from the verb tara, which means “to cross,” symbolic of her ability to carry worshippers across the ocean of existence. She is depicted in many different forms, and her Tantric form is very similar to that of Kali. She is youthful, short statured and wears a garland of skulls. Her skin is blue or black and she has four arms and three faces, each with a set of eyes. In her right hand she holds a sword and knife, and in her left hand, a skull and lotus (Bhattacharyya, 351). She prefers to be given sacrificial blood from her worshippers, drawn from specific areas of the body corresponding to certain chakras. Her significance is similar to Kali’s, for she represents the forbidden.

Chinnamasta, another sappy goddess, is described as the self-decapitated goddess. She stands naked with her head in one of her hands, happily drinking her own blood, while Kama and Rati fornicate beneath her feet. Chinnamasta does not have a large following, and it is believed that she was copied from early figures. She represents sexual activity, life, and nourishment. Her decapitated head and flowing blood is said to depict her desire to give blood to her followers rather than receive it. Her image is believed to display the reality of sex, death, creation, and destruction in life. Her harmonious depiction of life feeding off of death gives worshippers the revelation that everything is interconnected and that there is a defined cycle in life (Kinsley, 144-147).

Dhumavati, the Widow Goddess, is “ugly, unsteady, and angry…” her eyes are fearsome, and her hands tremble” (76). She wears rags from the cremation grounds and her skin is black. She is very old and she does not stop frowning. Aside from the Mahavidyas, Dhumavati is hardly known. She resembles many early Vedic goddesses, but she has no current cult following outside of Tantric worshippers. Her descriptions are overexaggerated in order to portray the difficult and painful time she represents in life. Taken in the context of Hindu society, she is a symbol of all that is unfortunate and unlucky. The crow that sits atop her horseless chariot is a symbol of death. Very few actually worship her, especially married people, as she is considered bad luck. Those who worship her report experiencing the desire to be alone, which is one indication that worship is appropriate for those who seek to denounce the world (176-94). It seems unclear why she is included in the Mahavidyas since worshippers tend to avoid her.

Another commonly worshipped Mahavidya is Kamala, the Lotus Goddess. Unlike many of her sister goddesses, Kamala is depicted with a beautiful golden complexion, a silken dress, and outstretched hands holding lotus flowers. Her breasts are accentuated and she has three lotuslike eyes. She is one with the goddess Laksmi. Like Kali, she is extremely popular in India and has the oldest following aside from Tantra of all the Mahavidyas. Her position at the end of the list indicates her inferiority. She is the opposite of Kali; she represents everything desirable and favorable. To her followers she gives wealth and costly ornaments, as well as symbolizes fertility and development. The lotus represents purity, power, and authority, and her association with it suggests that she is a symbol of perfection that rises above the material world while still being connected to it. Despite her connection with Vishnu in Hinduism, in the Tantric tradition she is entirely independent from male attachments (223-232).

There has been much fascination as of late in the Western world regarding Tantra and its erotic essence. Tantra has been mistaken as “female-centered sex-worship” where men do not possess sexual energy apart from union with a woman. The goal in this practice is to control orgasm in order to prolong sexual intercourse and represent Shiva, the God in perpetual union with a Goddess (Tantrism). While sexuality and physical function are aspects of attaining full enlightenment, the basis of Tantra is to evoke the Goddess within and learn from her, not just to increase sexual function. Unfortunately, the
Western world is still ready to understand and integrate the mental concepts behind Tantric goddess worship.

An essential aspect of goddess worship is not in congregational methods, but in an individual’s connection to the deity. Tantra is a method of worship aimed at integrating the physical and spiritual realms in order to arouse the divine power (shakti) that lies dormant within us all.

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It was late one Sunday afternoon that I ran into the boy. As always, I was returning from the lake near my house, a routine that my father had instilled in me in early childhood. He said that it would help me clear my mind if I went and meditated down near the lake everyday. I did not realize the truths of his words for sometime, but I guess that is true for all things. My mother agreed with him for she thought that my closeness to nature was a positive thing. On this particular day I noticed a young boy sitting on the side of the path near one of my favorite willow trees. The sun cast a beautiful haze around the lad, and I was suddenly reminded of my youth so very long ago. His arms were folded across his head and I could hear his muffled sobs through the cover of his limbs. 

“What is the matter, young boy?” I asked him.

Startled, the boy looked up to see my smiling face. “My parents are driving me crazy!” he said. “One of them is a Confucian and the other is a Taoist and they can never seem to agree on anything, much less how to raise me. I feel like I am never going to turn out right and there is nothing that I can do.”

I looked down at the poor boy and smiled. “The way of the universe is always a strange one. I knew that I had to stop and talk to you and now I know why. For many people, the thought of such a pair together in marriage seems like lunacy. But you are looking at the proof that it can work out. You see my mother was a Taoist master and my father was a Confucian master. Come, sit and listen to my story of how my parents worked everything out. Maybe it will help your parents to work out their problems.

My father, being a Confucian philosopher, had many great ideas for me. Because of his beliefs, he knew that schooling was very important and that wisdom would come through the study and mastery of my scholastic subjects. He knew life would be different here in America than in China, but he felt confident that my raising would go as to plan. He wanted to instill all the beautiful ideas of Li and the way life should be lived. He wanted to teach me all the ancient traditions that had kept him and his ancestors so wise and prosperous. In accord with the idea of Hsiao, he had made his parents very proud by honoring them and continuing their wishes, and he wanted me to do the same. Throughout his upbringing, he was introduced to the idea of Jen, or human heartedness. He believed our values, virtues, and goodness came from inside each and every one of us and that it manifested itself through Jen and the practice of Li. He had accomplished Yi or righteousness in everything he did. By the time he was old, he was so in tune with Li that Jen was produced without having to think about what to do. He had reached what so many had worked so hard for in this life: enlightenment or being one with the Tao. He did all these things and he wanted nothing more than to pass this knowledge on to me, his son.

My mother was a beautiful and extremely wise woman as well as a master of the Tao. Of course, she held a different view about how I should be raised. She also knew that moving to America would cause much tension in the way she wanted to raise me, but in different ways. She had studied back in China the Tao Te Ching, or the Treatise on the Way and its power. She had mastered the very essence of what the Tao was. She saw the world in a much different way than the way my father saw it. At the very root of the disagreement, she believed that there was no such thing as Jen or human heartedness. She did not believe that there was a distinct goodness that lay within each of us. She did not buy into the notion that each of us had to practice a certain way of life to bring out this Jen. Instead, she believed in nature. She believed that the way someone should lead one’s life should be whatever nature dictates. She believed that there was a certain way, or Tao, of the universe that everything came from and that every person on
Earth should try to listen to. She believed in sim­
plicity rather than structure. One would not have to
study and master scholastic fields to become wise.
To live a simple and harmonious life is the ideal
way to live. To rid one of desires and wants was the
only way to get rid of competition and conflict. She
believed there did not need to be a moral code for
people to follow because the true way of life came
straight from nature. She believed that moral codes
and visions of what is right and wrong were con­
trived by human beings, and that this is where the
fault lies with Western beliefs. She believed that
inaction, or Wu Wei is the true way to reach hap­
piness and to be one with the Tao. Only do what is
natural to you, nothing else. She saw not the lines
nor the objects nor the people. Rather, she looked at
the spaces in between these things as what is truly
important in this universe. She practiced Te, or the
function of Tao. Later in life she reached enlighten­
ment, something she wanted to pass on to her
lovely son.

The boy looked up at me with wide, wondering
eyes. I had touched something inside of him that
was all too familiar. "Please sir, tell me what they
did when they raised you, Tell me so that my
parents can do the same."

I smiled at the boy for his eagerness to learn. I
began my story once again. "When my parents met,
they knew that they were meant for each other.
They saw in each other great wisdom and under­
standing for the world around them. They were
immediately married soon after my mother was
pregnant with me. They realized that I would be
their biggest problem, specifically in the area of
raising me. But because they were both masters of
their philosophies, they came up with this solution.
To begin, even though they came from completely
different theologies, they realized that their goal in
this venture was the same: to raise their child to be a
righteous, well rounded being who eventually
would be in touch with the people and universe
around them. They realized that even though they
disagreed about ways to get there, that the ultimate
destination was the same place. They saw that in
the end they both ended up as wonderful human
beings that embraced all that was right in the world,
one following the way of Li and producing Jen, the
other practicing the Te of Tao, but both acting
exactly the same. A wonderful feeling arose in both
of them along with the comfort that the universe
has more than one way to reach enlightenment.
They saw that there was nothing that should go
wrong as long as they taught the child, me, what­
ever came naturally to them. For my father, the
natural way would be the same as the Li that he
cherished so much. He had reached a point that the
Li that my father knew totally coincided with
the natural, simplistic way that my mother felt life
should be lived.

Over school, they agreed that some schooling
would be necessary. My father, because it was the
way of the Li, and my mother, because it seemed
that it was the natural thing to do, or that it must be
in tune with the Tao for her husband to turn out the
way he did. Nevertheless, my mother would
remind me always that not everything I learned in
school would be totally right, and to always look in
between things to see the true importance. In the
interests of rituals at home, I would practice some
of what my father held to be true, but would listen
to my mother to why this is important and what
simple reasons lay behind them. She explained that
the Li was just the best natural action to take, given
their personal situation.

The boy was smiling now, and I could see that
my words were making him feel better. The sun was
starting to set and I could hear his parents calling
him from across the lake. I said to him, "Finally,
they gave me this lake as a kind of token of their
agreement. In this lake I found the ritual that my
father installed in me, the ritual of meditation on its
shores. In the same lake I found the simplicity of
nature that my mother gave to me, and all at once I
was at peace.
What is Zen?

What we call Zen is not truly Zen. Zen is a philosophy, a religion, a psychology, and a way of life but is not truly Zen. Zen is complex and contradictory but remarkably simple. Zen is empty and void but remarkably delightful. What is Zen? Zen is. Words are inadequate in revealing the meaning of Zen. Yet words are among our best tools for communication. By careful consideration of ideas preceding the rise of Zen Buddhism we can perhaps become more receptive to understanding Zen.

We begin the search for the meaning of Zen by examining the philosophical environment which gave rise to Zen: Indian and Chinese philosophies. In India, Buddhism arose out of a Hindu environment and later, one form called Mahayana evolved. Taoism, a philosophy that also contributed much to Zen, was developed in China. It was in China where imported Mahayana Buddhist ideas fused with existing Taoist ideas to form what was later called Zen. Concepts that are typically attributed to Mahayana Buddhism and Taoism are integral parts of Zen thought. An understanding of these ideas can help scatter the fog that surrounds the understanding of Zen.

The Tao of Taoism is translated as the "Way" and can be somewhat described as the ultimate nature of reality. Tao is the "beginning of Heaven and Earth" and the "gate to all mystery" (Lao Tzu 1). Yet it is indefinable. Lao Tzu, the great Taoist sage, says of the Tao:

Something mysteriously formed,
Born before heaven and earth.
In the silence and the void,
Standing alone and unchanging,
Ever present and in motion.
Perhaps it is the mother of ten thousand things.
I do not know its name.
Call it Tao.
For lack of a better word, I call it great.

(Lao Tzu 25)

We can only describe it by pointing out what it is not, for Tao is beyond human conceptualization. Taoism has a saying that those who know do not speak and those who speak do not know. This is not stubborn resolve to keep secrets but acknowledgment of the indescribable nature of the Tao. By trying to grasp the Tao and restrain it with abstractions and concepts we misrepresent its true nature. Words will always fail to capture the Tao. This mysterious Tao, is everywhere and nowhere, basic and great.

The virtue and power that comes from the Tao is Te. This virtue is natural and always appropriate for it is the Tao itself. "Te is the unthinkable ingenuity and creative power of man’s spontaneous and natural-functioning” (Watts 27). The always appropriate and most efficient Te is the natural result of accordance with Tao.

Taoist sages point out that Te can be revealed in mankind through wu-wei. Wu-wei is literally "no-effort." This type of effortless-effort is likened to the way life evolves. Without any effort our bodies grow, our eyes see, and hands feel. Marvelous things happen in the most appropriate way without any struggle. Wu-wei and the virtuous Te that follows it cannot be intended. It is simply letting things happen without attachment or judgment. If we try to grasp it, it falls beyond our grasp. The moment our effortlessness becomes intended, it is no longer effortlessness. The Te of wu-wei seems similar to what many athletes describe as being "in the zone." Here, without conscious effort things happen by themselves with an appropriate result. Wu-wei is not a dull stupidity or fatalism, but the completely natural state of human consciousness. Understanding the concepts of Tao, te, and wu-wei point us in the direction of Zen’s meaning.

Zen Buddhism is a form of Buddhism. It would be silly not to examine Buddhism in the journey to uncover Zen’s meaning. Buddhism is first of all a
way for finding liberation from anxiety and frustration. The basic concepts of anitya (impermanence) and anatman (no-self) are useful in our search for an understanding of Zen.

Impermanence suggests not that the world is truly impermanent but that reality is beyond categorization. It cannot be grasped and contained by ideas. Mahayana Buddhism commonly refers to the nature of reality as "empty." But it is important to understand that this is not at all a nihilistic view. Impermanence, emptiness, and void are used to describe the nature of reality. Yet it is not emptiness in the sense of nothingness. It is an emptiness that denies the ultimate existence of ideas and concepts. Impermanence suggests that reality is beyond any kind of knowledge. It is futile to try to contain reality by creating static ideas about it because it is not static. It is not even "not static," for that, too, is a concept. Impermanence points out the inherent emptiness of ideas and things.

The notion of "no-self" is similar in its approach. No-self is not a denial of consciousness but a denial of the existence of a separate, objectified self that can be experienced. For us to even point out the self would require something beyond the self saying "Over there is the self." But who is it that points to the self? Yet another self? This would regress infinitely and throws us back into that cycle of frustration and anxiety (karma) that is caused by trying to know what is unknowable. The self cannot be self-aware without detaching itself from what it claims to be. The entangling trap of this paradox is what Buddhism avoids by saying that no self exists.

Mahayana Buddhism gives us a most simple answer to the problem of the seeming paradox of existence and impermanence. It presents us with tathata, which is translated as suchness or thatness. "Thatness indicates the world just as it is, unscreened and undivided by the symbols and definitions of thought" (Watts 67). Thatness is just a nonsense word for what transcends words. We could just as easily use the word God, Tao, or Blah. It is the "non-verbal concrete world" that contains "no classes and no symbols which signify or mean anything other than themselves" (67). In this non-verbal world, the words, Taoism, Buddhism, and Zen misrepresent themselves. For they are not concrete existence, only ideas and concepts in our heads.

There seems to be nothing but contradiction in the search for Zen's meaning. Any realization of truth seems impossible. Yet Zen has a unique way of pointing at the thatness of reality. Zen points directly at life and shouts "!!!" Equally appropriately, Zen points directly at life and tears fall.

There are two major schools of Zen in Japan today. Each of these major schools emphasizes a particular technique for pointing the thatness of Zen. The Soto school suggests meditation as the most appropriate means to stimulating the revelation of realization. The Rinzai school, however, suggests study of a koan as the most appropriate means. A koan is a story, anecdote, or question that is meant to serve as an obstacle for a person's thought process. It is believed that by impeding a person's thought process, the koan will allow that person to discard that very process that is the true impediment. A so-called beginner level koan is one that presents an impossible, nonsense situation. The first koan of Hui-kai's Wu-MenKan is that of a student asking Joshu (Chao-chou) if a dog has a Buddha-nature or not. Joshu's response is "mu." Mu is a Chinese character for negative. The student would naturally be baffled by this "mu." What compounds the student's doubt would be the teacher's constant rejection of any of the student's attempts to show proof of this "mu," of this nothing. Soon the student is filled with doubt and feels completely stupid. Everything around him seems to be complete nonsense like this idiotic "mu." What likely happens next after some time is the spontaneous shattering of the stupidity of this "mu." The koan really has no meaning. All concepts and constructs too are not reality. What remains is "thatness," just an unconscious awareness of reality.

Other koan reinforce this "is" of Zen. Each koan might give the student a new perspective on the basic truth of Zen. Ideally the student would become very much in accordance with life. There is a famous Zen saying:

Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains, and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains, and waters are not waters. But now I have got its very substance I am at rest. For it's just that I see mountains once again as mountains and waters once again as waters.

When we begin we are attached to ideas and labels, such as an "experience" that belongs to a "self." Mountains become as a definition in a dictionary. We work and work to pin everything down with labels. We are confused and frustrated, yet we don't know why. It's because of the conventional mind's tendency to desperately cling on to a
notion of world and self that is unnatural, that we are confused and frustrated. It becomes apparent that the value of a thing only exists in relation to another. Trying to improve our lives by constantly grasping only what is "good" is as silly as a dog chasing its tail. Or like trying to eliminate left by constantly turning right. Soon we see the emptiness of the mind's constructions called "mountains" and "waters." We realize that no-self and impermanence are quite appropriate. Any kind of concept is meaningless. This is where we see mountains as not mountains and waters as not waters.

After a fuller realization, we may realize what some call Tao and its accompanying Te, or "thatness," is only life as it is. It is surprisingly ordinary and mundane. In fact, it is nothing special at all. Yet it is always somehow full of life, always appropriate, always perfect in its own ordinariness. Here, mountains are simply mountains and waters are simply waters. What else could they possibly be? From this realization, the frustration of trying to understand reality through fundamentally inadequate means falls away. An individual with this penetrating awareness of reality will live a most natural and effortless life. For the sage, reality will unfold as it will, completely complete in each moment.

Zen is careful to point out that cultivation in the sense of actively working towards a goal will not lead to realization. There is actually no understandable goal to be reached and no concept of enlightenment to be attained. This may seem a hopeless endeavor, to seek the unknowable. If any conceptual understanding of Zen is not true Zen, then why struggle at reaching this impossible goal? One possibility is that it is most important to fully understand what it is that we need to discard before we realize that it must be discarded. Perhaps it may be that with a full understanding of the principles of Zen we are more attuned to a realization. However, it is most likely that to strive for any goal, even an impossible one, is just spinning in a circle. There cannot be a goal to reach. As soon as we think that it is a goal, then it is lost. Yet as soon as we think of it as not a goal, as the non-existence of a goal, then we are just spinning in the opposite direction. The point of koan study and Zen practice is to realize no realization. It truly is the hardest easy thing a person will ever endeavor to do.

All the conceptual knowledge we may possess, all the books we may read, all the discourses on Zen we may write do not amount to Zen. The meaning of Zen need not be revealed, for it was here all along. It is life and life is it. It is living life just as it is at this very moment. Life is really quite effortless and always right in front of us. The liberating realization that Zen alludes to is not new and unique to Zen. It is a simple truth, the meaning that Lao Tzu surely realized, the same that Gautama surely realized, and what many men throughout time have realized. A completely natural awareness that just is. Surprisingly, Zen is quite ordinary and mundane. It is really nothing special at all. It is really an impossibly possible impossibility.

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Agnes Chun

Li Ssu, the Grand Councilor to Qin Shi Huang Ti, First Emperor of China

In 897 B.C. the ruling house of Zhou in China granted a local chieftain and breeder of horses a small portion of land on which to breed horses. The chieftain, an ancestor of the Qin Dynasty, settled in the northwest portion of China, in the area now known as Shensi and Kansu. Deep in the Wei Valley, protected by natural defenses of mountains and rivers, the Qin prospered. Surrounded by nomadic groups living on their western borders, the Qin often intermarried with women from the tribe known as Rong (Guisso, 28). While the Qin benefited militarily from their strategic location, their obscure origins and ethnicity placed them in an inferior position in the realm of feudal China, and they were often referred to as "a barbarian state." (Eberhard, 62). In 677 B.C., armed with a superior cavalry, and a strong base, the Qin illegally changed their titles to "Duke," and slowly pushed their borders eastward, encroaching on and eventually confiscating large portions of Zhou land. The Qin were soon recognized for their military leadership and political cunning. In 350 B.C., the Qin rulers established their capital in Xianyang, and in 325 B.C., relinquished the title of "Duke" for the more impressive title of "King." With their new titles, vast wealth, and good location, the Qin state was born (Guisso, 28-9).

The once illustrious Zhou Dynasty, reduced and divided by feudalism, became just one of many states to struggle for superiority during the long and embittered "warring states" era. The Qin, although recognized as a minor power, were not considered a threat to the many larger kingdoms, and were continually overlooked because of their mixed bloodline. The battles of the warring period raged from 481-221 B.C. As weaker states were overcome by stronger ones, the number of competitors was reduced, and in 403 B.C., the six powerful states of Han, Wei, Zhou, Ch‘u, Ch‘i and Yen, along with a few others including the Qin, remained in competition for dominance (Bodde, 2).

Kingdoms, including the Qin, continuously sought advances in warfare and agricultural techniques. Philosophical schools of thought were supported, and educated philosophers were often recruited in the hopes of gaining valuable insight and superior knowledge. As the endless wars took their toll on the population of China, rulers, in an attempt at lessening the loss of so many lives, often employed diplomatic tactics in the fight for supremacy. Alliances were forged and broken, royal hostages and spies were planted in rival courts, and beautiful women, trained in the art of seduction, provided distraction in enemy states (Guisso, 30).

The warring period challenged the ideals of Confucianism, as traditional values were cast aside in favor of independence and self-reliance. While Confucian ideals of virtue, benevolence and righteousness worked in a peaceful time, they provided little comfort in the ensuing social and political upheaval. Contending states were inundated with roaming scholars, each anxious to teach his philosophy and serve his master dutifully. No longer the prize of a precious few, knowledge and the certain conquests it would bring were greedily sought after by all rulers. The philosophy known as Legalism was the last of the major schools of thought born in China during the warring period. "Fa-chia," or The Legalist School, clashed greatly with Confucianism. While Confucianism believed in the inherent noble qualities of men, legalism believed men were basically evil in nature. In contrast with Confucian thought of "government for the people," legalist thought espoused coercive laws, severe punishment, and the use of force to bind the masses to a tightly controlled state. Rejected by supporters of Confucianism, legalism advocated the concept of "positive" law. Requiring
complete obedience and service to the ruler, positive law placed little emphasis on education, making all men equal (Harrison, 75-6).

Three men stand out in the history of legalism: Shang Yang, Han Fei-Tzu, and Li Ssu. Shang Yang, a legalist and statesmen, recognized the Qin potential for dominance, and in 350 B.C. left his own state of Wei to join the Qin court, then under Duke Hsiao. It was under the tutelage of Shang Yang that the house of Qin gained great advances in wealth and power. Shang Yang promoted harsh reforms and new codes of law based on systems of reward and punishment. He advocated conscription in the Qin army. Its lands confiscated by the reformed government of Shang Yang, the nobility found itself reduced in both influence and wealth. Under this legalist government, peasants had the unprecedented opportunity to buy and manage farmland of their own. For the legalist government of Qin, population growth meant more bodies to fill the armies, and the state of Qin grew considerably in size and strength. Passionate about his beliefs, Shang Yang, ignoring traditional values, went so far as to punish Prince Ssu, the Duke’s heir to the throne, when the prince overstepped the law. When Duke Hsiao died in 338 B.C., Shang Yang was left in a vulnerable situation. Surrounded by enemies, including the new Qin King, Shang Yang was outlawed and eventually killed by the Qin army as he attempted to stage a rebellion against the Qin (Li, 77-8).

Han Fei-tzu and Li Ssu, both Confucian scholars and students of the master Confucian Hsun Tzu, attended their studies in the area known as Lanling. While Hsun Tzu taught Confucian doctrine, he also firmly believed that men were by nature selfish and evil. Even while absorbing their master’s teachings, Han Fei-tzu and Li Ssu opposed the Confucian merits placed on education and moral values. Legalism and its reliance on exacting laws made better sense to the young colleagues. In 248 B.C., Li Ssu took leave of his teacher. Having already decided that the state of Qin was superior, he set off in hopes of gaining entrance to the court of Qin. Han Fei-tzu would return to his home state of Han (Chan, 115, and Bodde, 57).

Li Ssu traveled to the Qin capital after completing his studies, and found favor with the then Grand Councilor Lu Pu-wei (Cotterell, 162).

Born in 259 B.C., amidst the heavy fighting for dominance, Prince Zheng of the Qin clan was destined to inherit both his ancestor’s hard-earned territory and the clan’s heady determination to realize supreme control of China. When Prince Zheng was just thirteen years old, his father King Zizhu died, leaving Lu Pu-wei, the Grand Councilor to the throne, to serve as regent for the prince. In 238 B.C., at the age of 22, the prince assumed the throne, and upon doing so, exiled his former regent Lu Pu-wei, amidst a scandalous rumor and attempted rebellion involving some members of the royal court (Guisso, 30-4).

This driver is one of the terracotta figures found in the tomb of the First Emperor in Xian.
From a postcard, courtesy of Grace Cheng.
Prior to Prince Zheng’s birth, his father, Prince Zizhu, had been held as a royal hostage in the state of Zhao, where he was befriended by a politically influential merchant, Lu Pu-wei. With the help of the Qin King’s favorite wife who was herself without a child, Lu Pu-wei convinced the King to make Prince Zizhu his heir apparent. Prince Zizhu, as heir apparent, married one of Lu Pu-wei’s concubines. Unbeknownst to the prince, the concubine was already pregnant with Lu Pu-wei’s child. When his wife gave birth to a baby boy, Zizhu, by now King, was none the wiser. At the age of twenty-two, Prince Zheng ascended the throne, and became aware of his dubious origins. Although Lu Pu-wei and several court advisors attempted to overthrow the young King, Zheng immediately retaliated by exiling not only his Grand Councilor, but his mother as well. Although King Zheng regretted his mother’s exile, and eventually allowed her to return to Qin, the betrayal of his chief advisor was not forgiven, and Lu Pu-wei committed suicide two years later (Bodde, 62).

The attempted rebellion by his most trusted advisor weighed heavily on the King’s pride, and, as Lu Pu-wei had been a non-native of Qin, King Zheng issued a decree in 237 B.C., calling for the expulsion of aliens from the state of Qin. Li Ssu, an outsider himself, found his new position as “Alien Minister” to the court threatened. Having previously impressed the King with his vision of a unified country, Li Ssu was allowed to verbally challenge the King’s decree of expulsion. In his argument, Li Ssu reminded the King of all the gains the Qin Dynasty had obtained through outside influences. As the Qin state eagerly sought to refine its cultural standing, many influences were brought in from areas outside of Qin. In ridding the state of all aliens, Li Ssu argued, the King would also be dismissing the cultural changes the Qin had enjoyed. After Li Ssu’s weighty argument, the King reconsidered and revoked his decree. In appreciation of his counsel, King Zheng honored Li Ssu with advancement to the post of “Minister of Justice.” With his future in the Qin court firmly established, Li Ssu asked for and was granted the honor of financing a network of spies to expedite China’s unification (Cotterell, 163).

In the pursuit of unification, King Zheng and his trusted advisor Li Ssu made strategic alliances with, or fought wars against, their neighbors. King Zheng, already educated in the reforms of Shang Yang, continued the practice of legalism in his campaign for dominance. Militarily weak in the North and East of Qin land, King Zheng ordered the settlement of great numbers of Qin peasants to areas previously inhabited by nomadic tribes, and the Qin expanded their area of influence much more (Guisso, 78 and Cotterell, 149).

The Qin army, hardened by many years of nomadic warfare, was strengthened even more by King Zheng’s belief in legalism. In contrast to feudal practice, the Qin King promoted men based on their fighting merit, not on their social position. Only warriors of excellent fighting ability and loyalty were allowed luxuries in legalist Qin, and this recognition helped make the Qin army quite superior, attracting soldiers from many areas. What areas of conquest could not be acquired through the use of force, were acquired instead by the use of bribery and manipulation.

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Terracotta warrior from the tomb of the First Emperor. From a postcard, courtesy of Grace Cheng.
The state of Qin grew in size and wealth, and from 237-221 B.C., launched a steady and organized fight for conquest of China. Having studied legalism, King Zheng recognized the brilliance of Han Fei-tzu, the foremost writer of legalist ideology. As the Qin State grew in size and strength, the King of Han, in an effort to prevent invasion by the Qin, sent Han Fei-tzu as emissary to Qin. As delighted as King Zheng was with meeting the author of many legalist writings, Li Ssu’s advice again had great influence on the King. Li Ssu reminded the King that Han Fei-tzu, a native of Han, would clearly strive to bring success to his master, not the Qin. King Zheng ordered the emissary imprisoned, and unbeknownst to the King, Li Ssu sent poison to Han Fei-tzu who, in disgrace, committed suicide. When the King, regretting his decision to imprison the scholar, sent for Han Fei-tzu, the emissary was already dead (Bodde, 63-4 and Guisso, 64-5).

In 256 B.C., the powerful state of Ch’u surrendered to the Qin, and the fate of China was sealed. In 221 B.C., the last of the remaining states, Ch’i, was conquered, and King Zheng’s dream of unification was completed. In honor of achieving the unification of China, King Zheng, encouraged by his advisors, determined his new title would be “First Qin Sovereign Emperor,” or “Qin Shi Huang Ti,” clearly recognizing the ruler’s unique position. According to the Emperor, his successors would be recognized as “Sovereign Emperors,” differentiating each emperor’s reign by number. Though it would not happen, Qin Shi Huang Ti predicted his dynasty would encompass ten thousand emperors (Eberard, 62, 66 amd Cotterell, 139).

The legalism that worked so well in the Qin Kingdom would soon be implemented in all areas of China and Li Ssu, now Grand Councilor, gained even more influence with the Emperor. As the Emperor also believed in Taoism, the philosophy that held nature and the cosmos as the ideal in life, he also strongly believed in the theory of the “five elements.” The theory of the five elements, according to Taoist beliefs, was the successive cyclic character that legitimized empires and their reign. Five elements of nature — fire, water, earth, wood, and metal — served as symbolic characters for successive reigning powers. The former Zhou Dynasty was characterized by the element of fire, and as water extinguishes fire, the new Qin Emperor chose water as his empire’s characteristic element. The Emperor decided that like the “cold and harsh” element of water, so too would his reign be unyielding and severe. The Emperor declared the color of black, the color symbolic of water, to be recognized as the official color of his empire, and all flags, court robes, and pennants were of this color. The Emperor also referred to his subjects as the “black-haired ones.” As the number six symbolized the element of water, the Emperor determined that the physical appearance of things such as the height of hats and length of cart axles would be standardized by the number six (Guisso, 36, 86).

In its desire to prevent rebellion, the government of Qin relocated the noble families of conquered regions to the capital of Qin in Xianyang. Stripped of their influence and wealth, the noble families, estimated at one hundred and twenty thousand, were left with little ability to muster any offensive measure against the Qin. According to legalist precept, the entire expanse of the Emperor’s land was divided into thirty-six units of command, or provinces, with these further divided into prefectures. The prefectures were subordinate to the provinces, and the provinces were directly accountable to the Emperor. Putting an effective end to feudalism, the Emperor did not bestow his loyal advisors or the royal family with gifts of land. Instead, three officials in each province, each to serve for a limited time, were responsible for successful administration of the Emperor’s law. The use of three officials served to prevent any individual gaining an unnecessary amount of power in the province, and helped to ensure the success of the legalist government. As many of the Emperor’s ministers were Confucian at heart and proponents of feudalism, they urged the Emperor to secure his vast territories with his sons. Arguing that only then would all of China be successfully controlled, the ministers urged the Emperor to reconsider his decisions. It was the equally firm argument of the Emperor’s Grand Councilor Li Ssu that prevailed in the end. Li Ssu reminded the Emperor of the fallen house of Zhou, and how the practice of feudalism and independent family holdings had led to the Zhou’s destruction. He went on to argue that if the Emperor divided his vast domain, his empire would suffer similar division (Eberhard, 64 and Bodde, 78-9).

With the country unified and controlled by officials of the government, the ability to communicate effectively became paramount to the success of the Qin Empire. Efficient communication certainly furthered the cause of unity in the land, and enhanced the Emperor’s plans for a cohesive society.
Li Ssu was very influential in making the writing of China uniform by repressing various characters and approving others (Bodde, 122 and Guisso, 90).

With the overwhelming influx of population in the capital, taxes, then paid in kind, became of great importance, and a system of uniform weights and measures was enforced. The standardized system helped to ensure a steady flow of taxes for the government. As the network of roads in the Emperor's land were traveled frequently and gutted by cart tracks, a mandated axle length was made uniform. A more daunting task was the teaching of the legalist principles of daily life to the masses. As people's lives were closely monitored and standardized, households were grouped into sets of five and held mutually responsible for each other. The punishment for disobedience was extremely severe, and varied according to the crime committed against the throne. Beheading was common, as was torture and mutilation. For other crimes, forced labor and the tattooing of exposed body parts served as punishment. Li Ssu exercised great influence in the administration of legalism. As author John A. Harrison claims, "It is difficult to ascribe the massive achievements of this reign to a man of such arbitrary appetites, and it is generally believed that the final unification of China, the abolition of feudalism, and the political, legal, and economic measures that sustained the Ch'in state were the work of that brilliant pupil of Hsun-tzu and fellow student of Han Fei, Li Ssu, grand counselor of the First Emperor" (Harrison, 84 and Guisso, 116).

In 213B.C, Li Ssu’s advice once again had great effect on Shi Huang Ti. Members of the Emperor’s court, resentful of the changes wrought by legalism, urged the Emperor to return to the time honored tradition of feudalism. Consulted, Li Ssu urged the Emperor not to weaken his resolve. The Grand Councilor furthered his argument by requesting that the Emperor punish the court members by destroying the literature that served to perpetuate the idea of feudalism and weaken the government. The Grand Councilor, with the approval of Shi Huang Ti, called for mass destruction of all literature deemed a threat to the Emperor’s policies. The "Shih," the book of Odes, and the "Shu," the book of History, as well as books of opposing philosophical thought were deemed dangerous sources of information, and destroyed. Literature on the subjects of agriculture, medicine, and divination were considered quality reading, and were excluded in the subsequent burning of books (Harrison, 87).

Li Ssu enjoyed his position of influence with the Emperor, and as legalist precepts dictated, Shi Huang Ti, as ruler, was urged to present himself as a symbol of heaven, leaving the matters of state in the hands of his advisors, namely Li Ssu. While he did not relinquish complete control, Shi Huang Ti allowed himself pursuits of pleasure outside the court (Guisso, 144).

For the many peasants and soldiers who fought in the war, China’s unification changed very little. When the war ended many soldiers mistakenly anticipated a quick discharge from the army. Instead they were put to work on another project. The Emperor, seeking to strengthen his empire, commanded his military leader, General Meng T’ien, to strengthen his northern borders by connecting existing walls of defense into one. The General, initially provided with more than three hundred thousand soldiers and forced laborers, was not only given the task of building a frontier wall; he was also responsible for building a network of roads with which to transport supplies and manpower, while simultaneously defending the borders against nomadic groups. With little rest and food the laborers worked through extreme climate conditions and hostile attacks from barbarous groups and untold numbers of people lost their lives building the Great Wall. General Meng T’ien completed the project in ten years, with the completed wall covering more than four thousand kilometers. As the Emperor conquered his rivals, he had replicas of their palaces built in Xianyang. Numbered at two hundred and seventy structures, the building of palaces required a great deal of manpower, which was provided by forced labor. The development of canals, while constructed to aid in agriculture and trade, made for yet another forced hardship on the general population, and resentment over the severity of the Emperor’s rule grew (146).

Three assassination attempts were made on the life of Qin Shi Huang Ti during his harsh reign as ruler of China. Although all three were unsuccessful and the perpetrators were put to death, the Emperor became increasingly concerned about his personal safety. The Emperor strongly believed in the Taoist philosophical ideas of immortality. Consulting with Taoist teachers, Shi Huang Ti was encouraged to attract the Taoist "true men," those who had withdrawn from society, and were said to hold the secret.
to immortality, the magic elixir of life. Increasingly afraid of death, Shi Huang Ti was told to avoid evil spirits by making his whereabouts unknown. In doing so, the Emperor would realize divinity himself, and attract the Taoist true men. An ardent believer, the Emperor ordered his palaces connected with covered walkways, and forbade members of his court to reveal his whereabouts, as he constantly moved from residence to residence in his pursuit of divine power. The Emperor also supervised the construction of his great tomb filling it with an entire army with which to protect him in his next life (Bodde, 116).

The promised true men did not appear, and in his growing angst, Shi Huang Ti became even more obsessed and tyrannical. The Taoist teachers, afraid of the Emperor’s wrath, escaped his palace, and the Emperor, in a fury, blamed scholars for their disappearance, believing them to have affected the Taoist teachers. As the inquisition of the scholars provided no satisfaction for the Emperor, he condemned four hundred and sixty to death, and had them buried alive in the capital, hoping to use their fate as an example to others. Fu-Su, Shi Huang Ti’s eldest son, angered by his father’s rash judgment, pleaded with the Emperor that by his actions he would create unrest in the empire. Furious with his son’s remonstration, Shi Huang Ti ordered Fu-Su to join General Meng T’ien on the construction site of the northern frontier (116-118).

Becoming increasingly erratic in thought and actions, the Emperor, consumed with finding an answer to his quest for immortality, left most of the administrative tasks to his trusted advisors, Li Ssu, and Chao-Kao, a eunuch in his harem. In 210 B.C., on one of his tours of the kingdom, the Emperor became very sick. As he had not found the magic elixir for immortality, he entrusted Chao-Kao, his eunuch and advisor, to notify Fu-Su, and instructed his oldest son to prepare for his burial. Instead, Chao-Kao, along with Li Ssu, withheld the notification from Fu-Su. Afraid of Fu-Su, and unwilling to part with the power they held, Li Ssu and Chao-Kao, dispatched a message “from the Emperor,” ordering both Fu-Su and General Meng T’ien to commit suicide. Both Fu-Su and General Meng T’ien, loyal to the end, committed suicide.

Together, Li Ssu and Chao-Kao decided to appoint Hu-hai, the easily manipulated second son of Shi Huang Ti, to the throne, and he was given the title of Erh-shih, Second Emperor. Chao-Kao, a longtime servant in the Emperor’s palace, held even more influence over the young and weak Erh-shih, and Li Ssu soon found his power and position of respect diminished. The many projects of the First Emperor caused the empire a sharp decline in agricultural resources, as manpower was demanded elsewhere. The Second Emperor, not considering the already unbearable load of the peasants, called for even stronger measures of punishment for the public.

In his concern for the preservation of the empire, Li Ssu asked Emperor Hu-hai to reconsider his actions. Chao-Kao, in a heightened position of dominance over the young Emperor,

The initial construction of the Great Wall, designed to keep nomadic groups out, took ten years. It covered more than 4,000 kilometers.
Photograph courtesy of Grace Cheng.
arranged for Li Ssu's arrest and execution on the matter of not fulfilling his duties to the First Emperor. Li Ssu, himself responsible for the deaths of many innocent men, was condemned to death by the new Grand Councilor, Chao-Kao. The mastermind who helped bring about the unification of China suffered prolonged agony before his death in 208 B.C. Referred to as the five tortures, Li Ssu suffered the slitting of his nose, the amputation of a hand, the amputation of a foot, castration, and finally public execution by being cut in two at the waist (Guisso, 37 and Bodde, 85).

In his "Shih-Chi," meaning "Records of the Historian," the noted Chinese historian Ssu-Ma Chien defined Li Ssu as "a representative of the particular class known as itinerant strategists." Ssu-Ma Chien claimed men like Li Ssu were a new breed of Chinese knights. In his quest for glory, Ssu-Ma Chien claimed, the knight looked out for his own best interests, taking no oath of loyalty or duty to anyone but himself (Watson, 21).

Emperor Erh-Shih's inept rule threw China into near anarchic conditions. Hatred of the harsh legalist rule grew and many rebel groups were formed. Chao-Kao, taking full advantage of the vulnerable Erh-Shih, staged a mock rebellion in the capital. Believing himself the target of an assassination attempt, the young Emperor Erh-Shih hastily committed suicide. The Grand Councilor surreptitiously assumed the throne, only to be opposed by members of the court. Forced to appoint an uncle of Emperor Erh-Shih to the throne, Chao-Kao was soon murdered by the new ruler in retaliation for his misdeeds. Within three days rebel groups invaded and destroyed the capital city of Xianyang, bringing a violent end to the Qin dynasty (Harrison, p.85).

In summary, the unusually severe practice of legalism in the Qin reign, while condemned by later writers of history, served to unify a country torn apart by the ravages of war. As brutal as the system of legalism was, China was made cohesive under one ruler, and one standardized system of taxes and writing. Ironically, Li Ssu and Qin Shi Huang Ti, the men who unified China, will forever be held responsible for destroying ancient Confucian text. However, despite all the negative aspects of the Qin reign, the name by which the world recognizes the country "China" is derived from the name of its First Emperor, Qin Shi Huang Ti.

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Ryan Koo

**Why the Killing Fields?**

In the immortal words of John Lennon, imagine a world without religion, without hunger, without a thing to kill or die for, with everyone living in peace. Sounds like a fairy tale? It probably is. The wars and killings that we hear about in our national news every day are nothing new. Throughout the history of the world, one can find many instances of mass killings, genocide, and acts of inhumane violence. From Ashoka’s mysterious killings in India to Mao’s cleansing in China, from Stalin’s brutal death sentences to Hitler’s infamous Holocaust, human-kind’s adherence to brutality is vividly clear in history textbooks and other historical writings. While doing research for this paper, I stumbled onto a different kind of genocide than the world was used to. It did not happen in Africa or in Nazi Germany. Instead, it took place in Cambodia during the Cold War era, in the aftermath of the American-Vietnam conflict. The events and atrocities inflicted upon the people of Cambodia did not become clear to the general public until many years after the violence had stopped. During the period 1975 to 1978, Cambodia suffered horrible crimes and racial destruction, much as had been the case with the Holocaust of World War II. The whole truth about Cambodia’s tragedy was not revealed until after the fact. This work presents some of the ideologies guiding the Khmer Rouge, the revolutionary faction that caused the violence and deaths during this period of Cambodia’s history. It also will illustrate what these ideologies caused with examples and descriptions of the massacres in Cambodia.

In 1970 the military overthrew its long time leader and king, Norodom Sihanouk. That eventually lead to a bloody civil war between the Communist Party of Kampuchea (PKK) and the American-backed National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK) (Jackson, 23). Most of the Khmers that lived in Cambodia at the time saw no difference between the government of Sihanouk and the government that was in control during period of French rule in Cambodia. As in most imperialistic takeovers, the government that takes control after a revolution frequently resembles the government that was in control before the insurrection.

The case is no different here. Unfortunately for the Khmers, the overthrow of the monarch was not the last of the violent times; it was just another sad beginning. “For the next five years, while the Khmer Republic (NUFK) controlled Phnom Penh and other urban centers, Cambodia was laid waste by U.S. bombing and by a civil war” (Chandler, 191).

In the aftermath of the civil war which ended in 1975, a new regime was in control of the country for years to come. In April 1975, troops of the Northern and Eastern Regions captured the capital of Phnom Penh. These troops (PKK or the Khmer Rouge, as I will denote it) would assume control over the country for the next 3-4 years. The capture of the city was followed by complete and total evacuation of its inhabitants, a very strange event to occur after a completed insurrection. French journalist Francois Ponchaud writes of the day when “a group of men in black detached themselves from the main body — long-haired young men surrounding a mysterious moon-faced man, unarmed, wearing a black polo shirt. Could this be the Khmer Rouge? A few moments later a hallucinatory spectacle began. Thousands of the sick and wounded were abandon-

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1. The French held Cambodia under its wing of imperialism since the 1800s. Like most other colonies, the nation suffered greatly from its government. The long history of control and violence that took place during these times helped seed the inherent hatred that was present in the Khmer Rouge and most minority groups. For a detailed look into the past of Cambodia see Chandler, David P. *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983).
ing the city. After the sick, we witnessed the departure of the entire population of Phnom Penh."

It was at this time that Pol Pot's regime took control of Cambodia. The term, Year Zero, was given to the beginning of this period, referring to the party's wish to completely overhaul the entire social framework of the country. One of the major themes of the Khmer Rouge was the rebuilding of the nation, ridding all outside influence in exchange for a new society based on agriculture and the common folk. This was the start of one of the most interesting periods in the country's history, filled with extreme nationalistic vision and horrible human suffering. Pol Pot not only wanted control over his new country, he also wanted to rewrite the very existence of the people who inhabited it.

Before one looks at the consequences and results of Pol Pot's regime, one must understand the ideologies behind the Khmer Rouge. According to Karl D. Jackson, the Khmer Rouge's ideology could be divided into four parts: total independence and self-reliance, preservation of the dictatorship, total and immediate economic revolution, and Khmer social values (Jackson, 39.)

The first and foremost objective of the Khmer Rouge, total independence, can be summarized by Pol Pot's statement that correcting Cambodia's relationship with the outside world by expelling imperialist and their economic and cultural influences was the fundamental priority of the party. Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge saw all outside influence as inherently evil. The West corrupted the minds of Khmers for much too long and there must be a stop to it. The nation could only become truly independent once it had shed all outside influence and assumed total control of its own affairs. At first, the idea of ridding outside influence does not seem like that bad an idea. Truthfully, many of South East Asia's problems stem directly out of imperialistic ventures from the West. But in accord with the rest of Pol Pot's extremism, the idea went too far. Pol Pot stressed that most things that came from the West directly tried to corrupt the state of Cambodia. These items included books, musical instruments, cassettes, videos, air conditioning, etc. Unfortunately for the commonwealth, this also included such things and modern medicine, a misfortune that would later cause the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. 

Along with the call for total isolation from the West was the hatred and persecution of any foreigner in the area, especially the Vietnamese. Pol Pot considered the Vietnamese as Kampuchea's "hereditary enemy" (Kamm, 235). But it was not only the Vietnamese that suffered the wrath of the Khmer Rouge. They proclaimed, "We cannot trust any foreign countries, including China. All foreign countries are of Kampuchea" (Kiernan, 229). Persecution, degradation and even death fell to those unlucky souls who happen to be of non-Khmer background. Refugees in Thailand and Vietnam reported that entire villages of Chams were wiped out by armed forces of the Pol Pot regime after 1975 (Kiernan, 230). These death tolls make up parts of the genocide that will later be discussed.

The second objective of the Khmer Rouge was the preservation of the dictatorship. One of the most interesting and fascinating aspects of Pol Pot's rule was that for the first two years, no one had any idea who was controlling the affairs in Cambodia. The Pol Pot Regime for the initial movement remained unnamed, party membership remained secret and the rural population were generally unaware of who among them were members (Kiernan, 227). In fact, Saloth Sar, later named Pol Pot, did not announce that he was the leader of the Khmer Rouge (PKK) until almost two years after taking control over Cambodia. When Pol Pot was proclaimed Prime Minister on 14 April, outside observers were surprised because none of them had come across the name before. It was at this point that Saloth Sar took the name "Pol Pot (Kiernan, 290). In 1977 a

3. Once the Khmer Rouge took control, they felt it necessary to control the people in a very urgent fashion. The unstable hold they held on the public was easily realized and drastic measures soon followed their control. For eye witness accounts of the evacuation see Ponchaud, Francois. Cambodia Year Zero. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

4. One of the major themes of the Khmer Rouge was the rebuilding of the nation, ridding all outside influence in exchange for a new society based on agriculture and the common folk. For a more in depth look into this view see Kiernan, Ben and Chanthou Boua. Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea 1942-1981. London: Zed Press, 1982, p 234.

5. Anything that came from the outside was considered in direct conflict with the party's main goal of self-reliance. Unfortunately, this theory eliminated many useful things that a society might need. For a better description see Kamm, Henry. Cambodia: Report From a Stricken Land. New York: Arcade Publishing 1998 p 131.

worked and slaved in the fields. This rush for revolutions caused some sort of shift in the social agricultural superiority led to the transformation of Khmer social values. Most watchful eye of the armed forces were civilians and capitalism. (Jackson, 58-59). Through the fourteenth centuries. The Khmer Rouge emptied the cities because they rejected modern civilization and largely rural society that predated both colonialism and capitalism. They sought to transform Cambodia into the kind of society with a more egalitarian one which would promote more equality for the masses, and to replace the old bureaucratic with a more omnipotent and anti-bureaucratic organization (Jackson, 70).

Following the evacuations of the cities were a series of “clean up crews” whose duty was to rid the cities of filthy western exposure. Propaganda spread by the Khmer Rouge proclaimed: “Immediately after the liberation of Battambang on August 17, 1975, our revolutionary army which took over the city took the task of cleaning up and eliminating the filth of the rotten old society left behind by the traitorous clique.” (Ponchaud, 45-50). Drinking and gambling, which had been quite prominent in the society and culture before the advent of the Khmer Rouge, were abolished with gambling having very severe punishments. Pre-marital sex in Cambodia prior to the take over by the Khmer Rouge was frowned upon, and this prohibition was enforced by public disapproval. After the insolvency, pre-marital sex was a huge offense with punishments ending with sometimes death. Permission to marry was very hard to obtain, and granted only by the Khmer Rouge officials (Jackson, 69).

Until this point in history, Cambodia was one of the largest Buddhist countries in South East Asia. To be Khmer meant being Buddhist. The countryside was dotted with over 2,500 temples and most men...
became monks at one part of their lives.” Because Buddhist teachings go against many of the doctrines set up by the Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot’s regime set out to destroy what was left of the Buddhist religion in Kampuchea (Chandler, 97). The most fundamental aspects of Theravada Buddhism was the pursuit of Nirvana through renunciation and a life of monkhood and meditation. Through the eight-fold path one could reach this higher enlightenment and ultimately, Nirvana (Jackson, 69-70).

Obviously, the Khmer’s plan for total country-wide movement into the rural communities in the hopes of creating this super agricultural based economy had no room in its boundaries for renunciation and mediation, not to mention the life-style of the monk. The following propaganda describes the Khmer Rouge’ attitude toward the Eight-Fold path to enlightenment: “The Buddhist religion is the cause of our country’s weakness. The bonzes are blood-suckers, they oppress the people, they are imperialists. Begging for charity like the bonzes do is an offense to the eye and it also maintains the workers in a downtrodden condition. It is forbidden to give anything to those shaven asses, it would be pure waste. If any worker secretly takes rice to one of these bonzes, we shall set him to planting cabbages. If the cabbages are not full grown in three days, he will dig his own grave” (Jackson, 69). The attempts to rid the nation of Buddhism, alcohol, and city life altogether are just a few examples of how the entire social framework changed after the Khmer Rouge came to power.

The application of these ideologies was intended to reshape the country of Cambodia into a perfect, non-western functioning nation. Although at first glance some of the doctrines that the Khmer Rouge imposed might seem like a good idea for a country such as Cambodia, the outcome of the revolution had disastrous effects. The extinction of Western medicines and food production led to hundreds of thousands of deaths. The hatred of Western influenced thinkers and the execution of many educated peoples brought on not purification and unity, but rather created horrific scenes of mass killings and virtual genocide. In the last few sections of this paper, I will try to illustrated some of the atrocities that were inflicted upon the people of Cambodia.

The Communist military victory in 1975 brought with it the hope that the violence in the country would stop. There was instead an immediate escalation in the violence and destruction in the country as Pol Pot imposed his social and economic systems in all parts of Cambodia. After the evacuations of the cities, the new government dealt with those in the state who threatened the new regime. The answer to this problem? Simple, extermination. The Khmer Rouge began an effort to identify and in many instances, execute political leaders, military officers, and civil servants of the previous republic, as well as anyone suspected of having any connection with it. Most of the killings took place after the enemies had been rounded up. Jackson describes men being taken to a place called Arak Bak Kor near Sisophon: “There the villagers found a killing...
ground littered with the corpses of the soldiers who had been beaten to death.” The villagers saw soldiers being brought in on long chains by the hundreds. The Khmer Rouge guards proceeded to beat them to death with pieces of timber in full view of the other prisoners awaiting the same fate. “The men in the trucks began to scream and wail and many fell down unconscious....” (Jackson, 175-50).

Government officials and the soldiers were not the only ones who saw that fate in the cities. Intellectuals — doctors, teachers, engineers, students and skilled workers were lined up for questioning, re-teaching, and eventually, execution. A medical student recalls burying nine school teachers in Phnom Penh. Unfortunately, the executions of the educated, the soldiers and government officials were just the beginning of the death toll. The real terror came later in the fields where the entire population of Cambodia had been forced to go (Jackson, 181-82).

The biggest problems in the fields were not from the Khmer Rouge militia, although the threat was quite large. The real problem was the amount of food that each person was allotted. Two tiny tin cups of rice were allowed for each pre-country dwelling inhabitant, with only one being allotted to those that had lived in the city. Starvation was quite common and the food ration could be taken away if the Khmer Rouge felt one were not cooperating with the regime (Jackson, 186). To top it all off, if the Khmer Rouge suspected anyone in the fields of being of any slight Western or foreign influence, the suspect would be dragged away, never to be heard from again. The lack of food and medicine accounted for extremely high death toll, sometimes reaching in the hundreds every day (Kiernan, 256).

The workday was long and arduous, lasting from five in the morning until about six in the evening, with two half-hour breaks in between. Illness and starvation claimed more lives in the fields than the Khmer Rouge’s brutal killings and assassinations, with daily tragedies and accepted fact. “Fear dominated life, and immediate death was constantly at hand. . . . They lived in terror under the unceasing watchfulness of fiercely suspicious and hostile teenagers who held arbitrary, apparently unlimited power” (Kamm, 127-29). Attesting to the violence and brutality of their watchers, one person is quoted: “I met one woman from Arey Ksach on the opposite shore of the Mekong; she had climbed a tree when she heard the Khmer Rouge were coming and was so terror-stricken by what she saw beneath her — children being torn limb from limb or impaled — that she preferred to let her legs be eaten off by giant red ants, rather than come down (Ponchaud, 2).

More than a million people were killed, not only the victims of Pol Pot’s killing fields, but hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children who died from disease and starvation as a result of the regime’s policies. Out of the 7.3 million Cambodians said to be alive on April 17, 1975, less than 6 million remained to greet the Vietnamese occupiers in the last days of 1978 (Jackson, 3). Some estimates are even much higher, going way past the two million point. If you look at the size of the population before and after this period, the massacres and deaths that occurred in Cambodia in three short years is unparalleled in this century. Not even Hitler had achieved that kind of mass destruction. Adding to the perplexity of the situation is the scarcity of records from within the Khmer Rouge and the absence of a total understanding of exactly why this took place. The events and ideologies discussed in this paper are light and brief to say the least, but I hope it helped shed some light into the mystery of Pol Pot’s Killing Fields.

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60 Horizons 2001* A journal of international writing and art
A foreign movie is a portal into a world of novelty in speech, customs, clothes and ideas. It is an unpredictable place, but with themes that have universal appeal. My quest for a good foreign movie led me to Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl. It was adamantly recommended by friends; came with high critical acclaim, having won 12 awards; and was banned in China.

We are told in the beginning of the movie that between 1967 and 1976 a program was implemented in China with hopes of lessening the social and economic disparity between the city and country people. During this time over 7 1/2 million students were transferred from their homes into rural areas where they were to mingle with the country folk.

A blooming young girl, Xiu Xiu, is one of the many who leaves her happy village in Chengdu, in 1975, to fulfill such obligations. Before she leaves we are given a touching glimpse of her warm social life. Her family is not rich, but makes up for it with love. Her father works, sewing on a foot-peddled machine. He steals patches of cloth from work to make shirts for his two girls. This is a simple family. The mother reprimands Xiu Xiu, the elder sister, for being wasteful with the bar of soap. As she steps into a miniature tub just big enough to squat in, her slender curves hint that she must be several years older than she looks, perhaps 16, not 12. The mother introduces Xiu Xiu to rags which are to be used for her period and then to be washed and dried in the sun. Already the movie is distinct from anything American, where talk of menstruation is not worthy of mention in mainstream American cinema. Here, it is pertinent to the fact that Xiu Xiu is becoming a woman. At least one young boy has taken notice and is so enchanted by Mu Xiu that he stands below her window at night, gazing upward, radiant, innocent, love struck. Lively background music has an ethnic flare with whiny, high-pitched tonal voices singing as bells chime intermittently. It is a sound I do not find particularly appealing, but I do appreciate the foreign flavor.

Once at the camp the girls will be further distributed to more remote areas. This introductory camp finds hundreds of young people gathered at an outdoor “walk-in movie theater. They stand or sit huddled closely together. The screen plays depressing images of war and sad voices sing, crying out, and the audience sings too, slow and mournfully. The viewer at home is propelled into the action, our hearts stirred, tears caught in the throat. We feel the same sadness over war, the injustice, the atrocity.

A boy gropes Xiu Xiu in the dark, but she’s a spunky and vivacious fighter and reprimands him in no uncertain terms. Thus begins a long dreary saga, stark and morbid. Xiu Xiu is sent away to the mountains under the wing of a Tibetan man who is “different.” He lost his manhood to the slice of a knife while a prisoner of war. Now he is a loner, a nomad, who lives in a tent and cares for horses. Xiu Xiu is to learn the skills so she can lead a troop of girls. The landscape is serene and gorgeous, but lonely, like Xiu Xiu. We see endless stretches of lush meadow, blue skies and green mountains, but imbued with a certain grimness.

A strained relationship between Xiu Xiu and the eunuch, Lao Jin, turns amiable when Lao Jin builds Xiu Xiu a crude bath out of a stretch of tarp. He prefers the rain. Xiu Xiu languishes in the bath but demands that Lao Jin avert his eyes lest they rot. When three men ride by on horses, he shoots his rifle to scare them away. He cares for Xiu Xiu like she’s a forest princess. She is really a spoiled city girl. He, the weathered, rugged loner, pampers her and cooks for her. She is the new meaning in his
otherwise barren life. She is a jewel in the wilderness, a budding flower amidst the bunches of purple, white, blue and yellow flowers in the field.

Soon this jewel is no longer a secret. Lao Jin’s nice singing voice, endearing ways, and campfires under star lit skies do not suffice for his physical shortcomings. A young peddler arrives one day, shattering her dreams of going home with news that the program has been disbanded, that the wealthy girls have returned home, but that he has the power to pull strings with the authorities and send her home. She complies with his crafty advances.

A new fire consumes her and finds her wasting away in anticipation of his return. Soon another peddler comes calling — and another and another. Each takes with them a piece of her hope, her beauty, her happiness, her sanity. She fools herself that her body is her passport home.

One scene finds Lao Jin plundering a bird nest of its eggs while a ruffian plunders Xiu Xiu back at the tent. Lao Jin faithfully serves her while she services every other man. Her fierce modesty has been replaced by a brazen carelessness, climaxing in a scene where Lao Jin simmers with pain as Xiu Xiu is bent over, being unabashedly ravaged and without pleasure. Lao Jin, in a sort of passive revenge burns the criminal’s shoe in the fire. He struggles with his physical and emotional lack of balls.

We are usually spared such desolate heartbreak in American movies. We might cry in a movie like Thin Red Line, but we are usually left with a spark of realization, or some redeeming characteristic. Nothing but depression sets in as frisky, confident Xiu Xiu becomes a living ghost—sad, forlorn, mangy and ... pregnant! Her eyes are sad and desperate and so is Lao Jin.

Nurses in what is now a veritable ghost town perfunctorily relieve the situation. After all, she was the fifth girl that day in the same predicament. To the nurses Xiu Xiu is the culpable party who would, “screw a horse and anything else that comes along,” which is proven when a three-toed man limps in to be pleased within minutes of her bloody ordeal.

Back at the tent, a new glimmer of hope lights up Xiu Xiu’s eyes. She asks Lao Jin to shoot her toes off in order to disqualify her from work so she can go home. She tries to bribe him with the only power she knows—sexual advances, but he would sooner do it for love. Through it all he has loved her in his own quiet way.

Xiu Xiu stands amidst the vast, snowy plains and moody bruised skies as a lady’s voice sings, whispery, haunting. Xiu Xiu smiles contentedly as Lao Jin raises the rifle to her heart and frees her from her burden of life. Lao Jin was, after all, the one she could always count on. The bath he constructed becomes her sepulcher. A last shot rings out, he joins her. So ends the story of two lonely souls, lost in the wilderness of life.

The story of Xiu Xiu is a story of young love, sexual awakening, coming of age, disenchantment, idealism and communistic principles gone awry. The movie is less the story of the girl named Xiu Xiu than a commentary on ideas that fare better in the world of thought than when applied to reality. To compare and contrast Xiu Xiu with American films would be futile. The universal themes of love, sex, hope and despair are prevalent, but the underlying iron grip of communism and its resultant oppression is so foreign a topic to those of us who are fortunate enough to live in relative freedom, prosperity and a land rich with opportunity.

From the time of my first birthday my mother has kept her culture alive by dressing me in a hanbok for my birthday party. The first birthday of a child is considered a special occasion for Koreans as it is for many cultures. The colors used in the hanbok for children symbolize good harmony and are believed to protect children from sickness and bad luck and to ensure them a healthy long life. The colors also represent the five directions: east, west, north, south, and center. I also had to wear a black silk hat called a jobawi and a pair of buhsuhn (Korean white socks), with colorful flowers and red silk tassels.

The 1988 Summer Olympic games was held in Seoul, Korea, giving people all over the world opportunity to view the Korean lifestyle. Many visitors were amazed by the beautiful colors and patterns of the hanbok. Hundreds of Korean men and women performed in their costumes, and it was a proud moment for them to express their art of clothing and dance.

The style of the costume was developed during the Yi Dynasty. The Yi Dynasty was established by Yi Song-gye but he renamed the kingdom, Choson, “The land of the morning calm.” This dynasty accomplished much in science, music, and technology. Confucian teachings guided Korean social structure, as well as politics. This Confucian Yi Dynasty developed the form and style of the dress with its strict emphasis on etiquette and manners. The rank of officials during the Yi Dynasty court were indicated by the length and color of the robe, width of the sleeves, and woven designs on the silk material (Yang).

As in many societies, sewing was a basic skill required of all women in Korea from the earliest times. Taking care of silk worms, spinning thread, weaving cloth and embroidery were also tasks for women in the household. From the Choson period on, hemp, ramie, cotton, and silk were woven throughout the country, and many of the techniques are still used today. The production of hemp fabric is complicated and requires accurate cultivation and harvesting. The white ramie cloth is manufactured in a process similar to the hemp. All ramie cloth had to be pounded with a heavy wooden stick on a smooth shiny flat rectangular stone. Doing this released the starch within and gave it a crisp, glossy texture (Kim).

Kkachi turumagi
Ceremonial Dress for a girl’s first birthday
Korean Choson Dynasty, ca. 1920.
Green silk damask, patchwork, embroidered and patterned silk.
Sleeves with red, yellow, black, green, and white stripes.
From the Ewha Women's University Museum, Korea.
Courtesy of the Honolulu Academy of Arts
Today, the hanbok is only worn for special celebrations and occasions. By the time my mother was born in 1945, for the most part, only adults and the elderly wore the Hanbok daily. The hanbok for women consisted of two major parts: the juhgori and the chima. The juhgori, a bolero-like blouse is made up of two front panels with sleeves extending from drop shoulders, a perfect stiff collar, and front sashes. The dongjuhng is a white narrow neck band, stiffened with paper underneath, and stitched over the collar to sharpen its appearance. It was made to be detachable so that it could be washed since it got dirty easily. Because of the detachable neck band, one would not have to clean the whole chogori, which was very efficient.

The juhgori has gone through many changes over the years in the length, care of the collar, and the use of the sashes. The sashes, goreum, played an important role to the juhgori because it not only kept it closed, but also served as an ornamental ribbon for the females. By the late Choson period, the juhgori stopped at the armpit and was longer in the front to cover the breasts. The Western missionary women influenced the different styles and made the jacket longer.

The traditional skirt is called the chima and was the other part of the basic two-piece clothing. My mother said the skirt did nothing for the woman’s figure. It had a high waistband that was pleated and wrapped with long sashes around the body at the chest right along the underarms. Since the chima was one size fits all, it had to be adjusted by the sashes. It also varied in lengths. Women looked taller when wearing it, for it gave the illusion that their legs were long. Women always looked graceful in the skirt whether they were standing, sitting, or walking. When the chima was not being worn, it was used as a bojagi (wrapper), dotja-ri (mat when spread out for sitting), cha-it (sunshade or blind), podaegi (coverlet), and a jang-ot (head-cover).

The traditional male hanbok included a juhgorgi and a paji, loose-fitting pants. The basic style of the men’s juhgori changed very little from the late Yi period, unlike the women’s. Early styles of the paji had narrow legs but grew wider as the Korean men gave up their nomadic lifestyle (Han). Because Koreans sit on the floor, the baggy paji made it more comfortable. My mother could not give me too much information on men’s clothing because her father had died when she was only ten years old. Her older brothers did not wear the traditional male costumes since the modernization had started.

One thing she did remember is the importance

Obangjang Turumagi
Five colored ceremonial robe
Korean Choson dynasty late 19th century, silk.
Courtesy of the Honolulu Academy of Arts.
of mourning clothes. Koreans’ mourning clothes remain an important indicator of society’s act of respect. She had come from a wealthy respectable family, and they could afford to dress her father in specially prepared garments made of finely woven hemp. Family members had to wear coarse and undyed hand-woven hemp. The outfit included a wide sleeve coat with a hemp cord tied around the waist to fasten it. All the men wore pointy hemp hats and women wore hemp rope around their heads like a crown. They could not wear any personal ornamentation and had to let down their hair. When my grandma passed away a couple of years ago, my aunt sent pictures of the ceremony. The old traditions changed and close family members wore black colored clothing instead of the undyed rough hemp.

The traditional hanbok has been made in all the colors imaginable over the centuries. The colors used in the clothing derived from the five basic colors of East Asian cosmology: red, yellow, blue, white, and black. However, according to the season or a person’s status in society, the color, or the material of the clothes varied. For special ceremonies such as weddings, commoners would wear ornaments and colorful clothing, except, of course, those reserved for the upperclass and royalty.

The *wonsam* was originally a ceremonial topcoat worn by women of royal status, high ranking court, and noble women during the Choson period. After the Choson period, the topcoat was adapted for the use in weddings and other very important ceremonies. Queens wore yellow robes embossed with gold dragons on them, and high-ranking princesses and concubines wore red topcoats stamped with gold phoenixes. The lower ranking princesses and concubines wore green topcoats stamped with flowers. Commoners were not allowed to wear colors designated for upper classes.

Marriage was always taken very seriously in Korea (Yang). *Hwalot*, the bridal topcoat, is made of red cloth lined with indigo. The colors represent the meeting of heaven and earth. The cloth was embroidered with plant and animal images symbolizing long life and the virtues of marriage and wishing the new couple happiness and riches. The Hwalot resembles the wonsam. It has changed very little since ancient times (Yang).

The hanbok would not be complete without the *Buhshun*, Korean socks. My mother said that the Korean white socks were worn indoors and inside their shoes. They were made differently for each season to satisfy the weather conditions. The sock was unlined in the summer, lined during the spring and fall, and full padded for the cold winters. It is still used today but mainly by elders or when wearing the Hanbok. It is shaped like a boot and

*Photograph by Joe Tomita*

Ceremonial robe

“Wonsam,” Korean Choson dynasty 19th century
Silk brocade.
*Courtesy of the Honolulu Academy of Arts.*
had the effect to make anyone’s foot look perfect. Koreans were concerned about making their feet look perfect, and this sock did the trick. Ornamented quilted socks were worn by babies on their first birthday. The socks are decorated with bright flowers and tiny red pompoms at the toes.

To go with the socks is the *Gamooshin*, or rubber shoes. In the early 1900s their shoes were made of leather, originally introduced from Japan. By 1932, the rubber-shaped canoe shoe was produced and was very practical for Korean farmers during the long rainy season. Later they became very popular and I even had two pairs of my own that my aunty had mailed to me from Korea. I remember wearing the shoes and my mother said that the rubber was very soft so I was comfortable in them. The leather shoes that were worn earlier were made of layers of paper or cotton and leather and lined with silk or leather.

The Korean hanbok has come a long way since the Yi Dynasty. Influences from around the world changed the styles and patterns of the traditional Hanbok. New styles have been created that better suit modern urban life and are more practical for everyday wear. Even thorough all the changes, the hanbok still looks as beautiful as the first designs made.

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**Hwalot, Bridal Topcoat**
*Courtesy of the Honolulu Academy of Arts*

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**Works Cited**


Hotaru no Haka (Grave of the Fireflies) is directed by Isao Takahata and produced by Hiyao Miyazaki, an incredibly prolific movie maker in Japan. With his company, Ghibli Studios, he has directed and/or produced close to 20 animated movies. This particular movie is based on the semi-autobiographical book of the same name written by Akiyuki Nosaka. Nosaka wrote this book to come to terms with the death of his sister who died due to malnutrition during World War II.

The film tells the story of two children from the port city of Kobe who are made homeless by the firebombs used by the U.S. military. Seita is a young teenager, and his sister Setsuko is about five. Their father is a commander or some sort of high-ranking officer serving on a battleship in the Japanese navy, and their mother is an unfortunate fire bomb casualty. After a string of fire bomb attacks, their town is destroyed and the two children eventually have to go and live with distant relatives. The first shot of the film shows Seita dead in a subway station, and so we can guess Setsuko’s fate. We are then accompanied through flashbacks by the boy’s spirit.

Seita tells a simple tale of survival. The boy and his sister must find a place to stay and food to eat. In wartime their relatives are not kind or generous. Their aunt obviously favors her own children and has absolutely no patience with Setsuko. After weeks of having to listen to how ungrateful he is, Seita brings his mother’s kimonos that he has hidden to his aunt. After their aunt sells their mother’s kimonos for rice, she keeps a lot of it for herself and Seita then realizes it is time to leave. He leaves with his sister to find a place where they can live. Seita comes across an abandoned bomb shelter built in a cave and decides to make their home there. Seita does his best to keep his younger sister happy and for awhile life is as good as it can be during a war. He has some money and can buy food, but during times of war, food is very scarce and hard to come by. As weeks pass, Seita is only encouraged by the idea that eventually his father will return. There is a touching scene where Seita catches handfuls of fireflies for Setsuko and sets them loose inside some mosquito netting. Seeing all of the small lights, Seita recalls the night his father’s ship left for the war. He imagines that the lights from the fireflies are the lights on the ship and the fireworks in the sky. The next scene is just as moving, as it shows Setsuko burying the large pile of now dead fireflies on the following day. She asks her brother why fireflies die so young and then goes back to making her makeshift burial ground.

The defining moment in the movie occurs when Seita overhears that the battleship that his father is commanding has been sunk by the American military and that Japan is losing the war. He then realizes that his father is not coming back, and his situation has become that much more desperate. For weeks, if not months, Seita had been believing that eventually his father would come home and everything would be all right. Seita had his hands full taking care of Setsuko, as she had been having diarrhea and her body was covered with rash. Not being able to eat decent food had taken a toll on the five-year-old girl.

Knowing now that his father would not be coming back, Seita takes out the last of his money and searches desperately for food to buy for his sister. He is able to buy a pumpkin and some meat, but by this time it is too late. That night Setsuko dies in her sleep, her small body withered away by malnutrition. In the final act, the spirits of Seita and...
Setsuko just look at you through the screen and it makes you think of everything that you have just seen.

I found this movie to be excellent for many reasons including the fact that it shows the war from a different standpoint. So many Hollywood war movies portray the Americans fighting for liberty and justice, but they rarely show shots of what actually happened to the people on the receiving end of that justice. With the use of fire-bombs, American planes were able to wipe out entire towns of wooden homes. This movie shows just how devastating the bombings were. Obviously, the Japanese had their hand in the war too, and did their own share of horrible war atrocities, but seeing how wars affect innocent children is heartbreaking.

When Seita and Setsuko begin to live in their old bomb shelter, it is hard to believe that they once lived in rather elegant surroundings. The movie shows this in typical anime fashion. Instead of telling you that they used to be rich, there is a flash back to when Seita and Setsuko are eating shave ice on the beach during the summer. In Japan, during the 1940s, only a privileged few would be able to afford ice in the summertime. Also, many times when Seita asks Setsuko what she would like to eat, she mentions delicacies like tempura, tonkatsu, ikura and uni, food that the average family would not be able to afford.

What saddened me the most was the fact that deaths like those portrayed in movie were not uncommon during the war. Innocent lives were cut short by a war that they had nothing to do with. Akiyuki Nosaka spent many years after the war regretting the fact that he had not saved his sister in some way or even died her. I cannot imagine anything more horrible then seeing a young child, especially your sister, literally wither away in front of you.

I highly recommend this movie. The subtitled format is better. I watched both the Japanese language and English dubbed version, and a lot gets lost in the translation in the dubbed version. In the subtitled version the phrases are translated rather literally. — And make sure you have a box of tissues ready.
Japanese animation, more commonly known as anime, is becoming increasingly popular in the United States. However, because the stories are presented with animation rather than real-life actors, many Americans think of anime as “kid’s stuff.” Far from the truth, numerous anime series feature ideas and concepts much too complicated and/or uninteresting for a child’s mind. They feature themes that are very important in the modern Japanese lifestyle, but which also reflect on their past. Understanding anime gives outsiders a greater knowledge of Japanese culture.

Many anime series are based on manga, or Japanese comics. There are two basic types of manga: *shonen*, or boys’, and *shojo*, or girls’. *Shonen* manga have stories related to sports, action, sex, and war. They have strong plots, but weak character development. Males are the main characters, and are portrayed as tough. Females usually play “damsel-in-distress” roles. Characters are drawn with bold, angular lines, and have small eyes. *Shojo* manga have females as the main characters, with stories focused on love and emotions. Characters are drawn with softer lines, and have enormous eyes. Eyes are seen as a gateway to the character’s soul, so the larger the eyes, the more sympathetic and sensitive a character is (Levy, 9-11; Schodt, Manga!, 88). During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the gap between *shonen* and *shojo* manga has been reduced, and it is not uncommon for girls to read *shonen* manga, and vice-versa. Even now, it can be difficult to place some manga into either the *shonen* or *shojo* category, since elements from both are incorporated into new stories.

One of the earliest known examples of comic art in Japan are the *Choojuugiga*, or “Animal Scrolls.” They are four scrolls painted with brush and ink, and are believed to have been created during the 12th century by a bishop named Toba (Schodt, Manga! 28-30). The first actual manga, created in the late 18th century, were called *kibyoshi*, or “yellow cover” (37). *Kibyoshi* were printed using woodblock technology, and were produced for adults rather than children. Several popular genres were humor, fantasy, drama, and pornography.

As time progressed, manga became increasingly popular for both adults and children in Japan, but one man, Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989), helped to change the style of manga drastically (Schodt, Dreamland, 233-68). One of his earliest works is *Shintakarajima*, “New Treasure Island,” a manga consisting of nearly 200 pages. What makes this work so important is that Tezuka incorporated a different style into his art, using unique page layouts and “camera angles” to give the drawings more motion. People who read *Shintakarajima* were amazed, and some even claimed that it was just like watching a movie. At the time it was created, many people barely had enough money to buy food; however, it is estimated that *Shintakarajima* sold over 400,000 copies (Schodt, Manga!, 62; Dreamland, 235).

Tezuka went on to create many other manga, such as *Tetsuwan Atom* (“Mighty Atom”), *Ribon no Kishi* (“Princess Knight”), and *Jungle Taitei* (“Jungle Emperor”). He became so successful that he
founded his own animation studio, Mushi Productions, in 1962. Tezuka was referred to in his homeland as "the Walt Disney of Japan" (Levi, 20), and "the God of Comics." In addition to starting his own animation studio, he also trained several aspiring animators, most of whom became successful later.

Although he was known more for his shonen manga, he also helped pave the way for shojo manga. In the early 1960s, Tezuka decided to transform two of his manga, *Tetsuwan Atom* and *Jungle Taijii*, into Japan's first anime series (Schodt, Dreamland, 244-48, 268-74). Both were later dubbed into English and aired in the United States under the new titles, *Astro Boy* (1964) and *Kimba the White Lion* (1966), respectively. Both anime were fairly successful, but it wasn't until the 1980s that anime would become popular again in the United States.

With the arrival of *Star Blazers* and *Robotech* (known in Japanese as *Space Cruiser Yamato* and *Macross*, respectively) in the early 1980s, anime once again found a place in America. However, American TV producers greatly edited both shows by changing names and personalities of some characters, cutting out a lot of violent and sexual scenes, and even changing the ending for *Robotech* (Levi, 7 - 9). Nevertheless, children and teens loved it, and craved more. Another reason why anime became a success during the 1980s is that exchange students who went to Japan returned home with videocassettes of anime. Many new American companies, such as AnimEigo, Pioneer, and Viz Video were created to provide dubbed and subtitled anime to their new eager audience.

The 1980s was also a turning point in Japan as well as America. Previously, anime releases in Japan were rare, due to the high cost of production. Only exceptionally popular manga were made into anime, but with new, less expensive computer animation techniques, increasing numbers of manga became anime series. Two of the most popular anime during the 1980s were *Gundam* and *Urusei Yatsura* ("Those Obnoxious Aliens"). With the high success of these anime, movies and OVAs for both series were released (OVA stands for "Original Video Animation." It is a continuation of anime series, but is not aired on TV. It is usually sold on videocassette.)

Anime is created by Japanese people for Japanese people, yet its popularity in the United States is growing rapidly. This came as a surprise to many anime creators, such as Rumiko Takahashi. She is referred to as "the First Lady of Anime," and has created many popular shonen manga/anime including *Ranma 1/2*, *Urusei Yatsura*, and *Maison Ikkoku*. During a 1989 interview, when told of the success of her translated manga, she said, "If it's true, then I'm truly happy. But I must confess to being rather puzzled as to why my work should be so well received. It's my intention to putting in a lot of Japanese references, Japanese lifestyle and feelings.... I really have to wonder if foreign readers can understand all this, and if so, how?" (Levi, 3 - 4).

Although anime does contain many references to Japanese culture, series such as *Pokemon*, *Dragon Ball Z*, and *Gundam* have been dubbed into English and are highly popular among children, as well as young adults. Several of the reasons why anime is so admired in the United States are: the high tech look, multi-faceted characters, fantasy worlds, and the intriguing storylines.

Understanding anime can be very difficult for foreigners, but it can give a person an inside look of what Japanese society is really like. Although much of an anime can be fantasy, there are usually many beliefs, values, and customs that can be found within it. The plots and storylines in anime are often taken from Shinto, which is Japan's indigenous religion. Shinto is practically more of a lifestyle for the Japanese rather than a religion. When asked, several young people replied that it is more about carrying on family traditions than religious beliefs (45). Shinto is an animistic form of nature worship, but does not have any one sacred book such as the Bible. There is no central god, and it has no set moral regulations, but focuses more on celebrating life. Shinto has over 2,000 years worth of legends and fairy tales and more than eight million deities, many of which are familiar to most Japanese people.

One of the most popular Shinto legends used in anime storylines is the story of Amaterasu, the sun
goddess, and her brother, Susano-Oh, the wind god. They were sister and brother, born from the gods who created the islands of Japan, as well as the deities within them. Amaterasu and Susano-Oh were never married, but they created a number of children together. They also had numerous fights with each other. After one particular fight, Amaterasu was so upset that she sealed herself in a cave, leaving the Earth without sunlight. The other gods realized that something had to be done, or all life on the planet would die. They lured her out of the cave by throwing a huge party right outside. Curiosity got the better of her, and as she emerged from the cave, the other gods sealed the entrance so she could not return. Susano-Oh was banished from Heaven, but went to Earth and became a hero. Amaterasu eventually forgave him. "Tenchi Muyo!, Blue Seed," and "Ranma 1/2" are just a few anime to feature parts of this legend.

One of the reasons Shintoism has been practiced so long is that it is able to co-exist with other religions harmoniously. Buddhism and Shintoism are two different religions, yet are essential in the Japanese lifestyle. While Shinto is the religion associated with births, weddings, and other joyous occasions, Buddhism is associated with death. In anime, there can be traces of many different religions, such as Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity—all in the same story!

Anime authors also portray foreign countries and people in their stories; however, their interpretation can often be more stereotypical than truthful. The American character has a happy-go-lucky attitude, but is an alcoholic. He wears a cowboy hat, blue jeans, and cowboy boots. His Gundam is also a victim of stereotyping; it wears a football helmet, boxing gloves, has two six-shooter pistols (similar to the ones cowboys used), and rides on a surfboard. Some of the other Gundams are also ridiculous: the Matador Gundam from Spain resembles a bull, and the pilot is dressed as a matador. Another point to be taken into consideration is that although Japanese are Asian, it does not mean that they understand the culture of other Asians as well. Hong Kong is often associated with crime and violence in anime. India is seen as a place of "...bejeweled rajas, yogis in mountain caves, or a source of exotic new martial arts techniques" concepts that are far from the nation it is now.

Understanding symbols in anime can be difficult for Americans, because of the unfamiliarity with Japanese culture. Hair color is one symbol that can indicate a character’s personality type. Although hair color can symbolize different personality traits, it does not have any relation to the ethnicity of a character. Many characters in anime have a vast variety of hair color. Just because a character is blonde, it does not mean that he/she is Caucasian. Similarly, black hair color does not make a character Japanese. Since most of Japan’s population has naturally black or dark brown hair, anime characters with this hair color are usually more sympathetic or caring, and can represent a traditional Japanese person.

However, some characters with black hair can also represent a satire of Japanese people. In "Ranma 1/2," the main character, Ranma, changes from male to female when splashed with cold water. As a male, he has black hair but when changed into female form, his hair becomes fire-red. This helps indicate the difference between the two personalities. Akane, Ranma’s fiance, also has thick black hair. Although she seems to be a tomboy, she can also be very sympathetic and caring. One character who has black hair but does not seem to fit the “traditional” Japanese personality is Kodachi. She is more of a satire of a traditional Japanese person than a sympathetic character.

Characters with blonde hair color also have significance in anime; blondes usually mean trouble, or evil. In the anime "Fushigi Yuggi" ("Mysterious Play") a handsome but evil warrior, Nakago, has blonde hair. Pink hair on a character suggests cuteness. Washu, a character in "Tenchi Muyo!", has bright pink hair and wants everyone to address her as "Washu-chan" (little Washu). Even though she is a grown woman, she chooses to appear in the form of a child.

There are many other symbols present in anime, which help the viewer to grasp a better understanding of Japanese culture. "Sakura," or cherry blossoms, are associated with death, because of a concept
called *mono no aware*. It basically means that there is barely time to appreciate its beauty before it disappears. The duration of sakura is very short; kamikaze pilots and samurai were compared to the lovely flowers as they went off to battle.

Religious symbols also exist in many anime; Shinto objects, such as the *torii* or gateway, suggest a lighter, joyous mood. Conversely, Buddhist objects, such as temples, or the presence of a Buddhist priest can imply a more solemn and serious atmosphere. This is not because Japanese dislike the religion, but because it deals with death. When people die, Buddhist funerals and burials are held. Christianity and Catholicism may sometimes appear in anime, but since these religions are not dominant in Japan, they do not always represent good as they do here in the United States. More often, they hint at supernatural powers for those who possess a cross or crucifix.

Holidays also have a different significance in Japanese society. Christmas in Japan is celebrated differently than in the United States, since the religious meaning for the holiday is lost. Santa Claus is known in Japan, but the holiday focuses more on couples and romance than family. Exchanging Christmas presents is a sign of affection between men and women. In *Fushigi Yuuou* ("Oh! My Goddess!"), a young couple looks forward to showing their affection for one another with the exchanging of presents.

Music cues can help to make certain scenes more dramatic, or can also foreshadow future events. *Tenchi Muyo!* often uses wooden clappers, drums, and special shouts from Noh and Kabuki Theater to highlight particular moments, such as when Ryoko, a demon, appears. A samisen is a three-stringed musical instrument, which is associated with geisha and tea houses (Poitras, 116-170). In anime, when a samisen is played in the background, it is sometimes used to hint at a possible romantic or sexual encounter between two people.

The definition of a war hero in Japan is quite different from the idea of a hero in the United States. In the United States, heroes are expected to be brave, and fight for causes that are noble, honest, and pure. Winning their battle also helps to constitute the definition of a hero. In Japan, there is a different set of general guidelines that define a war hero. A Japanese war hero must also be brave and self-sacrificing, but needs to be unconcerned about personal success or survival. The cause is not very important; however, one must be willing to give his or her all for the cause. Winning does not make much of a difference; many times, losing makes a hero's defeat even more tragic (Levi, 67 - 8). Therefore, in anime, the enemy can sometimes be seen as a heroic figure, as long as he or she is selfless and entirely devoted to a cause. They are just considered heroes on the opposing side. Character development is important in anime, so it is not unusual to see heroes become villains, and vice-versa. It is also not unusual to see many of the heroes in anime die.

Japanese anime is very intriguing to American audiences, mostly because it is so different than cartoons here in the United States. It is also very interesting to try and understand what kind of lifestyle people have in Japan. Anime gives foreigners a glance into the Japanese culture, because it is made by Japanese people for Japanese people. When anime is created, authors do not worry how their audience will receive their work, since they believe that it is for their peers rather than for outsiders.

Editor’s Note: Earl Gamio, who created the art for this piece is a New Media Arts student at Kapi'olani. He has been a fan of anime since “Star Blazers” (aka. Space Cruiser Yamato). His current in anime style is Yoshiyuke Sadamoto and Hiroaki Samura; Sadamoto, for his designs, and Samura, for his technique.

Works Cited


Back Cover: Tapa created by Kaiulani deSilva, apprentice, under Moana Eisle, master, in the Master to Apprentice Program of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. The tapa was part of a display in the Koa Gallery at Kapi'olani.