



A Message from the Temple of Lono And the Hale O Papa

A member of the Human Family emerges from darkness to take a place in the chain of life.

Human survival relies upon the fertility of the land and the oceans.

The Gods were Ku (the Ocean), Kanaloa (the Sun), Lono (the Earth) and Kane (the fresh water). These Gods established the faith and foundation upon which our customs and civilization were built. These four Gods give breath to all things and provide the staff of life to feed all of us. Because the essential role of food is preserving and sustaining life, we worship food. That is why our temples are square, a constant reminder of the faith in these four elements.

As an island people, we would always need a secure source of food. The land dedicated to growing food was cultivated as a sacred responsibility and protected and honored as a center of peace within the greater civilization. This land is the Pu'uhonua. The life of the land is preserved in righteousness.

The kuleana: The areas of responsibility. The King had the power to take a life. The Tahunas were the priests, the doctors, and the teachers. The maka'ainana were the people who kept the garden healthy and productive for seven generations.

The Hawaiian understanding of the hydrologic cycle served to inform the unfolding of the religion, a personal matter -- the huna mana for each household to pursue in a form that suited their avocation, first as an 'ohana and then their role in the garden. The study of the Gods led to an intricate and deep understanding of natural processes. We had more than a thousand years of observation.

Thus, when the missionaries arrived in the islands, they encountered a very sophisticated civilization founded on a strong faith rooted deeply in the people's understanding of natural processes. On that foundation of faith, the Hawaiians had developed a complex social system suitable for an island civilization and a highly effective economic system that sustainably supported hundreds of thousands of people.

While there were acts that Hawaiians considered wrong and even evil, there was no Devil in the islands. The missionaries taught the Hawaiians to believe in the Devil, superimposed the missionary Devil on to the traditional Hawaiian faith, and then taught the Christian Hawaiians to turn against their own faith as proof they rejected the Devil. The suppression included the passing of the Moe Kolohe Law, which banned numerous practices and customs, including the worship of ancestors – a central tenet of the faith. This law still stands. The passing of such a law today would be equivalent to forbidding our Asian brothers and sisters to hold Bon dances that honor their ancestral dead.

The suppression of the traditional faith has been a long-standing practice of the State of Hawaii. In a country that prides itself on the freedom of religion, this interplay of traditional faith with state disrespect is nothing new to the Temple of Lono and the faith of our people. The Temple found out a long time ago that the State of Hawaii does not think we are a people of faith. If they did our Temples wouldn't be historical sites for tourists.

In 1978, based on the passage of United States Public Law 95-341, the Temple of Lono emerged from decades of suppression to reclaim the Pu'uhonua Lehua at Kualoa. For this law said that we, as a people of faith, had the right to our sacred lands. The Temple rebuilt the Ma Pele at Kualoa to reconnect with the practice of Moe Ohane -- talking to our ancestors.

The State of Hawai'i brought in its bulldozers to destroy Sam Lono's work and arrested him for camping without a permit. After years of forcing him through one court proceeding after another and spending hundreds of thousands of public dollars, the State levied a \$5 fine for the offense.

Do you see the people being arrested now on Mauna Kea because they are trying to protect that sacred mountain from the destructive actions of those seeking to put yet another telescope on sacred land?

The challenge is not about lease payments or terms. The challenge is about the right of a faith to be respected and practiced in its own homeland. The altar of the Temple of Lono is still in place at the Hale O Keawe in the Pu'uhonua O Honaunau. That Pu'uhonua, however, is now part of a national park operated as a tourist attraction by the United States National Park Service. The Temple is "allowed" to go into the Pu'uhonua to hold ceremony subject to the limitations of the park on the time and duration of worship.

The failure of the occupying power and even our own people to recognize the traditional faith of our people calls for a reconciliation. That reconciliation includes the recognition of the key role that the Pu'uhonua played in establishing the jurisdiction of the Kingdom.

Watching the Hawaiian landscape, the Temple of Lono witnessed various people stepping forward to reclaim the position of King or Queen. One measure of the validity of such a claim would be their relationship with the Pu'uhonua.

Only one embraced that relationship by acknowledging that the King's kuleana is based on the foundation of the Pu'uhonua. King Edmund Keli'i Silva, Jr. claimed his rightful position as protector and sovereign over the Pu'uhonua O Honaunau. The King put the issue of restoring the sacred land base directly before the National Park Service.

The King announced his intention to enter the Pu'uhonua and remain there for an extended period to engage in spiritual practice, seek reconciliation, and confirm his claim to the spiritual land base.

The response was to threaten to arrest the King should he over stay the time period the National Park Service would allow him to enter and remain on the Pu'uhonua.

The foundation of the faith in the Pu'uhonua reaches to the heights of Mauna Kea. From the sustenance of food provided by the Pu'uhonua to the realm of the Gods on Mauna Kea, the faith encompassed all.

When the time is right, the King, supported by the Temple of Lono and others who recognize the need to reconcile the religious schism created within the Hawaiian community by the teachings of the missionaries, will enter and reclaim the Pu'uhonua. On that day, a great step forward will take place in renewing the civilization that once provided an example of wise stewardship of our Earthly Garden.

Tahuna Frank Tamehameha Kamealoha Anuumealani Nobriga
Temple of Lono

Darlene Pabre
Hale O Papa