



Members of a Hawaiian delegation honor the Hawaiian god Kū upon his return from an exhibition at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. From left: Marques Marzan and Blair Collis from the Bishop Museum, Billy Richards, Keawe`aimoku Kaholokula, Kalama Fallau and Kukona Lopes. Photo by Kathy Tarantola/PEM.

HE'S BACK!

KŪ RETURNS AMID HONORS FROM HAWAIIAN DELEGATION

The escorts who accompanied the Kū sculpture back to PEM in October 2010 after an exhibition at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, honored the Hawaiian god during a traditional ceremony. Afterward, the men talked to museum staff about Kū's role in society, their personal backgrounds in traditional Hawaiian culture and their reasons for participating in the ceremony.

KEAWE`AIMOKU KAHOLOKULA

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND FACULTY MEMBER AT THE JOHN A. BURNS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII`I

A lot of us have been misled by the idea that Kū demands human sacrifice, with the idea that he's a blood-hungry god. That was the missionaries' interpretation of what they didn't understand. K was the first sacrificer for his community. There was a famine and Kū dug himself into the ground. His wife cried over the spot, and from there came the ulu tree, the breadfruit tree. He sacrifices his life to feed his community, a commitment to the greater good.

That's the significance of Kū coming back home for us. It allowed us to rethink what Kū really means to our people. We were led to believe certain things because of Christianity, because of the translation to English. But when we look back, now that more people are speaking Hawaiian and we are looking at traditional text, we're learning that the gods are just like us. That we created them, they didn't create us, which is kind of different from Christianity. Like a cross to Christians, a piece of metal you wear around your neck, it's not the metal, it's what it stands for. The images remind us of what Kū has done and what he signifies. Hawaiians are now returning to our traditional values and

part of that is our traditional spirituality, looking for guidance.

The *Hale Mua*, a grassroots organization on Maui and O`ahu, is the traditional first house for all men in the community, from the age of 7 until death. It was where a young man learned how to be a man, learned your skills, your trade, your profession and all the religious aspects that go along with that. In modern times we've resurrected the concept as a way to build leadership in the community among Hawaiian men through cultural practices and values.

We saw that Hawaiian men, compared to men of other ethnic groups and our female counterparts, aren't doing as well. We believe that's because of cultural changes among our men and the idea of Western masculinity and the vices that came with that. We're returning to our cultural values and practices, to bring them into the present time, to make them relevant to us and build leadership.

KALAMA FALLAU

SWITCHING ENGINEER, CARVER, ARTISAN

My education in most things Hawaiian came in my 20s, when I was invited to train in Lua (Hawaiian martial arts). I think at that time it was right for me, having a young family, I had more to fight for than ever I did in my life. The education, the camaraderie and the opening of our culture really grounded me in being a young father, protector, provider.

When the Kū ka lepa was standing at the Bishop Museum, I brought my `ohana (family) to attend and listen to discussions. But being there, especially with my sons, really awoke a sense of *kuleana* (responsibility) and pride in where the youth need to be on their journey forward. When I heard that two folks (who escorted Kū to Hawaii would not make the return trip), I felt it was my *kuleana* to step forward. I was lucky to be chosen to be part of this.

BILLY RICHARDS

*DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS,
PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION*

Both my parents spoke Hawaiian. But when I was growing up they wanted me to survive in the world as it was then, and at the time the Hawaiian language was not a part of that survival. I remember when people used to speak to my father in Hawaiian, he responded in Hawaiian, while my mom would respond in English. I knew a few words from listening to them. Some of it could be really naughty, especially with the old folks. They would revert to Hawaiian whenever they didn't want us to know what they were saying. While I wasn't speaking Hawaiian, I was part of a family *doing* things Hawaiian such as hula, chanting, or my uncles would take my diving.

I remember coming home from elementary school once, and at the time I was very much into stories of Greek and Roman gods, and my father says to me, 'We have our own.' And he started to teach me about who they were. He had a book on the headboard of his bed, *Vikings of the Sunrise*, by Sir Peter Buck. I remember reading the book and got hooked on our own people. It allowed me to see another side of who we were.

I recall reading about the voyages the Polynesians did and I remember thinking, 'I want to sail to Tahiti someday.' In 1976, the opportunity presented itself when I was selected to be a crewmember aboard the *Hokule'a*, a replica of an ancient voyaging canoe that would retrace the migration of our ancestors from Tahiti using traditional navigation techniques. I was fortunate to live the kind of life that I thought our ancestors did. And, I plan to participate in a sail around the world, on the same voyaging canoe, scheduled to begin in 2013.

As a kid, I gave myself to Kanaloa, the Hawaiian god of the sea. Everything I did was on the ocean. My father told me that in ancient times, young males were supposed to be warriors by the time they turned 12. When I graduated high school, I was surfing a lot and I started thinking that, as a warrior, I'm way overdue. So I joined the Marine Corps and was sent to Vietnam. Before leaving, the first thing I did was head down to the beach. There, I asked Kanaloa to let me go and for Kū, the god of war and battle, to take me. It was time to be a warrior. Then, when I completed my time in service and got back to Hawai'i, I thanked Kū and turned back to Kanaloa.



Kū (detail), early 19th century. Breadfruit wood. Photo by Dennis Helmar.

That was it, until Kū showed up. My brother-in-law Kyle was one of the four selected to pick up Kū in Salem and London. And in my mind, the original four had a covenant and therefore the responsibility to bring him back. However, for personal reasons, Kyle said he would not be able to make the return trip. My wife, who is Kyle's older sister, begged him to do it. But he repeated that he couldn't. When I was asked to go in his place, I told my wife, Debbie, 'This is not my job.' She said, 'Kū took you through the war. Maybe this is your time to thank him.'

KUKONA LOPES
*CULTURAL PRACTITIONER/WOODWORKER,
RETIRED AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER*

My introduction into Hawaiian culture came late in life. When I was growing up we were all being molded to fit the Western culture. Throughout my education in a Hawaiian school, we had one semester of Hawaiian language. My mother was raised similarly in that her parents spoke Hawaiian but only when they didn't want the kids to know what they were talking about. I was disconnected for the longest time.

But it was when I finally got hooked up with the *Hale Mua* in Maui and went to Pu'u Kohola, the question was asked, from above, not by a person: Why are you here, why were you born Hawaiian, what is the significance of your life? With that I swallowed the hook and it just stuck in me. It's not going to get shaken loose. I've been trying to educate myself and through people in the *Mua*, and really trying to find out just how far back I can go spiritually. My thing now is woodworking. I do carving. We practice ceremonial incarnations. The *Mua* has made several *ki'i* for Kū. I found something that grounds me in my culture and it's bringing it back to me."

MARQUES MARZAN
CULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST, BISHOP MUSEUM, HONOLULU

Training through my teacher, John Keola Lake, a prominent chanter and cultural protocol expert in Hawai'i, and a hula teacher. I had been under his guidance since 2002. When he passed away our school has continued and perpetuated his legacy. I learned protocols in four different aspects, different forms of chants, and prior to that, I learned the fiber arts of traditional weaving, fiber making, cordage and basketry. I'm honored to have the position I'm in now, cultural resource specialist. I'm the only one on the entire staff with that title. I am the representative in cultural protocols and help make decisions when cultural aspects might be impacted.

In the past, we trained from childhood through adulthood to perform these protocols. In ancient times, you had to do it perfectly. Today we don't have the continuity of our ancestors. We're starting off as young buds. I don't think the idea of going back to the traditional religions



Lynda Hartigan, The James B. and Mary Lou Hawkes Chief Curator at PEM, greets Kalama Fallau, right, and other delegates from Hawaii. Photo by Kathy Tarantola/PEM.

is something the groups favor, but connecting back to Hawaiian spirituality is most important. Recognizing all the aspects of nature with the qualities of deities. That is what is important to most of the groups. For many years, just going into the mountains and seeing the trees and plants was what my parents and generations before me had done. But knowing the actual connections to those deities ... all these different stories and interpretations you can glean off the natural environment based on the stories passed down. A more enriching understanding of how the Hawaiian community saw the world. A true rooted connection to your culture. Pushing people to recover those aspects of the religious practices, not the actual formal protocols.



Marzan presented the following gifts that visitors to the Bishop Museum had placed at the feet of the PEM Kū sculpture. The two other sculptures on view in Honolulu came from the Bishop Museum and the British Museum. They are the only known Kū sculptures remaining in the world.

- 'Awa in a coconut cup, made by an esteemed elder, Sam Kaai.
- A stone from Waiamea on O'ahu from a gentleman who was moved to present it.
- A fish carved out of a red stone. A traditional offering would have been a live red fish.

Marzan, along with Blair Collis of the Bishop Museum, presented a gift to Lynda Hartigan, The James B. and Mary Lou Hawkes Chief Curator at PEM. The piece of *kapa*, or bark cloth, was encased in a shadow box and decorated with a crescent motif using three natural dyes: 'olena, turmeric; 'alaea, red ochre; and *pala'a*, native fern. The motif mirrors the orientation of the Kū figures when they were on view at the Bishop. The *kapa* was made and decorated by Ivy Hali'imaile Andrade.