

**Hekili Paiaina
45-341 Puali St.
Kane'ohe, Hawaii 96744**

1/7/2000

Dear Honorable Sirs:

Regarding the recent reconciliation hearings on O'ahu on December 17 & 18, 1999.

My name is Hekili Pai'aina and I am writing to you on behalf of my ohana who reside in the ahupua'a of Kane'ohe, moku o Ko'olaupoko on the island of O'ahu.

Although I was not present at those hearings I was able to watch most of it on television and was in most part pleased by what I saw. The mana'o or message that I would like to express is one of understanding and patience. Most native Hawaiians are somewhat ignorant when it comes to their own history and culture. In fact, it would be safe to say that they know more about your history and culture than of their own. There was a time when there were more native hawaiiians speaking fluently in japanese then in their native tongue. But times are changing and a sense of pride is returning to things hawaiian. Most of our ignorance is due to a foreign country which put in place their educational system that was used to effectively eliminate cultural and traditional values and replace it with a western model. This was at the very least inappropriate and at its' worse, demoralizing and destructive to the indigenous peoples here. Therefore, hawaiiians who "find out the truth" embrace a deep sense of resentment and betrayal, culminating in boisterous exhibitions of anger and disbelief which you have been witness to.

For other hawaiiians such as my parents and their generation, they don't want to hear it. Its like an old wound that has healed. And for a few hawaiiians, they just don't care because its not a priority. It can't pay the bills or buy the drugs to help them cope with a lifestyle they have chosen.

I am one of the fortunate hawaiians who have been "born again". Although I still bear a mental scar of our history, I use that to my benefit and have become a cultural practioner, grounding me to the 'aina, the land that feeds. My ancestors had lived on these islands for thousand of years in a symbiotic relationship with the land and sea long before the first foreigners arrived.

America the Beautiful has had control of Hawaii for about one hundred years and the rape of the land for profit continues. Many of our culturally significant and sacred sites are located on federally owned land, and therefore excludes or makes it extremely difficult for native hawaiian practioners to access those sites. This limits our inherent right to practice our native hawaiian gathering, religious and navigational rights. We need access to these areas either by curatorship or withdrawal by the military, the later being preferred. As we are the indigenous peoples of this land who have been oppressed by a country who had admittedly taken it illegally, we have the right to determine our own destiny without U.S., Federal or State interference, i.e. Senator Daniel Inouye.

We need to work directly on a federal level with a department of reconciliation and the money for this process should be readily available, although the process should not be done in haste for we are accountable to our ancestors and generations to come.

In closing, I have seen a hard line push of HA Hawaii advocating the sovereignty process. I would like to state a fact; that they do not represent even a quarter of the hawaiian vote. Although they may have a say in the process, clearly they do not represent the majority. Also may I strongly suggest that something be done lawfully to protect the rights that we as hawaiians have received. Rights that are being threatened by the Rice case. Failure to react to this problem could result in needless acts of violence which would not benefit anyone's cause. Let us continue open dialogue in the coming year and work for the betterment of the Hawaiians.

**Sincerely,
Hekili Pai'aina**