

# Changing Reality

HUNA PRACTICES TO CREATE THE LIFE YOU WANT



SERGE KAHILI KING

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**HUNA PRACTICES TO CREATE  
THE LIFE YOU WANT**

**SERGE KAHILI KING**



Theosophical Publishing House  
Wheaton, Illinois \* Chennai, India

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Cover art: *Eye of Kanaloa*, digital art created 2012 with MandalaMaker 2.0 software. Copyright © KA Strick Designs. Cover artist Kathryn Strick, [www.kastrickdesigns.artistwebsites.com](http://www.kastrickdesigns.artistwebsites.com). Kanaloa is the God of the Ocean in Hawaiian mythology. The Eye of Kanaloa symbol is said to be healing, as well as a shamanic stargate.

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# Dedication

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This book is dedicated to the Alakai of Huna International, who have committed themselves to spreading the Huna philosophy, sharing the Aloha Spirit all over the world, and helped in many ways to develop the ideas and techniques presented here.

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# Acknowledgments

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# Part 1

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## The Shamanic Worldview



## *Life Is an Adventure*

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*Be aware of what you are and what you want to be;  
You can turn your life around from A to Z.  
Nothing is impossible; belief is all you need;  
You don't have to trust to luck, just plant the seed.*

*(Chorus) Oh, Life is an adventure; life is all a dream;  
Everything is flexible and not what it would seem.  
Dare to give yourself a chance to do the best you can;  
Plan the way to live your life and walk your plan!*

*When the world is getting dark and you are full of fear,  
Remember to turn on the light and make things clear.  
When you are unhappy and when you're full of doubt,  
Fill yourself with energy and then begin to shout:*

*(Chorus) Oh, Life is an adventure; life is all a dream;  
Everything is flexible and not what it would seem.  
Dare to give yourself a chance to do the best you can;  
Plan the way to live your life and walk your plan!*

*There's a little secret that's as old as it can be;  
Faith can make a mountain move and love can set you free.  
So bless the world each morning, and by it you'll be blessed;  
Trust the power deep within and then expect the best!*

*(Chorus) Oh, Life is an adventure; life is all a dream;  
Everything is flexible and not what it would seem.  
Dare to give yourself a chance to do the best you can;  
Plan the way to live your life and walk your plan!*

—Serge Kahili King, 199

## The Four Worlds of a Shaman



As many readers know, I was reared and trained in a Hawaiian esoteric tradition that we call Huna. Abundant details of this tradition and my training can be found in my other books. Suffice it to say here that my adoptive Hawaiian family, the Kahilis, followed a version of Huna that is strongly linked to shamanic traditions around the world. The equivalent word for “shaman” in Hawaiian would be *kupua*. What follows, therefore, will have shamanic underpinnings. For the sake of making distinctions, the tradition I write about here can be called *Huna Kupua*.

Although I have written extensively on the subject of Huna in relation to many different areas of life, with this book I intend to go even further in its understanding and practice. And, no doubt, even more details about my life may be revealed.

### A BIT OF BACKGROUND

One of the most confusing things to students of Huna is the way “Hunatics” (a convenient word coined by a student) look at the world. It confuses my students now and it certainly confused me as I was growing up in this tradition.

When I was a teenager living on a farm, my father would sometimes talk about the crops and the animals around us just like the neighboring farmers would, and sometimes he would talk “to” the same crops and animals as if they were all intelligent beings who could understand and respond to him. Even though I learned to do what he did, it was a good while before I understood the process. There was a time when I found it difficult to concentrate, with all the conversations of trees, flowers, bugs, rocks, and buildings going on. Then, somehow, I learned to switch in and out of that kind of awareness without knowing how I was doing it.

During seven years in Africa, my shaman mentor M’Bala taught me to merge with the animals of the jungle after going into a deep trance state. I thought that the trance was the means of merging with them. I realized that he was able to do the same thing in the blink of an eye without going into trance at all. Obviously, trance was just a tool and not the thing that caused the shift in experience.

And my Hawaiian kahuna uncle, Wana Kahili (WK), taught me to go on inner journeys filled with wonder and terror and to see omens in clouds and leaves and furniture. Yet he also taught me to be very aware of my waking state and how not to see omens as well, for there are times when that can be just as important.

My father, M’Bala, and WK spent very little time explaining the phenomena they were teaching me to experience. They felt that experience is the best teacher and that intellectual explanation would get in the way. That was a good method for getting me out of my hard head and into my body, but having to deal with the doubts and fears generated by the nonshamanic culture I also lived in slowed down my

learning considerably. In my learning and teaching, I have found that satisfying the intellect often lowers the analytical and emotional barriers to learning, allowing for a much faster assimilation of experience. So I spent years in nonjudgmental analysis of my personal experiences and those of other shamans in order to more fully understand what we were doing when we did what we did, so that it could be shared more easily.

The real starting point was WK's teaching that there are four worlds or worldviews (levels or classes of experience) that everyone moves in and out of spontaneously and usually unconsciously, but that shamans consciously cultivate. These are, in Hawaiian, *'ike papakahi* (literally, first-level experience), *'ike papalua* (second-level experience), *'ike papakolu* (third-level experience), and *'ike papaha* (fourth-level experience). WK's rough explanation was that these represent, respectively, the ordinary world, the telepathic world, the dream world, and the world of being. For teaching purposes I have renamed them the "objective," "subjective," "symbolic," and "holistic" worlds. WK also said that all of these worlds are common to everyone, not just shamans, and the difference is only that shamans use them knowingly with purpose. He added that a lot of confusion in people's lives comes from mixing worlds in their thought and speech.

It was my aim to teach a lot of people in a short time about shamanic experience, so even with this helpful start, I had a great deal of filling in to do. Here is a brief résumé of that search and research.

## THE SHAMANIC EXPERIENCE

What are we shamans (or Hunatics) doing when we do what we do? We speak with Nature and with spirits; we change the weather and create events; we heal minds and bodies and channel strange beings; we fly out of our bodies, travel through other dimensions, and see what others cannot see; and we pay our taxes, wash our cars, and buy our groceries. Is there a common thread connecting all these widely varying activities, or are they all just a bunch of separate skills?

There is a powerful clue in the first and fundamental principle of Huna. This principle says that "the world is what you think it is." Another more popular way of stating the same thing is that "we create our own reality." Most people who say this don't really accept it fully, because they think it only means that everything bad that happens to them is their fault; and many who accept it with better understanding limit its meaning to the idea that they are responsible for their feelings and experiences and that, if they change their negative thoughts to positive ones, they will begin to attract positive instead of negative experience.

Shamans, however, go much further than that. We take that idea to mean that we not only attract experience by our thinking but we also actually create realities. By our assumptions, attitudes, and expectations, we make things possible or impossible, real or unreal. To put it another way, by shifting mindsets, we can do ordinary and nonordinary things in the same physical dimension that we share with everyone else. I repeat that shamans are not unique in doing this. Any apparent uniqueness comes from how we apply our abilities.

The way to change experience and be able to use non-ordinary abilities within a given reality is to shift from one set of beliefs (or assumptions, attitudes, and expectations) about that reality to another set. It sounds so very simple, and it is. The most difficult part—and it can be extremely difficult for some—is to accept the simplicity, because that means changing one's idea about what reality is. The definition I am going to use is very simple: reality is experience. It doesn't matter whether you believe in a world "out there," in a world of telepathic and energetic connections, in a world made

dreams, or a world of oneness. Reality is experience, and experience is reality. Therefore, we can either do something to modify reality in some way in order to change our experience of it, or we can modify our experience in some way in order to change reality itself. And that's what this book is all about.

## A MODEL OF MINDSETS

The model I am about to present has been specifically designed to enable modern, urban shamans to make clear and conscious distinctions between reality levels or mindsets. In a society more familiar with and accepting of shamanism this would not be as necessary. The same sort of shifts would be made, but they could be made more intuitively because there would be fewer contradictory mindsets from other philosophies, both religious and secular.

Let's imagine that a modern anthropologist is on an island in the South Pacific studying the native culture. One day the village shaman comes in from weeding his taro patch and tells the villagers that while he was working, the goddess Hina came down on a rainbow and warned him that a hurricane was approaching; then she turned into a bird and flew away. The shaman moves easily from weeding to talking to the goddess, and the villagers accept it easily because they expect the shaman to be able to weed his taro and also talk to gods. The anthropologist, however, is likely to be stuck in a mindset that can allow for only drug-induced hallucination, mental aberration, fakery, or dramatization of some ordinary perception. The possibility that the shaman actually communed with a spirit is lost to him, and the ability to do it himself.

As the different worldviews are discussed below, keep in mind that each world can be entered in just a little bit, like dipping your toe into a pool of water, or it can be entered as fully as diving into an ocean's depths.

### 'IKE PAPAHAHI: THE OBJECTIVE WORLD

This is what most people in modern society would call ordinary reality. Using a meadow in a forest as our metaphor, your purely sensory experience of it as an external reality—the colors of the plants, soil, and sky; the smell of the flowers; the sound of birds; the feel of the breeze on your skin; the perception of movement of a doe and her fawn—would take place in an objective world framework. It would also seem obvious and unquestionable to you when viewing the meadow from this level that the meadow is so many square feet in size, that there are so many trees of certain kinds, that some of the trees are broad-leafed hardwoods and others are conifers, that so many animals of different sorts inhabit the area, that somebody owns it, and so on. All of these observations would be true, but only at this level of perception. For this first level, as obvious as it seems, is perceivable in that way only because of one fundamental belief or assumption that serves as the framework for the objective world: *everything is separate*. This is the assumption that allows for making classifications and categories, the laws of classical physics, and the various philosophies of cause and effect.

It is often quite difficult for people brought up with that assumption to see it as just an assumption. It seems so obvious that it must be the only truth. But that is the nature of fundamental assumptions. All experience tends to be consistent with one's assumptions about experience. It's like putting on

rose-tinted glasses and forgetting you are wearing them. If you never remember that you can take them off, you will always think that rose is the natural and only color the world can be. Inconsistency comes in when one becomes aware, consciously or subconsciously, of other assumptions. When the glasses slip, you start to remember you put them on, or you have a dream about a green world. Then you may open up to the experience of other levels. Shamans are taught as early as possible that the objective world is only one way of seeing.

The idea that everything is separate is very powerful and very useful. It has encouraged travel, exploration, science, industry, and all the miracles of modern technology, including those that brought about the publishing of this book. However, it has also been used to justify slavery, racism, war, vivisection, pollution, and overexploitation of the earth's resources. Understand that the assumption itself is neither bad nor good. Human beings must make other assumptions associated with value systems before good and bad enter the picture, and those can operate at any level of reality. Looking at our meadow objectively, for instance, you might see it as good because it provides a food source for various animals. Or you might see it as bad because it is taking up valuable space that might better be used for housing or feeding humans. The point is that the use or misuse of the environment or its inhabitants is based on the idea that things are separate and quantifiable according to personal value systems.

Two secondary assumptions of the objective world are that everything has a beginning and an ending and that every effect has a cause. Things are caused to be born or come into being by some agent or another and then they die or cease to be. This is a vital concern of objective-world thinking, and so great controversies rage over the physical causes of illness and exactly at what moment a cell or group of cells becomes a human being. Huge amounts of money are spent to determine the social and environmental causes of crime and to preserve historic buildings, because the end of their existence would be a cultural loss. And people undergo all kinds of emotional and financial burdens to uncover the specific trauma of their childhood that makes them unhappy today and to extend the life of their physical body. All such actions make perfectly good sense when viewed in the light of the assumptions previously mentioned, but viewed from other assumptions they make no sense at all.

Some people make the value judgment that the objective world is bad, and so they seek to escape or diminish it or deny it. In shamanic thinking, however, the objective world is simply one more plane in which to operate, and to operate effectively in any world is the shamanic goal. In his or her essential role as healer, therefore, the shaman may use objective-world assumptions to become proficient in such healing methods as massage, chiropractic, herbs and medicines, surgery and exercise, or nutrition and color therapy, without being limited to the assumptions of those methods. We change reality at First Level by changing what we do, verbally and physically.

## 'IKE PAPALUA: THE SUBJECTIVE WORLD

Now assume you are at the meadow again. This time you are aware of the interdependence of the natural world, of the mutually supportive roles played by the elements of light and shade, wind and water, soil and stone, trees, birds, flowers, and insects. You feel like you are part of the interdependence, not just an observer. Perhaps you feel emotions of peace, happiness, love, or awe. And you are aware of the season and reminded of seasons past and yet to come. If you are a shaman and are sensitive telepathically, you will probably be able to make a greater internal shift and become aware of the auras, or energy fields, of everything in the scene before you and the interplay of those

forces as well. You may be able to converse with the plants, animals, and stones, or with the wind, sun, and waters, sharing their secrets and stories. Depending on your background, experience, and skill, you may even be aware of and be able to communicate with nature spirits or devas and the oversoul, or *aumakua*, of the meadow itself. While standing there, you could suddenly witness a scene from a hundred years ago of Native Americans camping in that place after a successful hunt, smoking their pipes around the fire and giving thanks to the Great Spirit. You might even feel that you are/were one of them.

The above examples of subjective-world experience are possible because of the basic assumption at this level, namely, that *everything is connected*, supported by the secondary assumptions that everything is part of a cycle and in transition and that all events are synchronous, or happening at the same time.

In the framework of this worldview, telepathy and clairvoyance are natural facts, as unquestionable as the action of a lever in the objective world. Mental communication with anything that exists regardless of distance, is possible because everything is connected. Emotions can be experienced because of empathic connection. Auras can be seen and felt because energy is the connection. Past and future lives can be known because life is cyclic and time is synchronous. Death, at this level, is only a transition, part of a cycle, whereas in the objective world death is a finality. Everything about this level is true, but again, only from the perspective of this level. This is why people primarily oriented in the objective world have such difficulty accepting telepathic phenomena and subjective sciences such as astrology, as facts; it is why people who are primarily oriented in the subjective world find it so hard to explain their experiences to objectively rooted friends. Neither world makes sense when viewed from the perspective of the other. If you are born and you die and that's that, then past lives are nonsense. If the stars are a zillion miles away and you are here on earth, then any influence is absurd. On the other hand, if everything is interdependently connected, then cutting down every tree in sight to build more cities is suicide, and if you have been a member of a different race in a previous life, to hate that race today is hypocrisy. A shamanic way out of this dilemma is achieved through the seventh principle of Huna: "Effectiveness is the measure of truth." Instead of trying to decide which viewpoint is right, the shaman uses whichever one is effective and appropriate to the healing aim at hand.

Shamanic healing methods at this level make use of telepathic suggestions and creative thoughtforms, acupuncture/acupressure, and energy balancing, transfer, or movement by hand or with the use of tools such as crystals and special energy shapes and patterns.

## 'IKE PAPAKOLU: THE SYMBOLIC WORLD

Here you are in the meadow once more, only this time you let your imagination soar, and you see the openness of the meadow as representing your own openness to love and life; the trees become representations of your inner strength and highest aspirations; the birds sing promises of joy; and the sunlight is the touch of God upon your brow. You are filled with the beauty of the place, so moved that, depending on your inclinations, you immediately write a poem or paint a picture to capture the mood. You have now shifted into a mindset that has as its basic assumption that *everything is symbolic*. With a shamanic background, you could go further and look for guiding omens in the patterns of clouds, leaves, or bird flights. Or you could do a ritual that would consecrate the meadow and make it an even better healing place for future visitors. A typical shamanic progression of thought

at this level is that if everything is symbolic and dreams are symbols, then this reality is also a dream. ~~And one aspect of shamanic skill is to enter into dreams and change them. Someone may ask, of what is everything symbolic? And whose dream is it? It would be correct, at this level, to say that everything is symbolic of everything else, but especially of the perceiver, and that the dream is everything's dream, but especially that of the dreamer. Another symbolic-world way of saying it is that everything in your personal life experience is a reflection of you, including all the people and things around you. To change experience from this level, you can change the symbols, change your interpretation of the symbols, or change yourself so that the reflection changes.~~

The secondary assumptions are that everything is part of a pattern and exists in relationship to something else, and that everything means what you decide it means. Many research scientists and theoretical mathematicians are rooted in this level. They seek meaningful patterns and relationships in the apparent structure of the universe and frequently ignore, not only the effect on their search of their own decisions about meaningfulness, but also any objective applications of their research. For the shaman or other symbolically minded person, it becomes useful to notice how beliefs are reflected in the body and in life experiences, and how easily conditions and relationships are changed when patterns of belief are also changed.

Shamanic healing methods at this level include all faith, verbal, and visualization therapies including hypnosis, neurolinguistics, affirmations, guided imagery, placebos, dreamwork, and the use of amulets and talismans.

#### 'IKE PAPAHA: THE HOLISTIC WORLD

This time you are not standing in the meadow, you *are* the meadow. You can feel the sunlight being turned into usable energy by the chlorophyll in your leaves as your roots soak up nutrients from the soil, and you gladly give up your nectar to the bee who gathers your pollen to share with other flowers. As the bee, you enjoy sucking up the nectar, and you know without thinking that some of the pollen will be shared with other flowers and plenty will still be there to take back to the extensions of yourself in the hive. As the bird, you feel the trembling of your throat as you sing your mating song and tip your feathered tail to keep your balance on the pine branch hanging at the meadow's edge. And as the pine, you know that you are not at the edge of the meadow, but are part of what makes the meadow what it is.

This is a tiny sampling of experience at the holistic level. The basic assumption here is that *everything is one*. In practical terms, oneness is your identity. The deepest experience of it is general, called something like "cosmic consciousness," a woefully inadequate attempt to describe a sense of being one with the universe that is essentially indescribable because words and language simply cannot contain the experience. The more shallow and common experience of it is your sense of knowing that you exist. Descartes used a very third-level symbolic approach to justifying the sense of being when he said, "I think, therefore I am." An objective approach might be "I sense, therefore I am." The subjective phrase might be "I feel, therefore I am." At the fourth, holistic level, however, we can probably do no better than Popeye, who said "I am what I am and that's all that I am."

In the holistic world, there is no sense of distinction between you and whatever it is that you identify as also being yourself. To the extent that you are aware of the identification, you are operating in the holistic realm; and to the extent you are aware of "otherness," you are operating in other realms. You may have noticed that in our progression from world to world the sense of separation, quiet



distinct and a primary attribute of the objective world, grew less in the subjective world (connection less separate) and even lesser in the symbolic world (a reflection still implies something else that reflects). A person can also have a holistic awareness of what is considered self while simultaneously having a nonholistic awareness of what is “not self.” Thus a member of a certain tribe in West Africa can have a holistic identification with his own tribe (that is, he may have no sense of personal identity apart from being a tribal member) and yet have a completely objective and hostile view of another tribe.

While holistic identity is a natural human experience—some people normally extend their sense of identity to personal belongings, family, town, or country—it requires considerable skill to enter and to operate consciously in this world. Actors and actresses, whose profession developed out of an age-old shamanic tradition, are the most well-known practitioners of this skill today. In ancient times, and to a certain extent in modern times, shamans were and are able to take on the identity of animals, natural spirits, and archetypes that pass for gods and goddesses. In that state of identification, they have the qualities and powers of those entities. Just as a good actor who is normally shy can convincingly play a confident hero by really getting into the part, so can a shaman attain the strength of a bear or the wisdom of a god by contemplation and acting the part so well that the part acts him. This comes from the secondary assumptions of this level, that knowing begets being. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it: “Do the thing and you shall have the power.”

At this level, the shamanic healing modes are primarily of two sorts: channeling, whereby one takes on the identity of a greater healer or becomes one with a greater healing power and then works on someone in a healing way; and what I call “grokking and guiding,” whereby one identifies with and becomes the person to be healed and then heals oneself. Needless to say, the latter takes a fair amount of confidence to do successfully. Otherwise, you get so disturbed by the other’s condition that you pull out of the holistic level and cannot operate effectively there, or you forget who you really are and talk on the other’s symptoms without being able to heal. People who are strongly empathic may have this experience often. Many therapists identify so much with the problems of their patients or clients that they take on all the ills they are trying to help cure. When I train my students in healing at the holistic level, I recommend that they limit any identification process to a maximum of ninety-nine percent, so that the “one percent shaman” can always return to the core identity.

## MOVING BETWEEN WORLDS

Shifting mindsets or moving between worlds in full consciousness is a subtle and delicate process. A good approximation of what goes on is the experience of looking at this page of written material. It is possible for you to read the words and absorb the information, then to check it for typographical and spelling errors, then to notice the type size and style and paper quality, and finally to become aware of the page as part of a book that you are holding in a particular location at a particular time. The only thing that has changed is your perception, which you voluntarily changed in order to change your experience. In moving between shamanic worlds the process is similar. All you do is change what you are looking for and the assumptions associated with your aim.

The biggest obstacle to this and any other shamanic practice is the interference of critical analysis from other levels. It is quite difficult to practice telepathy if you keep telling yourself that ESP stuff is nonsense. Visualization will do you little good if you keep asking, “Am I just making this up?” And it’s very hard to make a decent income if you identify yourself as spiritual and you identify money as

nonspiritual. In order to move easily and effectively between worlds, you have to practice dropping the ~~assumptions—and the critical analysis deriving from them—~~of each world you leave before moving on to the next. With practice, lots of it, this becomes virtually automatic. What helps tremendously is loving yourself without reserve and trusting God within you. But of course that's good advice whether you are a shaman or not.

### A Short Review of Huna Principles



In all of my books, in some form or another, I teach what I call “the seven principles of Huna,” so much so that some people get bored or irritated because they think, “I’ve heard all that before.” If you feel this way, then skip this chapter. The principles will pop up now and then in further chapters anyway. However, if you are interested in expanding on what you already know and in stretching your mind a bit, then read on.

The principles are really just observations about life handed down orally for untold generations in some cultures and actually written down in various ways for millennia in others—for these ideas do not belong to any single culture. They can be found scattered throughout the writings of Greek and Roman philosophers, in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, and in the traditions of Taoism, Buddhism, Sufism, and Hinduism, to name a few. They came to me as a complete set of ideas through the Hawaiian culture. What is unique about the particular family traditions that were passed on to me is that I was taught to treat them as a set of tools for changing reality. With that in mind, here are some ways of looking at these principles.

I first learned the seven principles of Huna as a set of ideas from my Hawaiian uncle, William Wana Kahili, but not in the same form as I teach them now.

The first form he taught them in was as seven specific Hawaiian words: *‘Ike, Kala, Makia, Manawa, Aloha, Mana, Pono*. By studying the meanings and the roots of these seven Hawaiian words along with common modifiers, one can develop a set of guidelines for turning the essence of Huna into a practical way of changing reality. The problem for me as a student and as a teacher was that these guidelines were learned at a feeling level, the way traditional Hawaiian teachers taught their knowledge in the past. That is, I knew them and could use them, but because of my Western intellectual training I had a difficult time thinking about them and expressing them in English. The first course I taught in Huna was nine months long, and at the end of it all the students were still asking, “What is Huna, really?”

In order to solve this problem I spent a great deal of time condensing these guidelines into simple words and phrases that would be valid in their meaning, be pathways to deeper understanding, and be easy to remember. I will list them briefly, because they will be referred to throughout the book. They do not describe everything about Huna, but everything about Huna can be derived, implied, deduced, or induced from them. If you already know them by heart, please bear with me.

My keywords: Awareness, Freedom, Focus, Presence, Love, Power, Harmony (I have used many variations on the last one, but this is my favorite).

My condensed phrases: The world is what you think it is; There are no limits; Energy flows where attention goes; Now is the moment of power; To love is to be happy with; All power comes from within; Effectiveness is the measure of truth.

While this system has made it much easier to teach Huna to people trained in modern educational systems, much of the original flavor is lost, so I will present some other ways in which I was taught. Please forgive me for repeating a small amount of material from my book *Huna: Ancient Hawaiian Secrets for Modern Living*.

Uncle William used Hawaiian sparingly while training me, because at that time there were only a few estimated two thousand speakers in the whole world, and he decided that speaking it fluently was not necessary for what he wanted to teach me. On the other hand, there were certain concepts that could be grasped more easily as translations of Hawaiian thought. The proverbial sayings below, which I have incorporated into my novel *Dangerous Journeys*, are from him.

1.

*Ola i ka mea nui, ola i ka mea iki*: Life is in big things, life is in little things.

2.

*Ana 'ole, ke ao, ka po*: The inner world and the outer world are without limit.

3.

*No'ono'o ke ali'i, ehu ka ukali*: Thought is the chief, activity is the follower (he loved to do many variations on this form).

4.

*Noho ka mana i ka Manawa*: Power resides in the present moment (grammatically, it should have been *i keia manawa*, but that's not how Uncle said it).

5.

*Ke aloha, ke alo, ke oha, ka ha*: Love is being in the presence of someone or something, sharing joy, giving life.

6.

*Mai ka po mai ka mana*: Power comes from the inner world.

7.

*Ana 'oia i ka hopena*: Truth is measured by results.

To show that these ideas were not limited to the Kahili family, here are seven proverbs from the book *'Olelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings* by Mary Kawena Pukui (Bishop Museum Press, 1986). They represent only a few of the proverbs and sayings that incorporate the ideas in the principles, but they do show that the ancient Hawaiians were very aware of the seven principles in their own terms.

1.

*'A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka halau ho'okahi*: All knowledge is not taught in one school (a variation on the idea that there are many sources of knowledge and many ways to think about things).

2.

*'A'ohe pu'u ki'eki'e ke ho'a'o 'ia e pi'i*: No hill is too high to be climbed (a way of saying that

nothing is impossible and that there are no limits).

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3.

*He makau hala 'ole:* A fishhook that never fails to catch (said of one who always gets what he wants; the fishhook was a primary symbol of concentrated attention, and a good fishhook was believed capable of attracting fish even without bait).

4.

*E pane'e ka wa'a oi moe ka 'ale:* Do it now! (The actual translation is "Set the canoes moving while the waves are at rest.")

5.

*He 'olina leo ka ke aloha:* Joy is in the voice of love. (The relationship is obvious.)

6.

*Aia no i ka mea e mele ana:* Let the singer select the song. (A poetic way of acknowledging that power comes from within.)

7.

*'Ike 'ia no ka loea i ke kuahu:* An expert is recognized by the altar he builds. (As Pukui puts it, "It is what one does and how well he does it that shows whether he is an expert." This is a good guideline for recognizing experts in any field, as well as a good example of the seventh principle.) My uncle also liked to use the proverb, *Hö a'e ka 'ike he'enalua i ka hokua o ka 'ale*, "Show your knowledge of surfing on the back of a wave," to illustrate this principle.)

## THE PRINCIPLES IN STORIES

I have loved stories of nearly any kind ever since my father taught me to read at the age of three, but my favorites have always been myths, legends, and fantasy tales. Perhaps my Uncle William sensed this, or perhaps it was his usual way of teaching. At any rate, he told me lots of stories related to the principles of Huna. Some of these were traditional Hawaiian tales using the traditional storyteller's art of making the story serve the purpose of the telling, and some were Hawaiian versions of tales told elsewhere in the world, whose origin is uncertain. I'll present, in abbreviated form, seven tales, each offering a particular understanding of the principle to which it relates. These stories all feature Maui Kupua, the archetypal hero and shaman famous throughout the Pacific; and because my uncle's original home was Kauai, that is where the tales take place.

## WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

On a beautiful, calm day, Maui paddled an outrigger canoe full of coconuts into the Great Lagoon that used to exist west of the village of Waimea on Kauai. At that time, it was the practice of the High Chief to station a *luna 'auhau*, a sort of customs agent, at the entrance of the lagoon to collect taxes on goods from all who entered for the purpose of trade. So, as Maui paddled up, he was directed to land

on the shore before going on. Maui complied with a big smile, and the agent was immediately suspicious, because Maui had a reputation far and wide as a trickster. There was no tax on coconuts which were plentiful in that land, so the agent, certain that Maui was probably smuggling something, had his boat emptied completely in order to inspect the interior. Nothing was found, however, and Maui was allowed to proceed, although reluctantly. Over the next year, Maui came again about every two months and the same ritual was carried out. The canoe was emptied and searched, each search becoming more and more intensive, until Maui was finally allowed to continue on. After that first year, Maui didn't come anymore, and his trips were mostly forgotten. Many years later, Maui was walking the High Chief's trail from Hanalei in the north to Koloa in the south when he heard someone shout, "*Hele mai 'ai!* Come and eat!" Looking to the side of the path, he saw a man with white hair gesturing for him to join him in front of his hut where he was eating from a bowl of poi. Maui sat with him and shared the poi and they talked politely until the man said, "Maui, do you remember me?" Maui nodded. "I am no longer the High Chief's agent and there is something that has been troubling me all these many years since I saw you last. I know you must have been smuggling something, but I could never figure out what. Please tell me now." Maui took up a large gob of poi, ate it, smacked his lips, smiled, and said, "Canoes."

### HOW HIGH CAN YOU GO?

A long, long time ago (at this point some Hawaiian storytellers like to say, "before Captain Cook") the sky was very close to the ground, and all human beings had to crawl around on their hands and knees. This was inconvenient, to say the least, and there were a lot of quarrels and bruises when they bumped into each other because their eyes were on the ground. One day Maui, who was crawling around with the rest, bumped into someone and started to get angry, but he was stopped by a very sweet voice. "You're Maui, aren't you?" asked the voice. Maui grumbled assent. "Well, since you're supposed to be a *kupua*, why don't you lift up the sky so we don't have to bump into each other all the time?" Maui bent his head so he could see the speaker, who turned out to be a very pretty young woman. "If you give me a drink from your gourd," he said, "then I'll push up the sky for you" (note that this phrase is usually a metaphor for something else). The young woman agreed, and so Maui twisted over onto his back and pushed with his feet. Then he knelt and pushed with his shoulders. Then he stood and pushed with his hands. While he was doing so, the mountains, finally freed of the burden of the sky, were growing taller, so Maui climbed them and pushed and pushed until he gave a last great shove and pushed the sky up to where it is today—and that's why we know the story is true. However, some people still never take their eyes off the ground.

### KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE GOAL

Maui sailed between the Hawaiian Islands many times and finally decided that they were just too far apart, so he planned to bring them all together. He went to his mother, Hina, to ask for her advice, and she told him that if he could manage to catch the giant fish, *Luehu* (scattered), then he would succeed. She also told him that it was very important for whoever was helping him to keep their eyes on the fish no matter what happened. Maui collected his magic fishhook, *Manaiakalani* (lei needle from

heaven), talked his four brothers into helping, and paddled with them out into the deep ocean to find the giant fish (probably a whale). Finding Luehu, Maui caught it with his hook. The whale took them on a wild ride around the ocean in a big circle, causing the fishing line to wrap around the islands, and at last Maui's brothers were able to hold the great fish still and draw him toward Kauai, paddling backward for all they were worth. As the great fish (or big whale) was being pulled toward the canoes, the islands were being drawn together as well. Then a canoe bailer floated past Maui's canoe. All the brothers ignored it except the last and youngest one, who just picked it up and tossed it behind him in case it might become useful. As they got closer and closer to the shores of Kauai, the brothers heard loud shouting from the people on shore. The youngest brother turned around and saw that the canoe bailer had turned into a beautiful woman. "Look, brothers!" he shouted, and all the other brothers except Maui turned around and gazed with wonder on the beauty of this magical woman. At that moment, the fishing line broke, the whale escaped, and the islands drifted back to where they were before.

### WHERE ARE YOU?

Ever curious about everything, Maui decided to join the priestly order of *Ku* in order to discover what it was all about. Since this order was extremely strict, Maui had to spend lots of time at lectures and meetings to learn all the rules and regulations. One day Maui, as an acolyte, was told to accompany one of the older priests to a temple some distance away. As they traveled the path, the old priest kept up a steady monologue about the importance of following the rules. Some hours into the journey, they came to a flooded stream, and there on the bank was a young woman with a large load of *tapa* (a bark cloth used for clothes and bedding), weeping bitterly. On seeing the men, she begged them to carry her across so that she could get home before dark, because it was an area where bandits roamed after nightfall. The old priest ignored her completely, and Maui only smiled at her pleasantly without speaking. This was because it was a time of month when priests and acolytes of this order were to have nothing at all to do with women. When the old priest was ready to cross, he ordered Maui to carry him. Maui, being very strong, picked up the priest in one arm and the girl with her bundle in the other and stomped across the stream. There, he put both of them down and began walking onward. The priest hustled up beside him, red with anger. He spoke no word but his face became more and more red, and after a mile he finally broke out with an eruption of abusive words about how Maui had broken the rules. Maui looked at him in surprise and waited until the torrent had stopped. Then, gently, he said, "Are you still carrying that woman? I set her down by the stream."

### IN THE SPIRIT OF ALOHA

Long, long ago, when everything was different, Maui found his mother, Hina, crying outside her hut. When he asked her what was wrong, she said that the sun was traveling across the sky so fast her *tapa* cloth could not dry properly. Like a good son, Maui said he would take care of it. First, Maui taught his brothers how to make cord and, with the cord, how to make nets. They made a big, strong net and took it to the top of the mountain, *Haleakala* (House of the Sun), where the sun came out of his cave every morning to make his journey across the sky. Before dawn, the brothers draped the net over the

mouth of the cave and got ready. Morning came, the brothers held the net tight, and the sun burned right through it as if it were paper and went racing on. Realizing that ordinary cord wouldn't work, Maui went to his *kupua* (trickster god) sister, also named Hina, and asked for some of her hair with which to make a net. Since she had magical powers, her hair looked exactly the same even after she had cut off as much as Maui needed. With this hair, Maui and his brothers made a new net and climbed the mountain again, draping the net over the cave once more and waiting for dawn. When it was time, the sun burst out of the cave, but this time he was held by the magical net of hair. He was able to rise just high enough to shine onto the plains where the people lived, but there he was held fast in spite of terrific struggles. About midday it was getting very hot. Maui was both elated with his success and troubled by what he was going to do next, especially when his mother appeared and told him that this wasn't going to work because everything in the villages was burning up. Finally, Maui's grandmother, also named Hina, suggested that they do a *ho'oponopono* (a traditional kind of reconciliation process) with the sun. Maui got the sun to sit down with all the people, and together they aired their grievances and offered solutions. The outcome was that the sun agreed to go more slowly across the sky for half the year, and the people agreed that the sun could go more quickly during the other half. That is the way it is today, and so we know the story is true. We also know the story is true because sometimes you can still see the strands of Maui's magical net hanging down from the sun through the clouds.

## THE SECRET OF FIRE

A very, very long time ago, human beings had to eat all their food raw because only the '*alae* (mudhen) birds had the secret of fire, and they guarded it jealously. One day Maui gagged on some raw meat and complained to his mother, Hina, and she told him he would have to get the secret of fire from the '*alae* birds if he wanted cooked food. So Maui went to the swampy area by the Waimea River, where those birds lived, and tried to sneak up on them while they were gathered around the fire. But the birds were too quick for him. They scratched out the fire and scattered all the embers before he could catch either them or a piece of burning wood. Time after time, Maui tried with no success, so he went back to his mother and asked for advice. Hina suggested he try to catch the youngest bird late at night when they were all sleepy. This Maui could do. After catching the youngest bird, he choked him until he agreed to give up the secret. First the bird said that the secret was to rub two pieces of taro stalk together. Maui was no fool, so he held on to the little bird while rubbing the pieces of taro together. When it didn't work because the taro stalks were too soft, Maui choked the bird even harder. So the bird told him the secret was to rub two *ti-plant* stalks together, but when Maui tried that—still holding onto the bird—it didn't work either, for the same reason. Furious, Maui almost squeezed the life out of the little bird, who finally squawked, "Fire is in the water." Maui was so surprised that he loosened his hold and the bird escaped. Maui realized that he had been given a riddle, and as he was a great lover of riddles, he decided to figure it out rather than try to catch the bird again. After many days, Maui figured out that *Waimea*, the name of the river, means "red water" and that this is also a nickname for the hardwood tree, *olomea*. In addition, the yellow blossoms of the *hau*, a softwood tree that grows along the banks of the river, turn red in the evening and fall onto the water. Finally, he recalled that the phrase *wai'ula 'ili ahi* (red water with a surface of fire) is a poetic name for the Waimea River on Kauai. Putting this all together, he rubbed a piece of *hau* with a piece of *olomea* and produced fire. Before sharing his discovery with his people, Maui caught the youngest



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