

*A love letter of gratitude for our just concluded,  
first ever Hula Lokahi Retreat.*

*I am grateful for the beauty of the surroundings nestled hard up against  
the cliffs of Kā'ā'awa Valley;*



*for the quiet days and nights (except for the resident Peacock);*



*for the gentle rains that refreshed the land and the air;*



*for the sounds of the ocean as we chanted the rising of the sun  
each morning;*



*"E la e....."*

*for the joyful and full-hearted participation of each of our attendees in every aspect of our learning experience together;*  
*for the sacrifice of time and resources of our guests who came from far flung places on the mainland to learn and honor our culture;*  
*for our local haumana who came to immerse themselves into deeper learning;*



*for the delicious and healthful food we shared together;*



*for Kualoa Ranch gifting us with a great tour of the Moli'i fishpond and surrounding gardens and the learning they shared with us;*



*for the very land of Kualoa itself and the teaching that we get from being in these deeply historic and spiritually important places;*



*for the tireless work of Leialoha who put the retreat together and  
shepherded us through every moment of our time together;*



*for the spirit of beauty and grace that Momi brought to our  
sessions;*



*for all these things -and more- I am in gratitude.*

*In our time together we explored the deep background of the mele that we learned. We took a glimpse at the Kumulipo - the awesome genealogical chant that takes us through the eras from creation down to the birth of a single high chief. All this so we could properly understand the depth of the lyrics written by Frank Hewitt in his anthem "Kamali i o ka Pō".*



*For our kahiko mele, we used Hi iakā's words of praise for the highest peak we view from Kualoa Beach Park, "Kanehoalani". We harvested our own guava branches and fashioned our own kalá au for the mele. We made our own adornments for the dance - lei pō'o (head lei) and lei 'ā'i (neck lei). Dancing both of these numbers in view of this majestic cliff with a full understanding of the text was a powerful experience felt by all of us.*



*It was a deeply satisfying experience for me personally, and a pinnacle learning experience for our participants. This was our first such retreat - and already we are excitedly making plans for the next one. I invite each of you to consider being with us next year as we take on another area of study of the culture, of the dance and of the land. Watch this space for information!*

*Mahalo nui loa, Kumu Kea*



6/2017