

Ka Ahu Pae Hōkū A Makali'i

Years ago, for those who remember, three (3) ki'i once stood proudly atop the stone ahu (raised platform) fronting the Old Courthouse in North Kohala. One was a male image, one a female image, and one smaller ki'i. Over the years, the ki'i were either dismantled or had fallen. Two of the ki'i are currently housed in an art gallery in Kapa'au, and the largest one was placed on the ground at the back of the State building which is the building that is furthest mauka.

It is the discovery and the story of Kanani Kaulukukui, Jr.'s 20 year relationship with this ki'i of which his wife Lehua has named Hiki'ula, that we will share here with you, dear readers. You see, as a carver, he could not let this beautiful and sacred work of art lay another night in absolute desolation. This is the story of a night in the Fall of 2004 that will live forever in our memories.

After hearing stories of a fallen ki'i that had been stashed behind the old State building, we embarked on a mission of rescue. Knowing that this activity could only occur on a dark night, we waited for the night of Pō Kāne. As we traveled solemnly from Waikōloa to Kapa'au, we were deep in silent thought, plotting the best and most efficient strategy in moving a ki'i of unknown size and proportion. At 9 PM, Kanani Kaulukukui, Jr. backed his old Ford F150 in to the parking lot and lowered the tailgate. He got out and walked around the building to where the ki'i lay. He estimated that the ki'i was 6 feet in length and had a robust girth. In the dim light, he saw that the base of the ki'i was broken along with the headdress and cracks along the bridge of the nose. Kanani began to lift the ki'i. He bent his knees and wrapped his arms around its waist and told himself, "I am going to move him, no matter what." Kanani lifted and carried the ki'i around the building eventually making his way to his truck. Before placing the ki'i gently on to the truck bed, he silently said, "I am taking you home and I am going to give you new life."

After cleaning him up, Hiki'ula has stood proudly, ever watching, ever protecting our home next to an ahu that is just outside the back door. It is a good thing that the weather in Waikōloa is hot, dry, and sunny. The heat of the sun has tempered the wood making him tough and durable.

In early 2024, Kupuna Kealoha Sugiyama had a vision of a healing garden for the area. His vision was of a place where people of all ethnicities can go to meditate to find peace, solace, and healing. Through a permanent art installation, the vibrational energies of the area of the "old courthouse," where both justice and injustices were served throughout the years, can be consciously and subconsciously raised. Kupuna Kealoha brought together local community artists along with County representatives for meetings to discuss the project and to get the County's blessing. Uncle Kealoha specifically asked that Kanani carve ki'i for the ahu and he asked all of the artists to have their art done before Kamehameha Day 2024. Here was the opportunity for Hiki'ula to finally come home. Of course, we had mixed emotions. After 20 years of being the kia'i/guardian of our home, we were going to miss him, however, he has a higher purpose of serving the greater community.

Kanani set to work, restoring and strengthening the base, repairing and building up the headdress, fixing the bridge of his nose, applying fresh coats of stain, and multiple coats of water sealant. It took Kanani 3 months to get him ready to stand tall once more, ready to make the journey home to Kohala. We consulted the moon calendar and saw that May 4, 2024 would be the perfect moon phase for his installation. This was the night of Pō Kāne transitioning to the phase of Maui. We remembered that he was liberated on Pō Kāne and therefore, it was only fitting that he return home on the same moon phase.

Everything was prepared. At the site, gravel and cinder were laid. The accompanying map details the placement of ki'i. On the morning of May 4, 2024, Lehua witnessed a rainbow arching over one of the pu'u on Mauna A Wākea. This was a good sign. Upon arriving at the site, a light rain sprinkled down upon the ahu as a blessing of welcoming us home. The firemen were

ready to lend a helping hand in lifting and holding the ki'i up as Kanani locked **them** in to place. Kumu hula Mana'olana Keawe and members of Hālau Mana'olana O Kohala offered beautiful ho'okupu of lei and oli. Red fish were also offered.

It is at this point, dear readers, that I will now clarify why I say "**them.**" If you recall, at the very beginning of this mo'olelo, we said that three (3) ki'i once stood on this ahu and that two (2) are housed in an art gallery in Kohala. Months earlier, Kanani had inquired with the owners of the gallery if they were willing to release the ki'i to their original location. He shared with them about the healing garden project and the importance of this project to the community. The gallery owners, however, declined. Therefore, in order to achieve full restoration of ki'i on the ahu, Kanani began to carve two ki'i – one female, and one smaller in stature. Lehua has named these two ki'i Hiki Lei & Hiki Hōa'ia'i. He also envisioned an 'auamo where lei and other types of ho'okupu could be placed. This is why it took him three months to prepare.

Hiki'ula's homecoming meant that he has come full circle. The intention is that through the healing and restoration of Hiki'ula, with his companions Hiki Lei & Hiki Hōa'ia'i by his side, along with a myriad of other companions both seen and unseen, their combined healing energy will magnify and amplify within all who come in to their space. Ka Ahu Pae Hōkū A Makali'i.

An excerpt from the book entitled Hi'iakaikapoliopole, chanted by Hi'iaka as she restored life to a young woman in Kohala.

E ola ho'i 'o ia nei 'O Makali'i
Ka hōkū Hiki'ula, Hiki Lei, Hiki Hōa'ia'i
Ka pae hōkū a Makali'i

... 'Amama, ua noa, a lele ka pule!
The prayer has been set free!

