Lei o Hilo Ka Ua Pē i ka Ulahi

The Lei of Hilo is the Rain Scented with Smoke

Haʻehaʻe kuʻu hiʻikua
Puʻuohau kuʻu hiʻialo
A pō malia ja ao ʻē, pai a ka hulu kōnane

Kīʻina ʻŪpolu e ka ʻākau
Hēkau ʻē ka hema iā Kālae
Lele kawa me he lele wai pipʻolua Hawaiʻi

Na ka hau o Maunakea kuʻu niʻo
Na ke ahi o Maunaaloa kuʻu moʻole
Hualalai mili kuahiwi ʻōlewe nei
Ka moana nui pāmamao o ka moku

Inā kāua nauane, nauane
Ke ala e ʻimi nei i ka pono e kau ala

Inā hoʻi kāua nauane, nauane
A pāpahi i ka hālīko ʻapapane lei lehua

Lei o Hilo ka ua pē i ka uahi
He ola, he ola, he ʻAloha iwiʻhilo ʻē,

I bear the sun of Haʻehaʻe on my back
I caress the sun of Puʻuohau at my chest
And when night alights, it is the feathery
    glow of moonlight that sustains me entirely!

My right hand reaches for ʻūpolu
My left hand anchored at Kālae
Jumping in feet first like the water fall,
    Hawaiʻi in profound arch

The snow of Maunakea sets my zenith
The fire of Maunaaloa establishes my nadir
Hualalai conceiving in the womb the journeys
    upon further shores

Let's make a move and make a stir
For the path seeking profound experiences
    avails itself

Let's indeed make our move
Until we are worthy of wearing the lei of scarlet
    lehua

The lei of Hilo is that of rain drenched in
    volcanic promise
A life, a life this is, a life breathing right through
    to the core!

Composed by Dr. Taupōuri Tangarō, September 2006

This mele places the learner within the cardinal center of potential using Hawaiʻi Island's sacred
geography as a metaphor. In the Hawaiian language, the right hand is called ʻākau, which also
means north; the left hand is termed hema, which is the south. Stepping into this orientation then
positions the rising sun at the back of the person and the setting sun at the front, or face of the
person. Maunakea is the head, and as Maunakea is sacred so is the head of the native person.
Maunaoloa is the womb from which all magma rises from the core of the earth; hence Maunaoloa is
the primal base, as Maunakea is the celestial reach. Hualalai mili kuahiwi (Hualalai is the youngest
of mountains) speaks to profound germination. Lei o Hilo ka ua pē i ka uahi (Hilo's lei is that of rain
scented with smoke) speaks to the crux of our life founded on water and fire!