

Journal of Momi Kawelo The Remarkable Journey (Week One)

Day 1 - I've been training hard for the past three years so that I can "crew" aboard the Hōkūle'a. We've been making small trips around the State, but now I'm finally going to have my chance to sail on a long trip. Wow! Rapa Nui here we come!

The purpose of the voyage is to "close the triangle", sailing the ancient migratory route to reach the third corner of the Polynesian Triangle. The canoe has yet to visit Rapa Nui, which is the most isolated piece of land on Earth. How did our Polynesian ancestors ever find it?! This voyage will celebrate their accomplishment and focus on the lessons we can learn from the history of Rapa Nui. I am thrilled, but at the same time I wonder if I'm the right person to go on such a long voyage. This journey is going to be the most challenging. We're scheduled to sail from Hilo to the Marquesas to Mangareva to Pitcairn and then to Rapa Nui. The toughest part of the journey will be the Pitcairn/Rapa Nui leg. Nainoa said food and water rations will be cut in half plus there will be fewer of us on board. The whole point in doing this is to lighten our load and to get to our destination quicker. I can't help but feel a little uneasy. Even Nainoa admits that because of the grueling voyaging conditions we may not even make it to Rapa Nui. That makes me nervous.

And still there are questions that keep popping up in my mind: Do I deserve to go? Will I appropriately honor my ancestors? Can I handle being

out at sea for such a long time? What if I get sick? Are my family and friends ready for this? Nainoa told us not to worry. These kinds of questions always come up before a sail. He knows we are fit because we all went through the crew training and fitness tests and passed with flying colors! He also knows that not only are our bodies fit, but our mind and spirits are strong.

Well, I'm glad he has faith in me. I'm glad he has faith in all of us. Tomorrow we prepare the canoe.

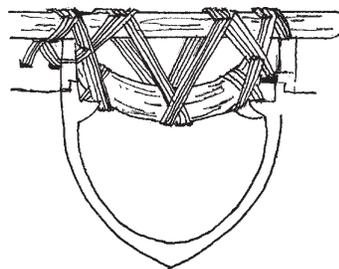
Day 2 - We just finished reinforcing the lashings of the hull to the 'iaoko (outrigger boom).

We're all tired, but excited about the voyage. Nainoa called a meeting today to talk about things we will need for the sail. Good thing I bought a 48-quart cooler from Costco last week!

We're expected to stuff all of our personal belongings into the one cooler. Gee! I hope all my stuff is going to fit. There's really not much you can fit in a cooler that size.

Nainoa said there are several things that we need to bring on our voyage like: a poncho because - guarantee - it's going to rain, sunscreen 'cause the sun is real intense and for sure I'll bring the sunglasses I bought from Kimura Fishing Supply. Ma keeps telling me to take my Kodak instamatic, but I told her, "That's a luxury. Only if there's room in my cooler, Ma."

When our kūpuna (ancestors) used to go on a long voyage, they would store their personal stuff in a hōkeo (long calabash). The hōkeo



had many uses. It would be used to store food, clothing, fishing gear and even cooking utensils. Anything our *kūpuna* wanted to protect from the wet weather would be stored in the calabash. Those items that could afford to get wet would be stored in *lauhala* baskets.

One thing we are not allowed to bring onboard is a transistor radio. There is one radio on board for communication with the escort boat that will travel with us. Nainoa said, if we turn on personal radios, we would probably hear reports of our location. One purpose of this journey is to navigate using the traditional methods of navigating by the stars. If the radio tells us where we are, then Nainoa would be able to get a “fix” on where the canoe is in relationship to land. That would definitely defeat the purpose of this journey. We do, however, have an ‘ukulele on board so we can make our own music. That will be more fun anyway!

I am grateful for this opportunity. And I am especially thankful for the support of my family. For without my ‘ohana, it would be hard for me to take this trip.

Day 3 - What a glorious day! Everyone who will be crewing the sail is down at the docks preparing for our voyage.

I'm the only *wahine* on board the canoe, and I will be responsible for casting the fishing lines and hauling them in. That's my *kuleana* (responsibility). This time of year, there should be plenty of fish. There's *ono* (wahoo), *mahimahi* (dorado), ‘*ahi* (yellowfin tuna), *a'u* (marlin) and *aku* (bluefin tuna). We'll have plenty of ‘*ono* (delicious) meals.

When I was a young girl, my father used to take me fishing with him. He told me a legend about a group of fishermen who were responsible for

discovering the islands I know the story wasn't true, but daddy made it sound good. As the story goes, these fishermen would go to the open ocean in search of fish. Sometimes they would be thrown off course because of a major storm. When this would happen, they would drift for days and eventually discover land. Daddy would always say, "Eh girl, we nevah use to catch fish, we use to catch islands!" Then he would crack up laughing. I never understood why he laughed so much. It was as if it was an inside joke.

As we all know, Polynesians wouldn't have drifted as far as the Hawaiian Islands. They must have watched the flight paths of migrating birds like the *kōlea* (*Pacific golden plover*) and figured out there were islands to the north of their home. What an incredible journey that must have been to take off in the direction of those birds.

Day 4 - If everything goes as scheduled, we should set sail in a few days. We're all nervous with excitement. I have packed and repacked so many times, trying to fit everything into my cooler. Finally, I'm packed and ready to go. I brought a couple of books and some playing cards to pass the time. *Mahalo, e Akua* for giving me this wonderful opportunity!

Day 5 - Tonight we have someone special in our midst. *Kumu Lei* has been rehearsing with us on protocol. *Kumu Lei* explained that protocol is respecting a certain place and its people. One way to show respect is through *oli* (chant). She's taught us a genealogy chant about *Hōkūle'a* and its many voyages. It makes me feel good to be able to greet our hosts properly.

Tonight, we practiced an *oli* (chant) at Hilo Harbor. The night was pitch black. There was no moon only the flickering of stars. The crew had

formed a human circle. As we clasped hands a wave of *mana* (energy) surged through the group. Everyone's face became serious. Kumu Lei stood with her back to the harbor and in a voice you knew came only from her *na'au* (guts), she bellowed:

One:	kū mau mau	It moves, the god begins to run!
All:	I kū wa	Stand at intervals!
One:	I kū mau mau	Stand in couples!
	I kū huluhulu	Haul with all your might!
	I ka lanawao	Under the mighty trees!
All:	I kū wa	Stand at intervals!
One:	I kū lanawao	Stand up among the tall forest trees!
All:	I kū wa	Stand at intervals!
	I kū wa huki	Stand at intervals and pull!
	I kū wa ko	Stand at intervals! and haul!
	I kū wa a mau	Stand in place! and haul!
	A mau ka ēulu	Haul branches and all!
	E huki, e	Haul now!
	Kūlia	Stand up my hearties!

Boy, was I was blown away. Real chicken skin. Kumu said that the chant is an ancient one. When it was time to build a canoe, the people would *laulima* (work together). There would be a sea of people extending from the mountain to the ocean. As the groups would *huki* (pull) on the rope, the log would gradually inch its way down the mountainside



kumu Lei

toward the ocean. As a way to focus their energies and bring unity to the group, the people would chant I KŪ WA.

What an awesome experience! This will be a night I will never forget.

Day 6 - Nainoa has given us the word. He's been watching the winds and clouds to see when we can go. We will probably leave Wednesday or Thursday.

We've loaded the canoe with the last of our non-perishable foods. Canned chili, corned beef, pork and beans and spaghetti are just a few of the items we have stored on board the canoe. During ancient times, our ancestors ate only traditional foods. That meant a diet of 'ulu (breadfruit), niu (coconut), 'uala (sweet potato), mai'a (banana), kalo (taro), i'a (fish), pua'a (pig), moa (chicken) and 'ilio (dog). The voyagers would eat all the fresh food at the start of the trip so it wouldn't spoil. Other foods that they had either dried or fermented before the trip would be eaten along the way. Smart buggahs huh?

My doctor keeps telling me that I'm in really good health. That must be from all the fish, poi, fruits and vegetables I eat every day.

I've been hauling five-gallon water jugs to the boat all day. For voyage to the Marquesas, we will need about one-and-a-half tons of water. That's a lot of water. Naturally, we will ration ourselves which means each of us will be able to drink only a quart of water a day. When the new crew begins the Pitcairn/Rapa Nui leg of our journey, they will have to cut their food and drinking rations in half. If our trip takes longer, we will have to catch rain water in the tarps we've hitched. Drinking rain water is not the

same as drinking Board of Water Supply water. But it's better than dehydrating. The Doc said we have to be real careful of that.

Day 7 - Tomorrow we leave! Nainoa has decided that the weather conditions are just right for us to set sail. He has checked the weather report. He's also been observing the wind direction and speed, the shapes of the clouds and the color of the sky in the horizon at sunrise.

Our journey will be an incredible feat! We will have accomplished something our ancestors did many, many years ago. This will be the first voyage to Rapa Nui from Hawai'i since the time of our ancestors using no modern navigational instruments. We will be traveling against the currents and against the winds. And...against all odds.

Nainoa talked about the vast distance between Hawai'i and Rapa Nui. He also reminded us that the Hilo - Marquesas - Mangareva - Pitcairn sail would be the easiest. It would be the Pitcairn - Rapa Nui journey that would be the most challenging. It will probably take about 35 days just to travel from Pitcairn to Rapa Nui. An that's only a 1,400 mile journey!

Since the canoe will be tacking into the wind, it will take five times longer than our "usual" 200 miles per day to reach Rapa Nui. It will also be difficult to find that small, isolated island. Plus on that leg of the journey we'll have fewer crew members and food rations will be cut in half. By doing this, it will make our canoe lighter so that the crew can travel faster. And so that "garens-ball-barns" we'll make it to Rapa Nui.

We all know of the dangers and the safety measures we will have to take on this voyage. And we are prepared. Tomorrow we sail!

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