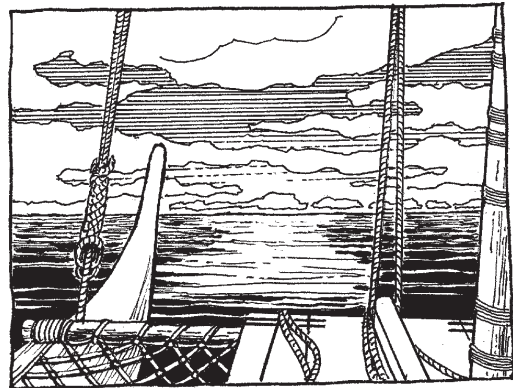


Journal of Momi Kawelo In the Doldrums (Week Four)

Day 1 - Nainoa sighted a school of porpoises off the port bow (front left part of the boat). He says that puts us about 9 degrees north latitude. We've been 14 days at sea and have finally reached the "deadly doldrums." The doldrums are not so much a place but a condition. There's no sign that reads, "You are now entering the Doldrums." All it is — and it can vary — is a weather condition that is situated slightly north of the equator. For those that sail through, sometimes it can be quick or it can be slow. On one voyage it took 21 days, and on another it took just a day and a half. It just all depends. Unfortunately, our conditions were not favorable at all.



The air was hot and sticky. Although it was overcast, the heat penetrated the cloud cover. The only ample shade on board the canoe was a few blue tarps, which brought some relief from the scorching heat. It felt as if we were in a frying pan. The ocean was *mālie* (calm) on the surface. It looked like a pane of translucent glass. There was absolutely no movement. No wind. No rain. No ocean swells. Nothing.

All Nainoa could do was to let the canoe drift. And all we did was wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. It was boring, and the crew would often be grumpy. Mau always told us that the time spent in the doldrums should be a time for reflection — thinking about things. We should also try to conserve our energy. Mau said if we burn up our energy, then we will use up our resources — like the food and water we brought. It sure does make sense.

I'm not sure how long we'll be stuck here. Each voyage is different. Each condition in the doldrums is different. Mau would always tell Nainoa not to fight the weather. Just let nature take its course.

I guess that's all we can do. We have to have faith in our navigator.

Day 2 - Nainoa told us that Mau could always tell where he was in the ocean just by recognizing different seamarks and their position in the ocean. Mau knew what region he was in when he saw the *mālolo* (flying) fish leaping out of the water in pairs or when there were more jellyfish than usual in one area. He could even tell where he was when a slew of sharks and a group of red-tailed tropic birds appeared. Mau's observations of nature were truly amazing!

I hope the sighting of the porpoises is an omen that we'll be out of here soon. On the last voyage to Tahiti, it took the crew only 7 days to get out of the doldrums!

Day 3 - On my 2 to 6 a.m. watch Doc confided in me. He was a bit concerned about Kia who is diabetic. Doc has always been cautious about having someone on board who is diabetic. But we've learned from previous

voyages that people with diabetes can make long journeys with appropriate preparation. Because of his diabetes Kia tends to drink more water. Doc's a little concerned about Kia and our limited supply of water. All we can do is hope for rain.

The canoe's sails are still slackened, and we're kind of drifting. Nainoa hopes that the sky will clear soon. Nights have probably been the worst. No stars to guide us — just a lot of cloud cover.

This endless waiting is getting to some of us. Tempers are short. The cook and Hōkū got into an argument over what to cook for breakfast. It's silly "kine stuff." Cook wanted to eat leftovers, but Hōkū said he wanted to eat canned corned beef. They were arguing and Doc had to step in. Hōkū confessed later that waiting in the doldrums was getting to him. We had a ho'oponopono session where everybody got to share their feelings. It was good because it gave us all a chance to speak.



Kia taking a break.

Every one of us realized the challenge we faced in keeping "cool-headed." And we also realized that we depended on each other to make this a successful voyage.

Day 4 - We're still drinking one quart of water a day but sparingly. Kia doesn't look too good. We're all worried about how low our water supply has gotten. Kia wants to do his part in conserving water, but Doc is

encouraging him to be sure to drink enough. Because the crew is such a family, we are concerned about each other and every one wants to do their part. I've been teasing Kia and telling him "no act macho, drink the water," but he's so worried about everyone else he keeps assuring me "no worry sistah, I stay fine."

Most of us have been just sitting around and waiting. That's all we can do. We don't have much energy. That "get up and go" we used to have is gone. Our bodies are exhausted from the intense heat of the sun. We've learned from previous voyages that prevention is the best thing. The day we left Hawai'i I whipped out my lip balm and have been applying it since. I've heard horror stories about previous voyages where crew members experienced dried, cracked and bleeding lips. Poor things!

We're all experiencing some form of dehydration. When you think about it, limiting yourself to a quart of water a day is not very much. I never realized how much I relied on water. Back home, I took water for granted. I would grab my jug from the refrigerator and chug down a quart of water within half an hour. But now my throat is scratchy, and I have a dry cough. It feels as if I have a fistful of cotton in my mouth, and I'm trying to swallow it, but I can't. I'm feeling somewhat light-headed. Doc says it's from lack of water. He told me to take it easy.

Day 5 - Hallelujah! This morning just before my watch ended at 6 a.m., we had a downpour. Fortunately, Nainoa saw it coming and had us set up tarps to catch as much rainwater as possible.

Boy, I never knew how much I appreciated the rain. I grabbed my sea soap, scrubbed my body and washed off the soap with rainwater. It felt so

good to bathe in fresh water. Some of the guys were pointing their faces up towards the sky and sticking out their tongues to catch the rain drops. It seems the cloud burst has lifted all our spirits.

Kia drank a whole quart of rainwater today. In just one sitting. He looks much better. I can tell he's feeling better because there's color in his cheeks, and he even challenged me to a game of *payut*!



Day 6 - I'm glad it rained yesterday. It really put us back on track and gave us a sense of renewed hope for leaving here soon. I think that before it rained everyone was really feeling "down in the dumps." I'm sure Nainoa, although he didn't say much, was feeling kind of anxious. He has to bear so much responsibility. It must be really tough to have a whole crew dependent upon you. I'm not sure I could handle that responsibility. Personally, I think it would be overwhelming.

The cloud cover has still not lifted — no sign of the moon and stars. The nights are pitch black and the air is still.

Hōkū and Cook made up. I guess it was the *ho'oponopono* session that helped put things into perspective. Just the other day it looked like they were going to "beef" (fight), but now they're joking around with each other. It's as if they never had a disagreement. Hōkū told me later that he apologized to Cook. He said he realized that it was this "waiting game"

we're playing that made him kind of *pīhoihoi* (disturbed). Hōkū said that Cook understood and confessed that he was feeling the same way. I know that being on a voyage like this can be real trying. Crew members get *huhū* (angry) with one another. But what's most important is that they make up. We all need to be positive in spirit. 'Cause if we're not, there will be *pilikia* (trouble) on board the canoe. And that's something we do not need.

Nainoa has kept us on water rations. Thank goodness we had that brief rain shower or our water supplies would not have been sufficient.

Now we're hoping for an opening in the clouds and for the *makani* (wind).

Day 7 - We had a pretty "hairy" day today. Nainoa kept telling us to save our energy. We're wearing long-sleeved shirts and taking it easy to keep from sweating and losing water. We will need our energy when the wind picks up. But Moke and Sau were feeling the heat and needed to cool off. They jumped overboard for a breather. Since they were there, they decided to clean the hull of the canoe. A lot of barnacles had attached themselves to the bottom. They were scrubbing and scraping the bottom when Nainoa told them that the sound they were making attracts sharks. Moke and Sau kind of laughed half-heartedly and said, "Yeah, okay, Nainoa, we'll be right up." Within seconds, a series of shadows appeared in the water heading for the canoe. It just so happened that I was working the fishing line when I saw the shadows. I knew exactly what they were. "Sharks!" I yelled to Moke and Sau. I never saw those guys move so fast. The two of them scrambled up the rope ladder to safety. We joked about it later, but I know they were frightened about that experience.

Now I know why Mau and Nainoa encouraged us to save our energy while we were in the doldrums. By swimming, we would work up a sweat, which would require our bodies to need additional fluids. If we drank the water our bodies so desperately needed, then our water supply would be depleted even further. Plus if we were swimming and the wind picked up all of a sudden, hoka (frustration would set in)! The boat would be off and sailing. That would be one big bummer for everyone. The canoe would have to huli (turn) around and pick up those who were left behind. That process would delay our trip and possibly place the safety of the crew in jeopardy. I know that Sau and Moke understood the seriousness behind Nainoa's initial warning. They were kinda shame about what happened, and they kept to themselves for the rest of the afternoon.

On my watch this morning, the cloud cover disappeared. The wind picked up, and the waves were doing a hula. We could all tell that we had made it. We were out of the doldrums! Everyone got busy with their kuleana (responsibilities). Everyone was in high spirits. We were once again on our way!