

A Huna Teaching (and Learning) Tale

By Pete Dalton

Some years ago, some time after the time of Captain Cook, I made a trip to Hawaii to train in Huna with Serge King.

One day, I stayed over with Serge and Gloria. I really appreciated the warm hospitality (and Gloria being so wonderfully accommodating to a fussy vegetarian from the UK!). We watched comedy, relaxed, ate and drank, talked Huna and I spent the night fascinated by amazing tropical soundscape created by the coqui frogs and other wonderful nocturnal denizens of Big Island.

Anyway, this story is not about the wonderful hospitality, the great company and the fascinating environment, rather it is focussed on a single incident that occurred during that trip.

The next morning Serge asked if I cared to go for a swim. I love the sea, so there could only be one answer: yes. In just a short walk we were at the sea which was warm from volcanic activity and swimming in the bay on that gloriously sunny day was an amazing experience.

However, this story is not about the wonderful warm sea, the sunny day and the delightful swimming experience, it concerns another incident that happened during that trip.

After the swim as we were getting ready to return to the house, Serge handed me a small dark rough object. I courteously accepted. On closer inspection it was a neatly rounded lump of porous lava rock.

After taking the rock I waited. In my head my thoughts were racing: What is this for? What does this mean? Is this a special shamanic talisman? Will it give me access to the powers of Madam Pele, Goddess of the Volcano? Will it give warn me of omens of things to come? In response to this mysterious gift from Serge I said 'Oh wow thank you'.

As we walked back to the house, I was very curious about what would happen next and the significance of the intriguing magical rock. When we returned, Gloria had prepared one of her legendary *pupu* platters and a wonderful conversation ensued covering myths and legends of Hawaii, the oceans, family and Huna and much more.

Of course, this story is not about the kindness and generosity, delicious snacks and stimulating chats. Rather it is about another incident which I have since realised was a big lesson for me.

The days went on and soon I was part of a larger gathering of budding adventurers from all over the world coming together in Volcano Village to connect and learn the Huna philosophy. I met amazing people from a wide variety of walks of life and shared some amazing experiences.

As time went by, my attention was drawn back to the lava rock that I had carefully placed on display as one of my few decorative personal effects in the cottage where I was staying. I began to reflect that nothing had really happened with the rock. Granted that it was an appreciated gift but it hadn't bestowed any powers, insights or knowledge – well at least not any that I appreciated at the time.

I began to get curiouser and curiouser and wondered if I was missing something or whether Serge had forgotten to tell me something. I decided that the next day I would enquire and see if he could correct this potential oversight. The next day, during a break in the class I mentioned the lava rock to Serge. I thanked him again for the gift and asked if there was something that I was meant to do with it as nothing had happened since I got it. Serge said he was glad I liked it and asked me 'What do you want to do with it?'

In that moment something dawned on me and clicked into place. - my *ah-ha* moment. Earlier in the day Serge had described that the traditional way that apprentice shamans learned was to get curious, try things, have experiences, get feedback and then ask questions about what they had experienced. I realised that apart from placing my rock delicately on a shelf, I had done nothing.

I suddenly had a wave of ideas: I could try to connect with it and find out what information I could glean from it; I could make it into a lucky empowering talisman; I could merge with it and begin to understand what it was like to be a lava rock; I could use it to generate a strong connection with the elements; I could even just actively use it as a source of appreciation and *aloha*. There were so many possibilities in that little rock

Subsequently I did a number of things with the lava rock, asked questions and learned lots. Through this I deepened my knowledge of Huna and also of the process of learning Huna. It made me realise that nothing would happen unless I made it happen. This was empowering.

Up to that point perhaps the rock was interesting but lifeless and inanimate – a metaphor for my previous inaction and waiting for I know not what to occur! Of course, as it turned out the rock was very much alive and had had some rich experiences.

This simple experience had led me to become curious, explore possibilities, apply knowledge, ask questions and get feedback and see things from different perspectives. That little lump of lava rock became a big teacher to me.

Now we know this story must be true because when I was ordained as an alakai of Huna International I was given the name *he kanaka 'imi 'ike 'ana* which loosely translates as 'a man seeking knowledge' reflecting my awakening desire to ask questions and seek more. And of course, my little rock teacher sits on the desk by my computer as a reminder of this important experience.

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