

Huna Concepts

by Pete Dalton

I often get sent questions about Huna and welcome the opportunity that this brings. In an ever-changing world and with an evolving body of knowledge it is not only the student that learns during the teaching process. Questions such as these help me to explore my own understanding and hone my responses.

I recently got an email with the following question:

Please would you explain to me why you and Serge use different words for the selves apart from Aumakua. Max Freedom Long and Morrnah Simeona do not use the names "KU", "LONO", "KANALOA" (what is the "core self" anyway?)

I present my answers here as they may be of value more widely.

‘A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okahi.
- All knowledge is not taught in the same school.

Although the word Huna is often used to describe a range of beliefs and practices that derive from the ancient Hawaiians, it does not refer to a single homogenous system.

In Hawaiian tradition, it was common practice that knowledge was handed down through family lineages hence what was communicated was open to variation and interpretation. So, for example, Serge King derived the large part of his Huna knowledge from his adopted uncle William Kahili whose family was on the island of Kauai. He in turn has re-presented that family knowledge in a way that makes it more widely accessible today.

In addition, some authors have drawn their interpretations from other sources. For example, Max Freedom Long drew considerably on an analysis of the Hawaiian language as well as other secondary systems when writing about his system of Huna knowledge. As a result, there are variations in what is presented as Huna. Sometimes this can entail what appear to be common elements and small variations and other times it can involve fundamental differences. It is important to be aware of this and not to assume that each system is similar and interchangeable.

As the quote above states, there are many sources of useful knowledge and many different workable systems of Huna. In my personal work, I predominately draw on the Kahili lineage and it is from this perspective that I now write.

Ku, Lono, Kane

Unsurprisingly, different systems use varying terminology as well as similar terminology to refer to different things. In the Kahili lineage the words *Ku*, *Lono* and *Kane* are commonly used. These have both an exoteric symbology referring to the three of the Hawaiian gods as well an esoteric symbology which in Kahlil Huna refers to three aspects of ourselves (with *Aumakua* being used interchangeably with *Kane* on the esoteric level). Even this distinction

varies between Huna systems with Kahili Huna holding that these are not distinct selves or separate entities or spirits but simply ways of looking at aspects of a whole self.

While some other systems of Huna posit three 'selves', it is worth remembering that we are not comparing like with like. Therefore, we need to avoid the fallacy of trying to equate different parts of alternative systems. There may appear to be similar concepts or terms, but the underlying systems are different. It can be akin to comparing apples and oranges!

Kanaloa

In Kahili Huna, *Kanaloa* is sometimes used to refer to another aspect of the self. In practice *Kanaloa* is more of a way of referring to the experience of harmonious integration of the three aspects of ourselves as represented by *Ku*, *Lono* and *Kane*. When we are in touch with these three aspects of ourselves, acknowledging, honouring and working with each of their unique qualities and motivations this can be considered *Kanaloa*. It is a state of harmony, peace, energy, awareness and presence and is sometimes referred to as 'Kanaloa consciousness'. This is experienced as the core of our being, the centre of who we really are. As with the other interior representations of aspects of the self, externally *Kanaloa* is also the name of a Hawaiian deity.

Pono: Effectiveness is the Measure of Truth

Huna provides a practical philosophy and system for living. Ultimately to benefit from Huna requires living and experiencing Huna. In all areas of life, we use language as a shorthand to describe concepts and experiences in a simplified way. Consequently, any terms we use are a convenience that points us towards aspects of a lived experience. The words we use are mere signposts along the route to help us, but they are not the living of the experience itself.

As a result, regardless of the system of Huna, the words and concepts and ways of categorising things are there just to guide us. The real test of any system is through using it and assessing whether it works for whatever you are hoping to achieve. In this regard, I find it useful to bear in mind a core principle of Kahili Huna: *Pono*. One of the interpretations of which is 'effectiveness is the measure of truth'. Whatever system you choose to use, test it to see if it increases your effectiveness and if works carry on using it. In my own experience that is how I have approached Kahili Huna and after many years it still meets that criteria well.

Hopefully the answer to this question will stimulate further questions and assist in you continuing your Huna adventure.

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