



Finding a Path Forward

**ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS THEME STUDY**

Edited by Franklin Odo





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Essay 9



Sites of Resistance to Imperialism

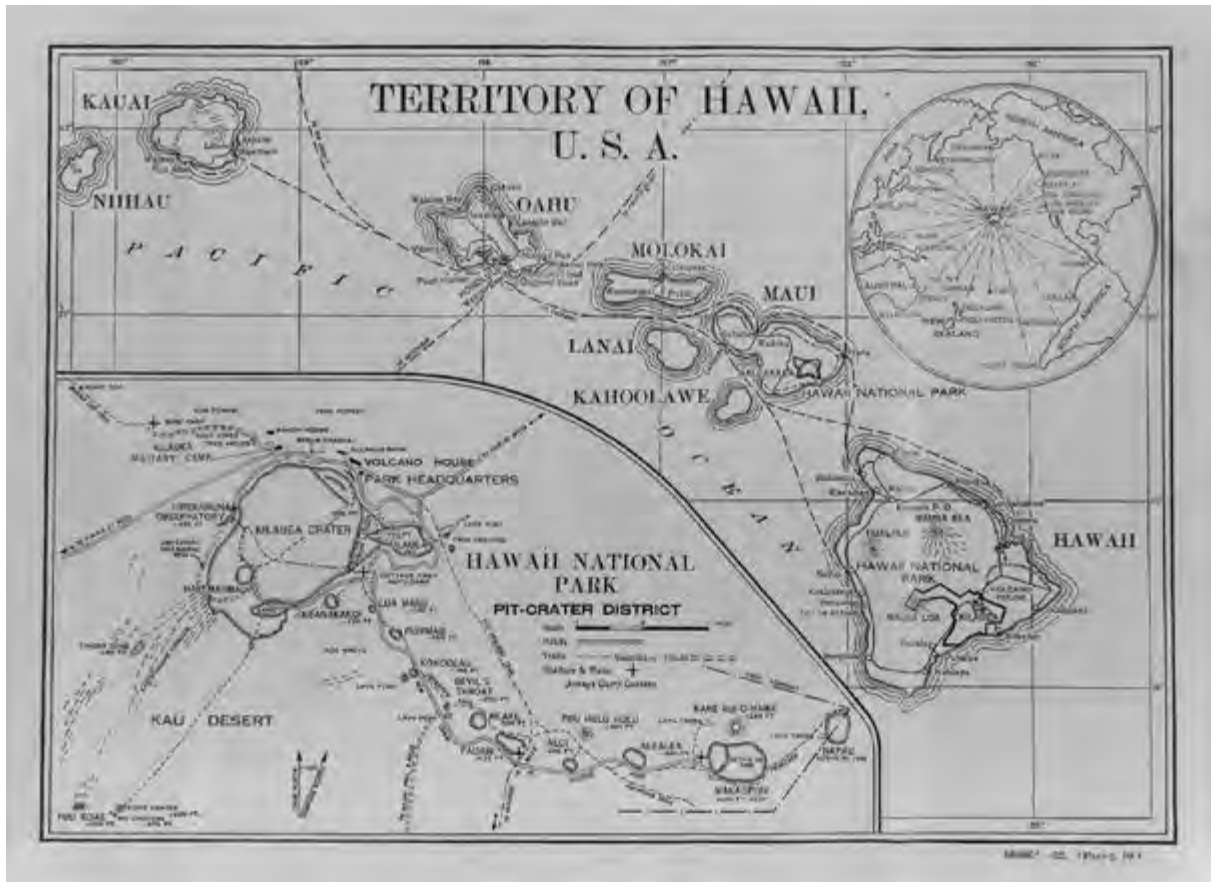
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In reflecting upon the theme of national historic sites and landmarks of “resistance to imperialism” in relation to Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans, it is important to acknowledge the layers of complexity and contradiction that exist because of the role that the American settler state plays as the imperial power and the object of this resistance. This is further complicated by the role that the American settler state plays as the entity that anoints a site as having a significant role in the national history of the U.S. The American settler state disrupted the independent development of Pacific Island nations and suppressed the self-governance of indigenous Pacific Island peoples in those island territories now claimed to be part of the United States. The American settler state also racializes Pacific Islanders and Asian immigrants and their American-born descendants, perpetuating institutional forms of environmental, economic, social, and cultural

Moa'ulaiki, Kaho'olawe is a site where ancestral Hawaiian navigators trained for way-finding across the Pacific. In the foreground is a lele or platform for the Makahiki ceremonies that were revived on the island in 1981. During naval training exercises, the landscape shown here had two large targets made of tires painted white for ship-to-shore shelling. Photo by Noa Emmett Aluli; used with permission.





A map of Hawai'i as a U.S. territory, with emphasis on Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Kaho'olawe is shown to the center right. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

racism. The erasure of the role of the original indigenous Pacific Island peoples in caring for, honoring, and governing lands now claimed by the U.S. was integral to the colonization of these peoples and nations. Expropriation of Asian immigrant labor, racist laws and policies, and suppression of social movements protesting inhumane living and working conditions reinforced the dominance of the American settler state.

Therefore, as we consider the importance of acknowledging national historic sites and landmarks of “resistance to imperialism,” it would be disingenuous not to question what role such a project, in and of itself, plays in the perpetuation of American imperialism. Is such a designation yet another form of appropriating the history and culture of Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans and incorporating it into a national narrative of Manifest Destiny and the dynamics of social Darwinism? Would such a designation somehow make the history of abuse, racism, and injustices toward Pacific Islanders

and Asian Americans more palatable or pardonable? Whose history will be represented and perpetuated through the course of processing such a designation?

Another strand of inquiry examines the purpose of engaging in the process of designating a site of “resistance to imperialism” as a national historic site or landmark. Is the purpose to attract visitors and tourists, or to enhance the cultural life of the community? Is the purpose to educate and connect current generations with a historic legacy, or is it to perpetuate a narrative of domination, conquest, and incorporation? Will the designation result in a process of healing or in the perpetuation of injustices and the rise of new conflicts? Will the designation protect a site from desecration, alteration, or destruction or simply not make a difference?

Perhaps the deeper issues that underlay these questions are the reasons most of the national historic sites and landmarks that represent “resistance to imperialism” in the Pacific Islands are sites of World War II

battles against Japanese imperialism, since this shifts the focus away from American expansion and the ensuing resistance from the islanders. It should be mentioned, also, that the narrative histories for these World War II sites have erased native histories and histories related to those native lands.

What are elements that can be part of the process to designate “sites of resistance to imperialism” that will truly honor the heritage of Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans; acknowledge the aspirations for self-governance, cultural perpetuation, equality, social justice, and well-being; and not simply subsume these groups into serving as tiny colorful pieces in the mosaic of America’s national history? How can the designation contribute to the protection of important cultural sites and enrich the lives of these communities?

Arguably, the process of recognizing “sites of resistance,” while well-intentioned, can be fraught with conflict and controversy, as conceptions of “history” and “culture” are highly contested. This is particularly true as they play out on native landscapes against centuries of U.S. colonialism, empire, and militarism. The process of designating specific places within the U.S. and its territories as historic landmarks should involve the acknowledgment of the experiences, histories, and cultures of all the peoples who were connected to the place to be honored and should begin with the history and culture of the indigenous peoples of the land who first experienced the land and its resources in their natural form.

HONORING THE LANDSCAPE OF “SITES OF RESISTANCE TO IMPERIALISM”

The land is immovable. Its features can be transformed over time by the waves of people who live upon it, cultivate it, and develop it for various purposes until its original features are difficult to distinguish, except through imagination. Nevertheless, the land remains as the foundation of the cultural and social activities of all peoples. All land in the fifty states of the United States of America and the nations over which the U.S. maintains relationships of governance are layered with the history of the first peoples who established stewardship and governance. That history is followed by succeeding waves of settlers and immigrants from Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific. The process of identifying such places as historic landmarks needs to acknowledge

the layers of this history back to the original, indigenous peoples of the land. Circumventing this process would not only violate the heritage of the peoples involved and their imagined political futures but also perpetuate the imperialist project for which such places became “sites of resistance.”

GENEALOGY OF PLACE

The nomination process for a site of resistance to imperialism should trace the genealogy of the land from the present, back to the elemental forces that defined its landscape. One key example, the island of Kanaloa Kaho‘olawe in Hawai‘i, is a site of Native Hawaiian resistance against imperialism. Dr. Pualani Kanaka‘ole Kanahale composed an oli ko‘ihonua, or genealogy chant, that was presented at a healing ceremony for the island in August 1992. Each stanza of the chant conveys a period of the island’s history, from its birth as a sacred child of the earth mother, Papa, through its destruction by ranching and military use, and its role as a “site of resistance” and then as a center for the revival of Native Hawaiian cultural and religious practices. Such a chant embodies, in abbreviated form, the process of distinguishing the layers of history for a particular historic site or landmark.²

Place Names, Chants, Songs, Sayings, Stories

Documentation of the place names, chants, songs, sayings, and stories of the place is important. This documentation should include contemporary, historical, and indigenous names as well as songs and stories because they will reveal the cultural significance and uses of the place over time. Acknowledging the original name given to a landscape or particular site is thus important to the process of resisting the impact of imperialism.

Artifacts and Structures

Ethnographic research and archaeological investigation can extend over a range of history and not be limited to one cultural group or period of history. In addition to the artifacts and structures related to settler colonial activities, such as trade, planting of new food and cash crops, introduction of animals, agriculture, military, or other economic activities, the original cultural, economic, and social life ways of the indigenous peoples of the land should be documented. For example, World

War II battlefields should not only feature the impact or remnants of war but also delve deeper into the artifacts and structures, which represent the lives of the native peoples prior to World War II.

Nature of Resistance

In developing the theme for this essay, a list of sites of nationalist and resistance movements that might be considered for nomination was drafted by the organizers of the theme study. This list provides a range of historic actions rooted in the evolution and expansion of U.S. imperialism that incited movements and acts of resistance by Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans.

For Hawai'i, there are sites related to the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and Constitutional Monarchy by American settlers and the claimed annexation of Hawai'i by the U.S. There are also sites of Japanese American incarceration during World War II.

For Guam and the Commonwealth of the Marianas, there are sites associated with the Spanish-American War and the annexation of Guam. There are numerous sites of World War II battles, such as the Plaza De Espana. There is also the air force base on the island of Tinian where the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki were stored before being loaded onto the aircraft.

Other movements for which "sites of resistance" can be acknowledged include the Gadar Movement to free India from British colonialism; the movement to support Sun Yat-Sen and the nationalist movement in China; the Anti-Vietnam War movement; the Peace Movement; student movements to establish Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies; the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement; the Anti-Marcos Dictatorship of the Philippines movement; and nationalist movements of Pacific Islanders, including efforts to close or prevent the expansion of military bases and training sites.

Nationalist movements are often protracted historic struggles that play out across generations, time, and space. There is a broad range of historic and cultural landscapes and geographies to explore as significant and iconic sites associated with movements of "resistance to imperialism." These include, but are not limited to, historic gathering places, offices and meeting rooms, locations of major rallies, sites of occupation

and physical clashes, residences of major leaders, structures and memorials built as symbols of resistance, burial sites, public and other forms of art, gardens, and cultural displays.

It will be left to the initiative of the organizations and communities connected to these movements of "resistance to imperialism" to decide if they want to pursue national historic site or landmark status for locations that depict their movement and attain a designated space in the national pantheon of historic preservation.

CASE STUDIES

Rather than attempt a comprehensive history or broad survey of Pacific Islander and Asian American movements of "resistance to imperialism" and their related sites, I elected to highlight two case studies which symbolize the history of nationalist movements in Hawai'i and Guam. The first is the movement to stop the bombing and heal the island of Kanaloa Kaho'olawe³ in Hawai'i, and the second is the movement to prevent the building of five new military live firing ranges that would have destroyed the cultural sites of Pāgat in Guam. The Kaho'olawe movement began in 1976 and celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2016. In November 2010, the "We Are Guāhan (Guam)" movement took the first step to stop the building of a complex of live fire target ranges at Pāgat village by filing a lawsuit against the Department of Defense (DOD). In 2013, the DOD announced plans to relocate the firing range complex.⁴

KANALOA KAHO'OLAWÉ⁵

One of the most prominent sites of "resistance to imperialism" is the island of Kanaloa Kaho'olawe in the Hawaiian Islands. In acknowledgement of its historic and cultural significance, the entire island was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1981, although at the time, and for another nine years, the island continued to be used for live fire military training exercises, including bombing by planes, amphibious landings, and ship-to-shore shelling by naval gunboats. Moreover, although the island is prominent as the catalyst for the modern Native Hawaiian nationalist movement, it was recognized as a historic site because of the concentration of 600 archaeological sites and 2,000 archaeological features on a 45-square mile island.

The history of the settlement and coloniza-

tion of Hawai‘i is revealed in the history of Kanaloa Kaho‘olawe. More importantly, the island also sparked Native Hawaiian resistance to American imperialism through direct protests and a renaissance of Hawaiian cultural practices that affirmed that Hawaiian culture had survived decades of colonial assimilation. In reviewing this history, we understand how such sites of “resistance to imperialism” are layered with and imprinted by the historical experiences and cultural practices of various peoples and cultures upon the same landscape, beginning most profoundly with the indigenous peoples of the land.

MO‘OLELO O KAHO‘OLAWE - THE HISTORY OF KAHO‘OLAWE

The island of Kanaloa Kaho‘olawe is one of the principal historic and cultural places held sacred by Native Hawaiians.⁶ Native Hawaiians who first encountered its rugged shores farmed the land and harvested marine resources from its surrounding seas. They established shrines and heiau (temples). Given its geographic location as the latitudinal piko, or center of the major islands in the archipelago, as they stretched across the Pacific from north to south, Kanaloa Kaho‘olawe became a center for the training of navigators in the science and art of astronomy and ocean wayfinding. Great kahuna or priests gathered to establish sites for the observation of seasonal movements of the sun and to develop and maintain a sun calendar.

The island’s changing landscape reflects the history of imperialist expansion into Hawai‘i, beginning in the late 18th century. There followed, in succession, the colonization of Hawai‘i through American missionaries, whalers, and merchant settlers; the militarization of the islands as an outpost of U.S. expansion into Asia leading up to World War II; and the attack on Pearl Harbor, World War II, and the development of Hawai‘i into the U.S. military’s Pacific command during the Cold War era and post-9/11 global anti-terror mobilization. On the other hand, the island and its landscape are also imprinted with the renaissance of Hawaiian culture, arts and science, and the revival of Native Hawaiian religious practices.

In 1793, British Captain George Vancouver, representing the expansive British empire in the Pacific and Pacific northwest, gifted goats to High Chief Kahekili

of Māui. High Chief Kahekili, who ruled the islands of Māui Nui - Māui, Lāna‘i, Moloka‘i, and Kaho‘olawe, had the goats taken to Kaho‘olawe, where they grazed and reproduced at will. The goats were the first factor that contributed to the denuding of the island’s landscape. By 1884, there were more than 9,000 goats on the island contributing greatly to the erosion of its topsoil.

Another layer of history was added to the island’s landscape when New England Calvinist missionaries, as part of the process of American settler colonialism, arrived in Hawai‘i in 1820 and gained influence with the Hawaiian monarchy. A mission school was established on the island from 1825 through 1838. The monarchy enthusiastically adopted the Ten Commandments as law; one of the punishments for adultery, theft, or murder, from 1829 to 1853, was banishment to Kaho‘olawe. Converts to Catholicism were also exiled to the island. Under the 1848 Ka Māhele,⁷ the process to establish private ownership of Hawaiian lands, King Kamehameha III claimed Kaho‘olawe and gifted the island to the Hawaiian Kingdom and Constitutional Monarchy.

From 1858 to 1910, when the Hawaiian economy shifted from whaling to sugar plantations and ranching, Kaho‘olawe was leased to non-Hawaiian sheep ranchers. In 1884, there were 12,000 sheep on the island, and the island’s topsoil continued to erode into the ocean. As a result, native plant and bird populations continued to decline. The island was exposed to aggressive invasive species that adapted more successfully to the barren landscape.

ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

In Honolulu, U.S. marines landed on January 16, 1893, to support American planter, business, and missionary-descendant interests who declared their so-called “Committee of Safety” to be a provisional government in control of the Hawaiian government on January 17, 1893. This government usurped the power of the Hawaiian monarchy and claimed all of the lands of the Hawaiian Crown and government.

The provisional government declared the establishment of the Republic of Hawai‘i on July 4, 1894, and Kaho‘olawe was among all the lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom and Constitutional Monarchy claimed by this new government. Unable to secure approval for a Treaty of Annexation by the U.S. Senate (which would require



Iolani Palace was established as the seat of power in Hawai'i under the Kalākaua Dynasty, and, despite being an icon of the Hawaiian Kingdom continued to be used as the capitol building under the provisional government, Republic, Territory, and State of Hawai'i until 1969. Photo by Carol Highsmith, 1980; courtesy of the Library of Congress.

a two-thirds majority), the U.S. Congress subsequently voted by simple majority to annex Hawai'i under the Newlands Joint Resolution in 1898.

Under an Organic Act passed by the U.S. Congress for Hawai'i as a territory, all these lands were ceded to the U.S. government. The U.S. government then turned the lands over to the Republic of Hawai'i as the ceded public lands trust for the benefit of the inhabitants of Hawai'i. However, management of these lands, including Kaho'olawe, became the jurisdiction of the government of the Territory of Hawai'i.

From 1910 to 1918, the Territory of Hawai'i suspended ranching leases and held the island as a forest reserve. The Territory then leased the island for cattle ranching through 1941 under the condition that the rancher would eradicate the goats, limit the number of cattle on the island to 200, and undertake revegetation of the island using the invasive kiawe or mesquite (*Prosopis pallida*).

In May of 1941, the U.S. Navy signed a sublease with the rancher and began to use Kaho'olawe for live fire target practice in ship-to-shore shelling. Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941, and martial law was declared. The following day, control over Kaho'olawe was turned over to the U.S. Navy, which expanded live

fire exercises and continued these exercises through October 22, 1990.

By September 1945, 150 Navy pilots; the crews of 532 major ships; and 350 Navy, Marine, and Army shore fire control officers had trained at Kaho'olawe. Another 730 service members had trained in joint signal operations on the island. In the end, Kaho'olawe had been used to stage every major battle on Japanese-occupied Pacific islands, notably, the catastrophic battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

During the Korean War, Navy carrier planes used Kaho'olawe to practice airfield attacks and strafing runs on vehicle convoys and other mock North Korean targets. In 1965, during the Cold War era, a one-kiloton nuclear explosion was simulated on the island when the U.S. Navy detonated 500 tons of TNT. During the Vietnam era, Navy and Marine Corps planes practiced attacks on simulated surface-to-air missile sites, airfields, and radar stations. By the time of the Gulf War, live fire training on the island was reduced, as the Navy shifted its primary training to other state-of-the-art electronic target ranges.

RESISTANCE AND RESTORATION

In January 1976, the island was selected to draw attention to historic injustices endured by Native Hawaiian people as a result of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by American settler colonialists with crucial support from U.S. naval forces. When many protestors arrived on Maui and boarded fishing boats to cross the channel to the island, the U.S. Coast Guard set up a blockade and threatened to confiscate any boat that landed on the island. One boat, however, with nine persons aboard, managed to elude the blockade. Seven of the nine who made this first landing were arrested. The two others remained on the island for two nights before being arrested. Even as they witnessed the devastation created by the full arsenal of conventional weapons that had been used on the island for over 35 years, they also testified to a sense that they were in the presence of pervasive spirits of the land and ancestors who had passed.

ALOHA 'ĀINA

In seeking an explanation of their spiritual experience on Kaho'olawe with their kūpuna, or elders, on the islands of Moloka'i, Maui, and Hawai'i, native activists learned of the history of Kaho'olawe as a place sacred to the god of the ocean, Kanaloa. The island had been a center for the training of navigators in the art and science of wayfinding across the realm of Kanaloa—the vast Pacific Ocean. Advised to organize in a Hawaiian way, the organizers formed the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana. In the Hawaiian language, 'Ohana means extended family, and the group organized themselves and conducted activities in that fashion, rejecting formal status as an association with officers and directors. The central slogan for the movement became "Aloha 'Āina," or love and respect for the land that feeds, heals, and shelters; the land that is a sacred manifestation of the natural life forces that our ancestors honored as deities, the land that is the nation of Hawai'i.

The struggle emerged as a movement of resistance to abuse by the U.S. military of Hawai'i's lands; to the assimilation and suppression of Hawaiian language and culture through a historic process of colonization; and to the takeover by the U.S. government. Two young Hawaiian men, George Helm and Kimo Mitchell, were lost at sea while protesting the U.S. naval bombardment of the island. Their martyrdom instilled a determination

in the movement to make their sacrifice meaningful. The movement persisted year after year until, finally, on October 22, 1990, President George H.W. Bush ordered all live fire military training to be halted. While this grassroots movement won a major victory in a struggle against the largest military force ever assembled in world history, the process of healing Kanaloa Kaho'olawe and protecting it from other destructive uses would bring new challenges. George Helm's vision of the "greening" of Kanaloa Kaho'olawe and re-establishing its role as a pu'uhonua, or refuge, for Native Hawaiian culture continued to provide inspiration and direction to the movement.

Gradually, the movement evolved from being anti-military into focusing on the stewardship of the island through the traditional and customary practice of Aloha 'Āina. This experience led to the revival of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural customs, including the language and practices, in order to re-connect with the life forces that Native Hawaiian ancestors honored as deities.

REBIRTH OF A SACRED ISLAND

The first ceremony to be revived, in 1980-81, was the Makahiki ceremony calling upon Lono, the Hawaiian god of the rain season and of agricultural productivity, to heal, re-green, and replenish the island and its



The detonation of a 500-ton TNT explosive for Shot Bravo, the first of three test explosions in Operation "Sailor Hat" on Kaho'olawe, was meant to simulate the effects of nuclear bombs on naval vessels anchored off shore. It is believed to have cracked the island's water table.

Photo courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph Collections.

resources. This ceremony traditionally opens in November and closes in January-February each year. Protocols and prayers for the ceremonies were provided by kupauna and kumu hula (hula master) Aunty Edith Kanakole and her 'ohana of Hawai'i Island. This became an enduring tradition. In November 2015, the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana opened the 35th annual Makahiki season for Kanaloa Kaho'olawe. Participants continue to journey from all of the islands to be a part of the ceremonies. Some of them have since established Makahiki ceremonies on their home islands. Ceremonies to honor Kanaloa, Kāne (Hawaiian god of fresh water sources), Laka, (goddess of hula), Kū'ula (god of fishing), and Papa (earth mother) have all been re-introduced and are now practiced on Kanaloa Kaho'olawe.

Significantly, the island itself has been reborn as a sacred place, recognized as a body form of the Hawaiian god of the ocean, Kanaloa. The realm of Kanaloa, the ocean, is both vast and deep, the island being the only part of the realm that rises above the ocean's surface and thus available for native peoples to live upon. The island itself has served as a portal into spiritual realms, connecting Native Hawaiians of the 21st century with ancestral knowledge and the life forces they honored as deities.

KANALOA KAHO'OLAWE AND HAWAIIAN SOVEREIGNTY

In 1993, in anticipation of the return of the island of Kanaloa Kaho'olawe to the State of Hawai'i, the legislature passed a law, Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 6K, which provided for the eventual transfer of the island to a sovereign Hawaiian entity. The law mandates: "the resources and waters of Kaho'olawe shall be held in trust as part of the public land trust; provided that the State shall transfer management and control of the island and its waters to the sovereign native Hawaiian entity upon its recognition by the United States and the State of Hawai'i."⁸ This measure set a precedent for Native Hawaiian sovereignty in that the State of Hawai'i acknowledged that there will be a sovereign Native Hawaiian entity and that repatriated federal lands can be part of the land base of this sovereign entity.

Title to Kanaloa Kaho'olawe was transferred to the State of Hawai'i in May 1994. From November 10, 1993, through November 11, 2003, the U.S. Navy con-

ducted an omnibus cleanup of ordnance on the island. After fifty years of use as a military weapons range, the island's 28,800 acres were contaminated with shrapnel, target vehicles, and unexploded ordnance. The U.S. Navy signed an agreement with the State of Hawai'i to clear 30 percent of the Island's subsurface of ordnance. In 1993, the Congress appropriated \$460 million for the Navy to fulfill this obligation. The Navy contracted Parsons-UXB Joint Venture to conduct what is acknowledged to be the largest unexploded ordnance remediation project in the history of the United States. Over 10 million pounds of metal, 370 vehicles, and 14,000 tires were removed from the island and recycled. However, rather than clearing 30 percent of the island to a depth of four feet, the contractors cleared no more than 2,650 acres or 9 percent of the island's subsurface. Another 19,464 acres or 68 percent of the island's surface was cleared of ordnance, but 6,686 acres, or 23 percent, of the island has not been touched. One disturbing fact is that the U.S. Navy can only guarantee that it is 90 percent confident that 85 percent of the ordnance in the 2,650 acres was cleared of ordnance to a depth of four feet.

In 2015, the island was managed by the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission, an entity administered by the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, awaiting the establishment of a sovereign Native Hawaiian governing entity that would be recognized by the State of Hawai'i and the U.S. government.

The vision for the island acknowledges its importance as a sacred place for the Native Hawaiian people, where both land and culture are nurtured: "The kino (body) of Kanaloa is restored. Forests and shrublands of native plants and other biota clothe its slopes and valleys. Nā Po'e Hawai'i care for the land in a manner which recognizes the island and the ocean of Kanaloa as a living spiritual entity. Kanaloa is a pu'u honua (refuge) and a wahi pana (legendary place) where Native Hawaiian cultural practices flourish. The piko (navel) of Kanaloa is the crossroads of past and future generations from which the Native Hawaiian lifestyle spreads throughout the islands."⁹

PĀGAT, GUAM¹⁰

A second prominent example of a "site of resistance" to U.S. imperialism and colonialism is Pāgat, Guam.

Pâgat (which in Chamorro¹¹ means to counsel or advise) is a historic village of the Chamorros, the indigenous people of Guam. It is one of four recorded sites on the northeast coast of Guam where latte can be found in its original location. Pâgat is the largest and most intact of these sites. Latte, unique to the Mariana Islands (Micronesia), are stone pillars with cup-shaped capstones that served as ancient Chamorro house supports. Built between 1200 to 300 BP (before present), latte are made of limestone, basalt, or sandstone; vary in height from 60 centimeters to more than three meters; and have been found in arrangements of six, eight, ten, twelve, or fourteen. Early Chamorros buried their dead under and near their houses, and ancestral burials are located where latte are found. For this reason, latte sites are also honored as sacred sites. Other cultural artifacts, such as pottery, jewelry, and stone and shell tools, are also found at latte sites.

There are twenty sets of latte in Pâgat, as well as lusong (stone mortars), medicinal plants, pottery shards and tools, and ancestral burial grounds. While some of the mortars were carved from local limestone, most are made of basalt and could only have been obtained



Typical latte stones found at various historical sites on Guam, including Pâgat and Latte Stone Park at Hagåtña. Photo by Hajime Nakano; courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, licensed under Creative Commons.

through an exchange network with villages where basalt was located. Today, in an era of profound cultural renaissance, Chamorro educators, traditional healers, fishermen, and activists alike regard Pâgat as a sacred place connecting them to their ancestral heritage. For them, Pâgat is a place to learn about and engage in their cultural practices.

The village was acknowledged as an important historic and cultural site and registered on the Guam Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. However, these important designations did not protect this sacred and irreplaceable site from being targeted by the military for use as a live fire training range.

In 2006, as part of an agreement between the U.S. and Japan, and after years of sustained protest by Okinawans against the massive and intrusive presence of American troops, the U.S. military announced it would transfer some 8,000 marines and their 9,000 dependents from Okinawa to Guam. The proposed buildup would have had numerous devastating effects. One of the most profound was the plan to construct five live fire training ranges at the sacred village of Pâgat. In response to the military's plans, the National Trust for Historic Preservation included Pâgat on its 2010 list of "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places." This organization, together with the Guam Preservation Trust and the grassroots organization, We Are Guåhan, filed a lawsuit against the Department of Defense. The result was a victory for Pâgat. However, the military then needed to identify an alternative location, and this would pose new challenges.

SYMBOL OF CHAMORRO HISTORY

As with the history of Kanaloa Kaho`olawe, U.S. military plans to construct the firing range in Pâgat became emblematic of a much longer history of land alienation and dispossession among the Chamorro caused directly by military expansionism. And, as had been the case with Kanaloa Kaho`olawe, the perpetuation of Chamorro indigenous identity and culture has become the focal point for resistance to U.S. military plans for the firing range.

Chamorro history extends back nearly 4,000 years in the Marianas Islands, and traditional sources place the establishment of the village of Pâgat some 3,000 years ago. When Spain colonized Guam in the 16th century,

Pågat was a major residential village. There is evidence that a wooden Catholic church was built for the village in 1672. The church was apparently destroyed during warfare between the Chamorros and the Spanish and never rebuilt.

The U.S. acquired control over Guam from Spain in the treaty that ended the 1898 Spanish-American War. In the aftermath of the war, Guam was ruled as an unincorporated territory, controlled by the U.S. Navy through the beginning of World War II. Hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Guam was invaded by Japanese imperial forces and occupied for nearly three years. In July 1944, American troops landed on Guam, re-established control, and conducted much of the remainder of the war from that island in the Northern Marianas. The atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki were transported to Tinian in the Northern Marianas to await their final journeys.

Following World War II, the U.S. reoccupied Guam. In 1950, with the signing of the Organic Act of Guam, the island became an unincorporated territory. The administration of Guam was transferred from the Navy to the Department of the Interior, and local, limited self-rule was established in the government of Guam. Chamorros were granted U.S. citizenship. This political status, as many Chamorros would later realize, came at the expense of Chamorro political self-determination and cost them serious loss of native lands.

In the post-WWII era, Guam was developed as a key U.S. military base for stationing, training, and deploying military forces in the Korean and Vietnam Wars and then for maintaining a strong, deterrent presence in the Asia-Pacific region throughout the Cold War. In the process, the U.S. military ultimately gained control of one-third of the total land mass in Guam through the gradual and persistent displacement of Chamorro people from their ancestral lands. The U.S. military ultimately gained control of 33 percent of the land in Guam, making Guam a virtual military fortress, one in which the local civilian population had limited powers of self-governance.

In 2006, when the Department of Defense announced its plans to transfer U.S. marines to Guam, as part of its Asia-Pacific realignment, Chamorro activists protested the military's plans to take more lands and, worse, to utilize the ancient Chamorro village of

Pågat for live fire training. The transfer of thousands of troops and their dependents from Okinawa to Guam is yet another stage in the build-up of Guam. The development of a firing range at Pågat was just one of a number of potential disasters. Others, certain to impact the Chamorros, include population increase, even more military facilities, added pressure on available housing, and additional infrastructure, including utilities, roadways, and social service requirements. Equally ominous is the prospect of the dredging of coral reefs to create a deep draft harbor at Apra for nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers.

RECLAIMING PAGAT

As the movement to protect Pågat evolved, the village became a powerful symbol of how the Chamorros had been disconnected from thousands of acres of their ancestral lands. Through the "Save Pågat" movement, Chamorros and non-Chamorros alike expressed their opposition to further military development and to the island's continued colonial status. These groups invoked the traditional Chamorro value of *inafa'maolek*, or make things good for each other, through collective action that would sustain a healthy balance between the people and the lands of their ancestors. They also accepted the responsibility to *prutehi yan defendi*, or protect and defend, their Chamorro heritage and their cultural and ancestral lands. So-called "heritage hikes" became a compelling means of educating and engaging the broader community in the collective effort to protect and defend Pågat and to challenge the firing range proposal.

The filing of a lawsuit by a coalition of organizations succeeded in effectively securing a victory for Pågat through an admission from the DOD that it had not considered all reasonable alternatives, as required by federal environmental regulations, for the siting of the firing range. However, the lawsuit did not stop the military build-up itself. The end result was another proposed location for the live fire training range, Litekyan, the site of another ancient Chamorro village. In response, a new grassroots movement, "Our Islands are Sacred," emerged to protest the construction of firing ranges at Litekyan.

COMMON THEMES

In both case studies, cultural sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places were nonetheless

still vulnerable to military appropriation for live fire ranges considered sacrilegious by indigenous populations. This raises questions about the efficacy of listing places in the National Register or designating places as National Historic Landmarks. Both cases indicate that listed and designated sites cannot be effectively protected from military use unless contemporary movements of “resistance to imperialism” insist that historic protection laws are enforced by the courts. Contemporary movements formed to protect iconic sites of historic cultural significance are part of a continuum of a nationalist movement with deep historic roots. We need, therefore, to use broad parameters in evaluating the appropriate time frame for designation of sites of “resistance to imperialism.”

In both Guam and Hawai‘i, protests initially formed in opposition to military activities on lands considered sacred and designated as NRHP sites eventually evolved into movements grounded in the culture and traditions of their ancestors. In the process, both efforts evoked traditional customs and practices, protecting sacred ancestral sites, and linking into broader historical movements for national sovereignty.

WAHI PANNA - AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE ON SITES AND LANDMARKS

In closing, I would like to suggest that we resist having Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans limited to the National Historic Landmarks and National Register criteria in our conception of prominent sites and landmarks of “resistance to imperialism.” As an alternative, I offer the Native Hawaiian perspective regarding places, sites, and landmarks of prominence. This is the practice of Native Hawaiian ancestors to name and honor places of distinction or wahi pana, a practice which continues today in our dedication of cultural sites.

The late professor and kupuna, Edward Kanahele, provided an eloquent explanation of wahi pana in the introduction to *Ancient Sites of Oahu: A Guide to Archaeological Places of Interest* by Van James:

In ancient times, the sacred places of Hawai‘i, or wahi pana of Hawai‘i, were treated with great reverence and respect. These are places believed to have mana or spiritual power. For Native Hawaiians, a place tells us who we

are and who is our extended family. A place gives us our history, the history of our clan, and the history of our ancestors. We are able to look at a place and tie in human events that affect us and our loved ones. A place gives us a feeling of stability and of belonging to our family – those living and those who have passed on. A place gives us a sense of well-being, and of acceptance of all who have experienced that place.

A wahi pana is, therefore, a place of spiritual power which links Hawaiians to our past and our future. Our ancestors knew that the great gods created the land and generated life. The gods give the earth spiritual force or mana. Our ancestors knew that the earth’s spiritual essence was focused at wahi pana.

At one time, the entire Native Hawaiian society respected and honored numerous wahi pana. Over time, that understanding was lost, especially among the Hawaiians who were separated from their ancestral lands. Only when a Native Hawaiian gains spiritual wisdom is the ancestral and spiritual sense of place reactivated.

The inventory of sacred places in Hawai‘i includes the dwelling places of the gods, the dwelling places of their legendary kahuna, temples, and shrines, as well as selected observation points, cliffs, mounds, mountains, weather phenomena, forests, and volcanoes.¹²

As we move forward, together, to honor the cultures, life ways, and histories of Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans, including the experiences of “resisting imperialism,” let us also honor the associated natural landscapes as central to these events and not just as backdrop to the drama of human events. Let us also consider approaching this process from the perspectives of the indigenous Pacific Islanders and the Asian Americans, themselves, and consider new approaches and criteria for such sites and landscapes.

Endnotes

1 The author worked closely with Professor Christine Taitano DeLisle (University of Minnesota) in developing and composing this essay, especially for the case study on Pāgat. Julian Aguon, J.D., also reviewed the essay for accuracy regarding Pāgat.

2 The entire chant concludes this essay, after the Reference section.

3 The island of Kaho‘olawe was originally named Kanaloa and considered to be a body-form of the Hawaiian God of the ocean, Kanaloa. As part of reclaiming and honoring the island as a sacred place, the organization leading the movement, Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, and the organization providing spiritual and cultural guidance to the movement, the Edith Kanaka‘ole Foundation, now call the island Kanaloa Kaho‘olawe.

4 Given that the Kaho‘olawe movement had been organized for forty years at the time that the article was written and the movement to save Pāgat was extended over three years, the section on Kaho‘olawe is much longer. It also reflects the experience of the author as a member of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana.

5 This section is based on Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor, *Nā Kua‘āina: Living Hawaiian Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007) and Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor, “Kaho‘olawe: Rebirth of the Sacred” in *Amerasia Journal, The Politics of Remembering*, edited by Henry Yu and Mae M. Ngai, 28:3 (2002): 68 – 83.

6 Native Hawaiian, according to the 1993 Apology Law, Pub. L. No. 103-150, 107 Stat. 1510 is “any individual who is a descendent of the aboriginal people who, prior to 1778, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area that now constitutes the State of Hawai‘i.”

7 Ka Māhele refers to the establishment of private property in Hawai‘i wherein the King and the Chiefs agreed to remove their respective interests from lands in which they previously held joint interests so that either the King or the Chiefs would retain their interest in the land parcels.

8 Hawai‘i Revised Statutes § 6K-9 (2012)

9 Kanaloa 2026 Working Group, *I OLA KANALOA! A Plan for Kanaloa Kaho‘olawe Through 2026*, 2014, iolakanaloa.org, accessed 11-20-15.

10 The sources for this section on Pāgat are Tiara R. Na‘puti and Michael Lujan Bevacqua, “Militarization and Resistance from Guāhan: Protecting and Defending Pāgat,” *American Quarterly*, 67:3, September 2015, pp. 837 – 858 and <http://www.guampedia.com/pagat/> accessed November 20, 2015. This section was reviewed and augmented by Christine DeLisle and Julian Aguon.

11 Chamorro is the name for indigenous people of Guam and their language.

12 Van James, *Ancient Sites of O‘ahu*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1991), ix – x.

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He Ko'ihonua no Kanaloa Kaho'olawe, He Moku

1st paukū

'O Wākeakahikoluamea	<i>It was Wākeakahikoluamea</i>
'O Papahānaumoku ka wahine	<i>The wife was Papahānaumoku</i>
Hānau kapu ke kua koko	<i>The sacred birth pain was born</i>
Ka'āhea Papa iā Kanaloa, he moku	<i>Papa was weak with Kanaloa, an island</i>
I hānau 'ia he pūnua he nai'a	<i>It was born a fledging, a porpoise</i>
He keiki i'a na Papa i hānau	<i>A fish child for Papa was born</i>
Holo 'o Haumea i ke keiki moku	<i>Haumea travels to the island child</i>
He moku kapu na Haumea na Kanaloa	<i>It was a sacred child for Haumea, for Kanaloa</i>
Ho'ono'ono'o kona 'ano wahine	<i>Reflecting her femaleness</i>
Kapa 'ia 'o Kohemālamalama o Kanaloa.	<i>It was known as Kohemālamalama of Kanaloa.</i>

All:

<i>E ulu i kalani a Kāne.</i>	<i>To increase in the sphere of Kāne.</i>
<i>E ulu i ke kai a Kanaloa.</i>	<i>To increase in the sea of Kanaloa.</i>

2nd paukū

<i>Holo mai Pele i ka huaka'I</i>	<i>Pele travels abroad</i>
<i>Ka huaka'i 'imi noho no ka 'ohana</i>	<i>An exploration in search of a family residence</i>
<i>'Ako 'ia ka 'iewe, 'o Pu'uinaina</i>	<i>The placenta of Pu'uinaina was plucked</i>
<i>Na Pele i ho'olawe i ke keiki</i>	<i>Pele took the child</i>
<i>Ua ho'olawe 'ia i ke kai o 'Alalākeiki</i>	<i>It was taken to the sea of 'Alalākeiki</i>
<i>He hei kapu na Kamohoali'i</i>	<i>A sacred place for Kamohoali'i</i>
<i>Kapa 'ia 'o Kanaloa</i>	<i>Known as Kanaloa.</i>

All:

<i>E lana i ka lanii a Kāne.</i>	<i>To float in the upper realm of Kāne.</i>
<i>E lana i ke kai a Kanaloa.</i>	<i>To float in the sea of Kanaloa.</i>

3rd paukū

*Kaulana 'o Kanaloa i nā mea lawai'a
He 'upena kahe no nā maka i'a
'O Kū'ula ka maka i'a no kēia pae moku
Ua hahai ke keiki o Kū'ula
Kūkulu a'e kekahi ko'a i'a
A laila nō, koho 'o 'Ai'ai iā Haki'oawa
Ho'omaopopo iā Kū'ulakai, he makua.*

*Kanaloa is famous for fishing techniques
A flow net for fishing
Kū'ula attracts fish for this archipelago
The child of Kū'ula reflects his father
Building fishing shrines throughout
'Ai'ai chooses Haki'oawa for this shrine
It is in remembrance of the parent, Kū'ula of the sea*

All:

*He mau maka i ka lani a Kāne.
He mau maka i ke kai a Kanaloa.*

*Eyes in the sky of Kāne.
Eyes in the sea of Kanaloa.*

4th paukū

*'O ke au mehameha 'o Kaho'olawe
'O ke au nā ali'i 'o Kamehameha
Ua ho'ea mai nā po'e haole i kēia 'āina
A laila, ua lele nā kapu akua
'O kēia ke au 'ai noa, 'ai hele
Hō'ea mai i Kaho'olawe pa'a ka 'āina
Kapa 'ia kēia 'āina, Hale Pa'ahao.*

*The time of loneliness for Kaho'olawe
It is the time of the offsprings of Kamehameha
Strangers arrived upon this island
Then the godly laws vanished
This was the time of free eating, eating about
People arrived on Kaho'olawe to stay
This land was known as the prison.*

All:

*Ua pa'a i ka lani a Kāne.
Ua pa'a i ke kai a Kanaloa.*

*Kept permanently in the area of Kāne.
Kept permanently in the sea of Kanaloa.*

5th paukū

*He 'āina mālama ko Makee 'ailana
Mālama i nā po'e kao, pīpi, lio, hipa
Ho'ololi i ke ali'i, kupa i ke ali'i haole
Ua lawe 'ia mai nā moku kaua
Moku lawe hae, moku lawe koa,
Moku lawe ki hā
Ho'olawe ka moku 'au i ke kai.*

*A land cared for by Makee
Caring for goats, cattle, horses, sheep
Old chiefs lost their status, new chiefs ruled
The war ships were brought
The carriers, boats that brought soldiers
Gunboats were brought
The island eroded, washing out to sea.*

All:

*Hana 'ino i ka lani a Kāne.
Hana 'ino i ke kai a Kanaloa.*

*Abused in the domain of Kāne.
Abused in the sea of Kanaloa.*

6th paukū

*Ua ala Hawaii'i mai ka moehewa mai
Ho'omaopopo i ke keiki i'a a Papa
O Kanaloa
Ke moku hei a Haumea
'O Kohemālamalama
Ke Kino o Kamohoali'i
E ho'ōla hou kākou iā Kaho'olawe*

*The Hawaiian woke from the nightmare
Remembered was the fish child of Papa,
Kanaloa
The sacred land of Haumea
Kohemālamalama
The body form of Kamohoali'i
Give life again to Kaho'olawe.*

All:

*Ola i ka lani a Kāne.
Ola i ke kai a Kanaloa.*

*To live in the realm of Kāne.
To live in the sea of Kanaloa.*

7th paukū

*Ua kahea 'ia 'o Lono i ka makahiki hou
Ma ka Hale Mua o Lono i kāhea 'ia ai
Ua kanaloa 'o Kanaloa i Kohemālamalama
Puka hou a'e ka mana o Kanaloa*

*Lono summoned for the new year
At Hale Mua of Lono, he was called
Kanaloa was reconfirmed to Kohemālamalama
The energy of Kanaloa was revitalized*

*Ua kani ka leo pahu i ka malama 'o
Kūpu'eu i ka ao o Lono
Kūwâwâ i ka houpo a Laka.*

*The drum sounded at the attention of Hōkū
The realm of Lono was activated
Laka reverberated on Ka'ie'ie at Kanaloa.*

All:

*Ala i ka lani a Kāne.
Ala i ke kai a Kanaloa.*

*Awaken in the ambience of Kāne.
Awaken in the sea of Kanaloa.*

8th paukū

*Ua hō'ea ka lā ho'iho'i 'ea
Ka lā ho'iho'i moku
Ka lā mana kupuna
Ala ka Mua Ha'i Kūpuna e hānau nei
E kanaloa 'ia ana i ka piko o ka pae 'āina
He 'āina kūpa'a no nā Hawai'i
E ola i ka Mua Ha'i Kūpuna*

*The day for sovereignty is at hand
The day to return the island
The day to return the ancestral influence
It is at Mua Ha'i Kūpuna where it was born
To be established in the navel of the islands
A steadfast land for the Hawaiian
Give life to the Mua Ha'i Kūpuna.*

All:

*A mau loa i ka lani a Kāne.
A mau loa i ke kai a Kanaloa.*

*Forever in the ether of Kāne.
Forever in the sea of Kanaloa.*

9th paukū

*(this stanza was added to honor the birth of
the child of 'Ohana members on the island)*

*Nānā a'e ke kumu a kilohoku
Kuwo ka makani, newe ka pe'a
Pe'ape'a pōhaku
Hakū 'ia ka pae 'āina
Hānau ka moku
E Pō, e pō e mālamalama
Lamalama ka ili o ke kai
Kai! Ka alaula Ho'ōla*

*We look to the source and to the heavens to guide us
Our prayers are the wind that fills the sails
The home of the he'e
Rises a pebble at a time
Until a new land is born
The darkness begins to lighten
The ocean's surface glows with life
The sun is rising in pathway to the east*