

Seeds of the Present; Roots of the Future

Our way of life is constantly moving forward, our technology is advancing and our understanding of the world around us is growing. There is one thing in this world that is vitally important for the advancing of our society; it is our youth, our next generation of thinkers and dreamers. They are our observers, who watch and learn. The youth will one day grow and fix the mistakes made by past generations, which is why the youth of each generation is the key to our future, as the human race.

There are so many different events in the world that affect the youth of every generation. But, the youth of our world can make an even greater impact. An event that has had great impact on our race and our culture is the Haleakalā Movement. It has affected the Hawaiian people, our land, and our culture. The movement involved many Hawaiian activists peacefully protesting against the construction of the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope atop Haleakalā. The top of Haleakalā is a very sacred piece of land to Hawaiians. The problem is the leveling out of Haleakalā to structurally support the base of the telescope. Hawaiians could not watch their sacred land atop their mountain be defaced.

The goal of the protestors was to stop the movement of the trucks hauling telescope parts to the top of Haleakalā. At each event, protestors would march on the crosswalk in front of the base yard entrance holding signs that read “Aloha ‘Āina” and “Kū‘ē,” meaning Love the Land and Resist respectively. In the article “Maui County Protests Against Haleakalā Telescope” reporter Anthony Pignataro stated that “[W]hen the trucks started their engines, several protestors lay down in the driveway, with their

arms linked together with PVC pipes.” Of those protesters linked together in the driveway of the Maui Base yard, 20 were arrested, and their bail set at \$600.

I, as a youth of this generation, am a part of those Hawaiians who stood against the construction of the telescope and the destruction of our ‘āina. I experienced first hand and through social media what happened at each protest. Each of the protests that I attended took place at the Maui Base yard, however there were others that took place atop Haleakalā. Most of the protesters marching were of Maui roots, but there were other protesters that came from different islands to show their support for the natives’ stand against the destruction of our ‘āina.

An aunty that I met at my second protest really opened my eyes to the reality of my purpose as a young protester. This aunty was from the Big Island and she came to support our mountain. She told me that so many people from Maui stood alongside her to protect Mauna Kea, their main mountain, so she wanted to give back and support the Mauian’s mountain, Haleakalā. When things at the protest started to heat-up she took it upon herself to protect the minors at the protest. Once people started getting arrested, the minors in attendance were at risk of being taken away by Social Services, and because most of us were so heated-up in the moment we didn’t realize what a big deal that consequence was. But this aunty did, she pulled all of us minors on the side, away from the commotion. She explained to us that it was our kuleana to observe and watch the event unfolding before us. She told us it was our duty to document what was happening, and tell our story in history books for the future to understand that we, Hawaiians, took a stand against the destruction of our mountain. We didn’t just stand idly by. Her understanding of our importance calmed each of us down. From then on we understood

that we needed to protect ourselves from trouble with the law so we could write about our experiences and spread them to empower others.

After what I had experienced that night, I went home knowing I was in trouble. I had stayed out way past my curfew, but I knew my consequences and I fully accepted them. However, I wanted my mom to know my experiences and I wanted her to know that I didn't stay out for "no good reason," there was a purpose to my disobedience. So I wrote her a letter depicting what I saw and felt at the protest, what I'd learned, and what my purpose was. But because it was late my mom, and my entire family, were already asleep, so I left my letter on the table along with my phone. In the morning I surprisingly found my phone on the counter but my letter was gone. I was confused because my consequence was having my phone be taken away. I called my mom to ask if she had forgotten to take my phone, but she told me that she was very moved by my letter. She told me that even though I was disobedient she saw how important this stand was for me and allowed me to continue my summer without punishment.

Following all that I had experienced that night, I left with the understanding that the youth of our generation have a very important role. Our role is to learn from the mistakes of the present and guide the world down the right path allowing it to grow and prosper. We, as the seeds of the present, must grow to protect the history of the human race, but at the same time prevent ourselves from repeating the actions and decisions that may have once destroyed us in the past. We, the youth, are the key to the prosperity of the future.

Work Cited

Pignataro, Anthony. "Maui County Protests against Haleakala Telescope, TPP Are Really Heating up." *MauiTime*. 03 Aug. 2015. Web. 12 Apr. 2016.