

# Kaholo'ana



Honolulu newsboys circa 1915

## A Nation of Literacy

—by Constance Kiakahi Hale

King Kamehameha III decided that he wanted his people to read. And read they did, quickly becoming one of the most literate populations in the world. Starting in 1834, more than 100 newspapers blossomed in the islands. Native Hawaiians wrote voluminously and read voraciously. After 1948, Hawaiian-language

newspapers—and the world of nineteenth-century Hawaiians—retreated into the dim world of microfilm. Then a visionary language professor decided to breathe life into the old papers and the lost world of Victorian and territorial Hawai'i. And San Francisco's *Nā Lei Hulu I Ka Wēkiu* joined in a grand experiment.

**I**t's 1825. You are eleven years old, and you've just been made king of a new nation. Your father brought eight tiny islands under one leader in 1810. He ruled until his death in 1819, your older brother through 1824. Now you are king, with your stepmother as regent.

In the kingdom, you were one of the first students taught to read and write. Your subjects live in a world that is rural and mostly communal. It is pre-literate, with your people recounting their history in chants and stories in

song. Your kingdom is isolated in the middle of a vast ocean, but the world—England, the United States, France, Russia, and China—has started to come to you.

What do you do? What do you say to your people? If you are Keaweawe'ula Kīwala'ō Kauikeaouli Kaleiopapa Kalaninuiwaiakua Kalanikauio'kikilo Kīwala'ōikekapu Kamehameha, also known as Kamehameha III, you say this, in a speech on June 6: "*He aupuni palapala ko'u.*" ("Mine will be a nation of literacy.")

### A Golden Age

Kamehameha III became the longest-reigning monarch in the history of the Hawaiian Kingdom, watching his country evolve from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional one. The period of his rule became known as the Golden Age of the Hawaiian Kingdom. In a careful balancing act, he acquired a palace, wore Western clothes, and worshipped a Christian god, but he gave the right of self-government to his people by establishing a house of representatives, a constitution, and a supreme court. He also managed to keep his island kingdom intact.

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# A Kumu's Dream Team:

*Learning from the Source* —by Kai Moran



**T**he more information we gather about Hawaiian language, culture, and history,” says Kumu Hula Patrick Makuakāne, “the better equipped we are to understand and appreciate all we learn in hula.”

This belief was the driving force behind a special event Makuakāne organized for Nā Lei Hulu students last summer: a weekend of workshops with four visiting *kumu* (teachers) from Hawai‘i: Kau‘i Sai-Dudoit, researcher and director of Ho‘olaupa‘i: Hawaiian Newspaper Resource; Puakea Nogelmeier, composer, kumu hula, and professor of Hawaiian language at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa; Kaliko Trapp, composer, musician, translator, and instructor of Hawaiian language at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo; and Ron Williams, Jr., instructor in Hawaiian Studies and Ph.D. candidate in History at the

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and founder and principal researcher at Ka ‘Elele Research and Writing.

Makuakāne has known each of these kumu for years and has had many illuminating conversations with them about Hawaiian history and culture. He created the workshops in order to include hālau students in the discussion and expand their knowledge. “To learn from such a distinguished panel is a dream come true for those who want to deepen their understanding of Hawaiian studies,” says Makuakāne.

During the weekend workshops, students attended up to two different lectures each morning, and then a panel discussion with all four kumu in the afternoon. The lecture topics, chosen by the kumu, covered everything from the etymology of certain Hawaiian

words to the lives of significant figures in Hawaiian history, to the deeper meanings of song lyrics. The lectures unfolded as salon-style conversations. Some kumu used slides; some provided handouts; others talked story.

During the afternoon panels, Makuakāne posed provocative questions, such as, “If you could witness one event in Hawaiian history, what would it be, and why?” The kumu took turns answering, offering perspectives rooted in their areas of specialty. The students packed the room—listening, enthralled—and gave a standing ovation at the close.

Hālau student Myrissa Lai, who attended both days, says the teachings of the kumus’ helped her fall in love with Hawaiian history. She adds, wistfully: “I wish there could have been an entire week of workshops.” ▼

## Aloha, Uncle Richard

*Nā Lei Hulu said “aloha” to a treasured friend this May: Richard Tavares moved back to Kona, Hawai‘i, after living in San Francisco for nearly forty years. He joined Nā Lei Hulu the day the hālau first opened its doors in February 1985. You might say that, without him, there wouldn’t have been a hālau. Over the years, Richard has been a student, performer, teacher, confidante, advisor, beloved elder—and the ultimate uncle. Though Hawai‘i is once again his home, we know he’s left his heart in San Francisco.*

—by Patrick Makuakāne



Richard Tavares, one of the original members of Nā Lei Hulu, poses with hula brothers at lā ‘Oe E Ka Lā Hula Competition.

# “A Dandy and a Badass”:

Kumu Patrick returns to Merrie Monarch after 30 years, reconnecting with his hula family and reliving the thrill of that stage.

—by Patrick Makuakāne

“Patrick, this is your kumu,” that unmistakable voice said over the telephone, more than a year ago. It was Robert Cazimero, calling from Honolulu. “We’ve been invited to dance in the Merrie Monarch Ho’ike. Will you come back to dance?”

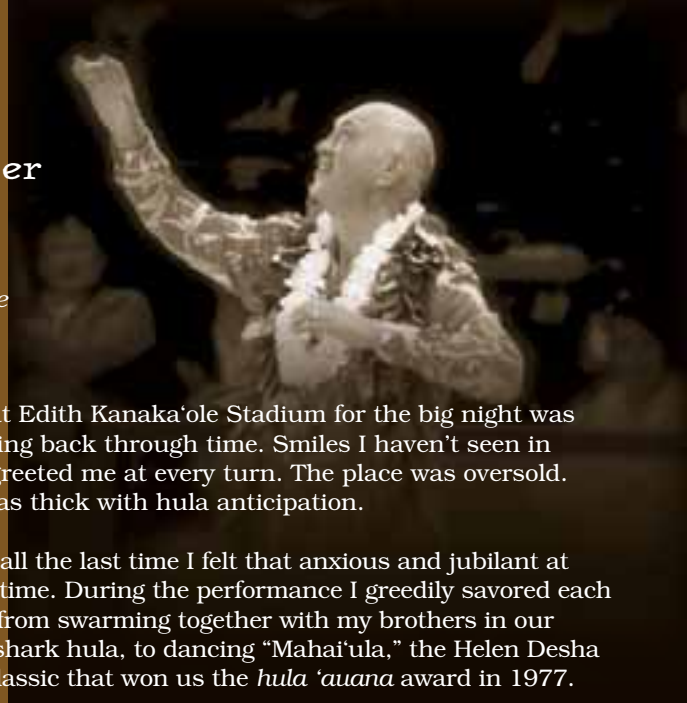
It’s been thirty years since I danced with my *kumu* and Nā Kamalei at the annual hula spectacular. I still remember the bow ties and suspenders we wore for our *hula kahiko* honoring King Kalākaua. Who knew it was possible to feel like a dandy and a badass at the same time? That event marked the passing of my senior year of high school. Hula had been the best part of my teens—both a portal to my heritage and a fiery beacon lighting the way to my future.

Yet I don’t compete in competitions like Merrie Monarch anymore. I prefer choreographing stage productions where I’m not limited by competition rules, only by my imagination. But a *ho’ike* is an exhibition—no competition to stress over, no *hālau* politics, just the good stuff: a chance to dance in a line again with my hula brothers, some of whom are now kumu. And this one was celebrating the Hilo hula fest’s fiftieth anniversary.

“Count me in, Kumu.”

The decision might have been easy, but the preparation wasn’t. Thank the ancestors for YouTube, which helped me brush up on Kumu’s choreography. My hula brother Kumu Michael Casupang assisted, too: While touring San Francisco this spring with his high school ensemble, he played the gracious taskmaster, whipping me into shape.

In Hilo, my hula brothers and I made our home at the Armory, nestled beside the airport. Its gymnasium was lined with army cots and futons, but in no time, we transformed the place into a hubbub of hula activity. From ten large trash bags we grabbed freshly picked *liko lehua* and ‘*a’ali’i* crafting our *lei po’o* (headbands). We hung our ti-leaf skirts on random carts and walls, refreshing and remaking them obsessively. Our kumu was in rare form for our final, late-night rehearsal. We were not. I wasn’t worried. We’d been there before.



Arriving at Edith Kanaka’ole Stadium for the big night was like strolling back through time. Smiles I haven’t seen in decades greeted me at every turn. The place was oversold. The air was thick with hula anticipation.

I can’t recall the last time I felt that anxious and jubilant at the same time. During the performance I greedily savored each moment, from swarming together with my brothers in our dynamic shark hula, to dancing “Mahai’ula,” the Helen Desha Beamer classic that won us the *hula ‘auana* award in 1977.

The last time I was on this stage, many of us were teenagers. Some of us hadn’t even been born by 1977. Now we are fathers, grandfathers, and kumu with families and *hālau* of our own. We have aged, but our kumu, with his radical charms, seems ageless.

I’ll never forget singing “Waikā,” a haunting melody stemming from a traditional chant honoring Kamehameha. Kumu accompanied us on piano for this, our *hālau* song, but midway through the song he left the baby grand to join us onstage. His distinctive falsetto hushed the crowd. One by one, people in the audience began to stand. By the time we joined him for the last strains of “*A he aloha ē*,” our a cappella voices were drowned out by thundering applause.”



# A Nation of Literacy

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He was less successful in keeping his population intact: In 1778, at the time of the arrival of British explorer Captain Cook, there had been an estimated 325,000 native Hawaiians. In 1825, there were 150,000. And by 1854, when Kamehameha III died, that number would be halved again, as his people were ravaged by measles, smallpox, and other diseases.

Yet the very literacy that Kamehameha III promised his people flourished. A generation and a half after his declaration, almost 100 percent of Hawaiians could read. This literacy rate was higher than that of America, France, and England.

In 1820, missionaries had started arriving from the United States. It was they who developed a Hawaiian alphabet, translated the Bible into Hawaiian, and taught people how to read. By no means did Hawaiians stop there.

## Many Beacons

Nowhere is Hawaiians' embrace of literacy more apparent than in the Hawaiian-language newspapers that proliferated in the century after Kamehameha III made his pronouncement. The first, *Ka Lama Hawai'i*, appeared in Lahainaluna, on February 14, 1834. (Its name can be translated as *The Beacon* or *The Luminary*.) The second, *Ke Kumu Hawai'i* (*The Hawaiian Educator*), came just months later, on November 12, and was published in Honolulu.

Newspapers proliferated like *naupaka* shrubs on the beach. There may have been only 100,000 people who could read Hawaiian during this time, but more than 125,000 pages of Hawaiian-language newspapers were printed in more than a hundred different papers over 114 years. They equal at least a million typescript pages of text. According to one scholar, they constitute the largest indigenous-language corpus in the Western world.

There was *Ke Au o Ko'a* (*The New Era*, in the 1860s), *Ka Hoku o ka Pakikipika* (*The Shining Star of the Pacific*, also in the 1860s) and *Ke Aloha 'Aina* (*The Patriot*, published after the overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani.).

The mastheads were as exuberant as the names of the newspapers: They featured gothic script, sans serif type, ships' sails, and animals with long tails.

The articles covered all kinds of bases. Foreign news fed a public curious about the world and aware of being an independent nation subject to the influence of other powers. Serialized romance novels and translations—of everything from *Tarzan* to *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*—aimed to entertain. Articles like “How a Woman Should Ride a Horse” mirrored the moral mission of Victorian-era newspapers. Legal notices eloquently recorded the troubling story of the transfer of lands from Hawaiians to *haole*. There were obituaries of royalty and rogues, sailors and tailors. And there were *kanikau*, the dirges loved ones wrote memorializing favorite moments with the deceased.

In 1893, accounts of the arrest and overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani were reported. In 1896, a new law making English the language of instruction in government and private schools appeared—both in English and Hawaiian. Many consider that law the death knell for the Hawaiian language. No matter: The reading continued. But, more and more, it was in English.

In 1948, the Hawaiian-language newspapers fell silent. The last one, *Ka Hoku o Hawai'i*, published out of Hilo, ceased printing.

## Liberating Knowledge

For decades, the 125,000 yellowing, molding, and increasingly fragile pages of the Hawaiian-language newspapers lay scattered among different archives and libraries across the islands. By the 1970s, about 75,000 of them had been put on microfilm. Meanwhile, the number of people who could speak Hawaiian, not to mention read it, dwindled. (There were fewer than 50 native Hawaiian speakers under the age of 18 in the early 1980s.)

This was about when Marvin Nogelmeier arrived in Honolulu. The Minnesota native was on his way to Japan and stayed in Hawaii on a whim. He fell in love with the islands and their culture, and he has since become Puakea Nogelmeier, Hoku Award-winning songwriter, *kumu hula*, and associate professor of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i. His Ph.D. dissertation and first book, *Mai Pa'a I Ka Leo* (*Don't Restrain the Voice*), revealed the overlooked but critical



role of primary sources in Hawaiian history—including the newspapers.

Nogelmeier has made it his mission to move this trove off the rudimentary reels of microfilm, out of the dark basements of university libraries, and onto the Internet, where it can be accessed by all, keyword-searched, and translated into English. Only then can it really transform our understanding of the history of Hawai'i.

The first step was to recover the newspapers and put them in one place. What started as the “Hawaii Newspaper Project” in 2000 became Ho'olaupa'i, a project operated through the Bishop

Home Pula Repubalika

KA WAHAOLELO O KA I'EHULEHU

NUPEPA KA HOKU O KA PAKIKIPIKA

Museum in Honolulu and directed by researcher Kau'i Sai-Dudoit. A total of 15,000 pages had thus far been turned into searchable text.

In 2009, Ho'olaupa'i moved to Awaiaulu, a nonprofit educational organization. Those searchable pages were made available on Web sites and public-access databases.

But Nogelmeier kept thinking about the untapped history contained in all the pages still sitting on microfilm, forsaken. The challenge, though, was finding people to do the work of transcribing the pages. Then Nogelmeier thought: What if I could find volunteers willing to do the tedious typing on some

In the end, about 2,700 volunteers—from Hawai'i, the mainland, and twelve other countries worldwide—produced 16,000 typed-up newspaper pages. The 45,000 remaining pages were turned from digital images to files of letters and words using optical character recognition (OCR) technology. (While OCR doesn't require manpower, it can only turn century-old newspapers of poor quality into what Nogelmeier calls "gibberish" and indecipherable "streams of letters.")

### "Opening a Book to the Past"

More than 240 of the volunteers who worked on 'Ike Kū'oko'a were affiliated with Nā Lei Hulu I Ka Wēkiu. In all, the hālau is credited with having transcribed 1,194 pages, making it the organization that contributed the most to the project.

One of the earliest Nā Lei Hulu students to jump on the bandwagon was Sally Vrana. The typing was tedious, some articles banal. One consisted of two seemingly endless columns—the names

Christmas Day. The installment ended with "*Aole i pau*" ("To be continued").

In reading about a shipwreck off Honolulu Harbor, Vrana was curious about certain words. She looked them up to learn that a "twisting wind" upset the ship, and that everyone made it off except the captain and a cook. "This is the kind of thing we all turn to newspapers for," Vrana notes—a dramatic event, a record of small but telling details, words that speak worlds. "This project made me feel related to Hawaiians, part of the same humanity," Vrana says.

Kate Motoyama, a professor of speech communications, used time between classes to type pages. Motoyama, who typed a grand total of 50 pages, motivated herself by dedicating each page to a different person in her class. When she got through everyone, she started dedicating pages to Hawaiian royals. "My knowledge of Hawaiian is rudimentary," she says, "but typing newspaper pages was like opening a book to the past that had been closed."

*Nā nupepa*, or "the newspapers," have inspired the hālau community beyond the bounds of the 'Ike Kū'oko'a project. In 2012, the annual Nā Lei Hulu performance at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco featured six *mele*, or songs, recently uncovered in the papers' pages. But that, it turns out, only whetted the appetite of Kumu Patrick Makuakāne. The Hawaiian-language newspapers are the sole source of inspiration for the show premiering this October.

What would Kamehameha III have made of this testament, exactly 200 years after his birth, to the enduring power of "a nation of literacy"?

# KE ALAULA.



of those pages? What if you could show that many hands make light work? What if I could turn the whole effort into a giant test of crowdsourcing?

And so, in 2011, 'Ike Kū'oko'a ("Liberating Knowledge") was conceived. It would be a project to transform Hawaiian-language newspapers from recondite images on microfilm into searchable

pages of text available to all. The task would be to view a snapshot of a page and type out all the Hawaiian words written there—an understanding of Hawaiian not required. The eight-month project, running from November 2011 through July 2012, would be run by Awaiaulu and directed by Nogelmeier and Sai-Dudoit. It would seek volunteers from around the globe to type up the 60,000 pages still trapped on microfilm or PDFs.

of those who had donated to civic organizations and the amounts of their contributions. But then the mundane became meaningful: "There among the names of a church group," Vrana says, "was a Makuakāne!" And then—"this was funny"—there was someone whose Hawaiian name might be translated to "Johnny No Give." Across from his name: "0 cents." Was that a joke, Vrana asked herself, or a prod?

Daniel "Pono" Sternbergh transcribed 16 pages published between 1891 and 1908. He says that he tried not to look up words or get slowed down by reading for content, but he couldn't help "eavesdropping." He got caught up in some serial stories, like those published in 1903 about *Roderika o Kiladea (he Naita) a me Kate Makamuraga* ("Roderick of Kildare, a Knight, and Kate McMurragh") and *Kaunawahine o ke Kulanakauhale o Tarevis* ("The Countess of the City of Tarevis"). The latter, set near Frankfurt, Germany, took up the entire front page of the paper on

## KAHOLO'ANA STAFF

Editor:	Constance Kiakahi Hale
Designers:	Chris Uesugi Lauer Linda Zane
Deputy Editor:	Jenny Des Jarlais
Copy Editor:	Julie Holland
Writers:	Nā Lei Hulu haumana
Photographers:	Nā Lei Hulu haumana

# Ka Leo Kānaka:

*Nā Lei Hulu's October show brings bygone voices to the San Francisco stage*

—by Jenny Des Jarlais

*Can something as black and white as newspapers inspire a hula show? Hālau dancer Jenny Des Jarlais asked Kumu Patrick Makuakāne about the moment he realized the Hawaiian Language Newspaper Project might anchor Nā Lei Hulu's annual performance, the title of which he translates as "Voice of the People." How did he find material in quotidian stories? What did nineteenth-century sensibilities reveal about the Hawaiian spirit? How did he find metaphors that would speak to a twenty-first-century audience?*

**Q: How did you decide to build a hula show around a project to digitize sixteen thousand pages of Hawaiian-language newspapers?**

A: I was applying for a competitive choreographer grant and knew that the project I submitted would need a very compelling subject. It hit me, *bam*. The newspapers! What if I did a show based on the newspapers? They're such a rich repository of knowledge, historical progress, and culture. It's like an unmined historical dig. I thought the idea of creating a show using the newspapers as inspiration would resonate with the grant panel. And it did. So now there's no turning back. *[Laughs.]*

**Q: Has it been a creative challenge to stick with a specific set of source material?**

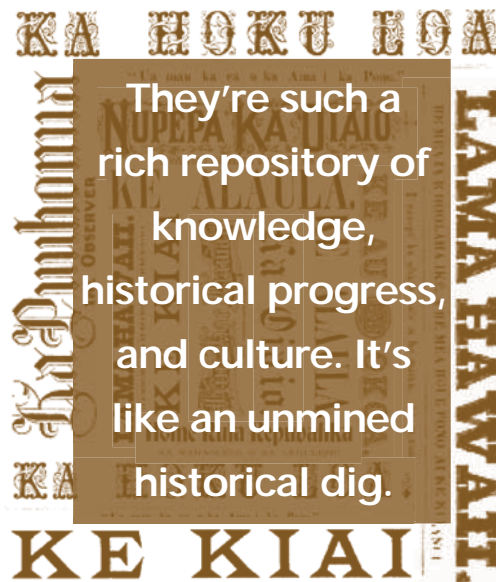
A: A bit. I did it in 2006, with the show *Daughters of Haumea*. But in that case I drew from a single book of scholarship on the various roles women played in ancient Hawai'i. I could flip through it, ruminate, and imagine. But with this project there's an almost overwhelming amount of material—from genealogy to historical anecdotes, poetry, dirges, fiction, astronomy, zoology, cartoons. The newspapers spoke about every aspect of life.

Another challenge had to do with how I could, in one performance, live up to the grandness of one hundred years' worth of newspapers. I have needed to pick some topics, to cull through articles I'm interested in. For example, the myth of Hi'iaka'ikapoliopole is an epic saga passed down through oral tradition. One of the most complete versions written down appeared in the *Ka Na'i Aupuni* newspaper from 1905 to 1906 as a daily serial. The way I want to present it in the show is to flesh it out in separate segments, mimicking the way it was serialized in the paper. Little vignettes here and there. It's such a huge story you couldn't do it justice in a single fifteen-minute segment.

**Q: How are you integrating *hula mua*, your own distinctive, progressive style of hula, into a show based on material so rooted in the past?**

A: I've been up late at night trying to figure that out. The material is historical, so I find myself leaning toward expressing it through traditional hula movement. I have to be

deliberate about pulling myself out of that mindset and finding a way to express the history in a modern way.



I've asked myself, were there any opera houses in nineteenth-century Hawai'i? Any jazz clubs in the 1920s? What did Hawaiians think and read about the amazing singers and entertainers of the day? That music would lend itself to hula *mua*.

Another good place for it is in the *mo'olelo* (fables) captured in the papers. They reflect whimsy, fantasy. It's easy to represent them with hula *mua*. For example, there is a beloved story that we first performed in 2008: 'Aiwohikupua wants to marry La'ieikawai. He sends his sisters, the Maile Sisters, to entice La'ieikawai with their fragrance and lure her down from her mountain home to be with 'Aiwohikupua.

**Q: What do you hope the audience will take away from the show?**

A: First, what a literate nation Hawai'i was. Kauikeaouli, Kamehameha III, was one of the first students taught to read and write in Hawaiian. At age 11, in 1825, he became king and declared, "*He aupuni palapala ko'u*," which means "Mine will be a nation of literacy." Within about a generation and a half, almost 100 percent of Hawaiians were literate. This was a higher rate than in America, France, or England! That's really phenomenal, something we as a people can be proud of.

Second, I want them to know there's this vast collection of unmined history. There are still many stories about who we are that are left untold. I hope people will be inspired to do their own research.

**Q: What do you guess the Hawaiian newspaper editors would think about this show?**

I think they'd be thrilled—but not necessarily surprised. They recognized that they were doing important work. They'd appeal to their readers, saying: "If you know more about this *mo'olelo* or can correct it, please write in and tell us."

They knew that, through the newspapers, they were safekeeping the culture for the future. It was nineteenth-century crowdsourcing. ♡

Patrick Makuakāne & Nā Lei Hulu | Ka Wēkiu present

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## HULA ON ICE: THE SAPPORO SNOW FESTIVAL

—by Ryan Fuimaono

The Nishi-Juichome Station may seem like just one stop on a Sapporo subway line, but for nine of us dancers this past February, it was a portal into another world. Having arrived on Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, the night before, we were hardly prepared for what greeted us as we emerged from the underground: crystalline sculptures and snow-white statues and stages of building-sized proportions—all made of ice—lining the streets of Odori Park. We had arrived, along with two million other people, at the 64th Annual Sapporo Snow Festival.

Thousands of revelers circled the park, snapping photos, watching performances, or eating Japanese delicacies. Children cavorted on slides carved from ice, and thrill-seeking

skiers and snowboarders waited their turn at an Olympic-sized ski jump.

The most awe-inspiring of the fair's structures was the outdoor stage sponsored by Hawaiian Airlines. The frozen goliath depicted an all-snow Lē'ahi (Diamond Head) looming over four snow-children enjoying a beach day in Waikīkī.

We followed Kumu Patrick Makuakāne to a small tent where we gathered to *pule* (pray) before dancing, huddling around the small gas heater and trying not to burn our fabric and raffia skirts in the flames. Once on stage, we tried not to squint as quarter-sized snowflakes flurried into our eyes. It was an elemental juxtaposition: the warmth of the hula and the icy cold snowfall. Between shows, we sipped cups of piping hot chocolate or munched on fresh crab cakes and *malasada*-like fried doughballs.



After three days of performing, we managed to jam in shopping, snowball fighting, sightseeing, and, of course, eating throughout the greater Sapporo area. We indulged in everything from familiar foods (Sapporo's famed ramen, as well as shabu shabu and sushi) to more daring dishes (salted chicken necks and pork intestine soup).

The trip left us feeling not just full, but fulfilled: We had partaken in a Nā Lei Hulu I Ka Wēkiu first. ♡