

Traditional Hawaiian Wedding

as performed by: *Kahu* (minister) B. Kauihimalaihi Helemano
bhelemano@aol.com • p.o.box 1249 • Haleiwa. Hi, 96712 • 808 626-4740



clothing for her *Kāne* (man) and her *‘Ohana* (family). The prayer in honor of the couple is given during this time.

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Ka Nui Kaula

(The coconut fibred cord)

The *kahu* (minister) will remove the cloth from the couple’s hands and hand a small three stranded cord to the man to hold. The cordage is made from the husk fibers of the coconut or *niu*. As the *kapa* or blanket symbolized a special relationship between man and wife, the coconut cord too, has a deep and spiritual meaning.

The couple will remain facing each other as the *Kahu pule* gives the cord to the man and makes a gesture for the woman to begin to braid the three loose fibers. One end of the cord is knotted and the ends (3) are loose and free. The woman will begin to braid all three fibers together, and when finished will tie a tight knot which will bind all the cords together as one. The symbolization of this sacred cord is as follows:

- The cord represents the first time that the couple will work together as man and wife.
- The three separate cords, which are bound and braided tightly together represent the vows of marriage, which are spoken on behalf of the couple during the braiding process by

Ho Ao

Ho Ao, is the Hawaiian word for wedding or betrothal. The ceremony is based on, Hawaiian tradition. Anciently here in Hawai‘i this was a very important ritual, reserved for the highest- ranking chiefs.

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Ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i

(The Hawaiian language)

The ceremony will be conducted entirely in the mother tongue of Hawai‘i, but a complete English explanation will be given prior to the service. This means that the couple will be given simple instructions to follow before the ceremony. The following examples show how easy it will be for the couple and guests to understand.

Ka Hana

(The ceremony)

The ceremony will consist of three separate parts, each using an ancient symbol of Hawai‘i, as an integral part of the service. A *Pule* or prayer will first be given in honor of the couple, and blessing the event.

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Ke Kapa Moe Hawai‘i

(The Hawaiian blanket)

A small white cloth is draped across the hands of the couple as they are asked to face each other and clasp hands. This ancient symbol represents the sharing of the same blanket as man and wife. It also represents the *wahine* or woman, because in ancient Hawai‘i, it was the woman who hand made the

the *Kahu pule*. The vows are called *Ka 'Ōlelo Pa'a* which means words of devotion and everlasting respect for each other and the fact that the words are *Pa'a* which means bound or fixed together.

- The small braided cord (12 inches) will become a symbol and reminder of the couples vows and wedding day. It will also become a keepsake to be kept, in a special place in their new home.

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Ka 'ohe Hano Ihu (The sacred nose flute)

The nose flute was an instrument said to have played by lovers in ancient Hawai'i, and it is an integral part of many modern Hawaiian ceremonies. The symbol and sound of the nose flute (played by the minister) represents a very unique tradition. In old Hawai'i lovers would serenade themselves by playing the nose flute. Each flute had a distinct sound and two lovers knew whose flute was being played at any given time.

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- The symbol of the nose flute in the Ceremony, represents the once parted lovers are brought together *pili* by the sound of the nose flute (as it was in ancient times).
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Ka Honi Hawai'i (The Hawaiian kiss)

The couple will be told prior to the ceremony (during the English explanation) that when the wedding party hears the sound of the nose flute, it will now be the time for the couple to *Honi* or kiss in the manner of the Polynesian people. And it will signify the end of the ritual.

- Here in Hawai'i, the custom of kissing is quite different than in other cultures.
- Most cultures kiss or embrace by touching of the *lehelehe* (lips).

Hawaiians kiss by touching noses.

This ancient form of greeting is more than just a kiss or embrace, since it revolves around the *Ha* (breath). As two people *Honi* they share the breath of life.

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The sharing of the breath of life is the spiritual reason that Polynesians greet in this manner. As one person inhales, the other exhales, this exchange of the breath is the gift of ones life force to another and symbolizes the sharing of life itself.

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Lawa (The end of the ceremony)

After the couple performs the *Honi* (kiss) the minister pronounces them as man and wife. The ancient traditions used in the ceremony are an integral part of the Hawaiian culture and has been hundreds of years.

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Nā apo (Rings)

Many people request to exchange rings and say their own vows. This can be done after the Hawaiian portion of the ceremony and dozens of guests to Hawai'i have requested this for their ceremony. This can be arranged with the *Kahu* prior to the ceremony, or by phone or e-mail.

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B. K. Helemano

P.O.Box 1249 Haleiwa, HI 96712

bhelemano@aol.com

808 626-4740

808 292-4292 cell



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