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PHANTOM NIGHT MARCHERS IN THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

by Katharine Luomala

My paper focuses on the phantom night marchers of the Hawaiian Islands as reported on the five main islands--Hawai‘i, O‘ahu, Maui, Moloka‘i, and Kaua‘i. For the last ninety years or so published and unpublished accounts have surfaced of people encountering the marching apparitions of chiefs, chiefesses, dead relatives, gods, goddesses, and their retinues on roads they had once ceremonially traveled to attend to customary affairs inextricably combining secular and sacred elements. Hawaiians call the phantom parade either *huaka‘i pō* (*huaka‘i,* procession; *pō,* night) or, less often, *‘oi‘o* (derivation unknown).

The diverse content of the narratives and beliefs, which circulate principally by oral transmission, suggests that many originated independently during the last century. They evolved in a cultural matrix that encompassed information passed on orally or from publications about non-phantom--and even some spectral--Hawaiian daytime and nighttime processions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries following Captain Cook’s arrival in 1778. In the next century, foreigners writing about the traditional and the transitional culture had to depend on themselves for organizing processions of their own followers, supplemented by Hawaiians, to conduct their business. Later, Hawaiians who had learned to write described processions in which they had participated or had heard about from elders. In the marches were living human beings, some of whom were led by a man or woman of such high rank as to be considered divine, and by men carrying images of gods of both sexes. Hawaiians believed that marchers might include gods, goddesses, family guardian gods, and spirits of dead kinfolk who assumed either material or spectral forms visible to human onlookers.

Source material about phantom marchers of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries consists of my unpublished collection of over twenty

narratives and statements of belief and about a half-dozen published references.[1] The unpublished material has items from the 1930s but most date from between 1950 and 1970. The first published reference to an *ʻoiʻo* that I know of was in 1883. It stated that a phantom army led by King Kamehameha's spirit had been seen on Hawaiʻi. Another early account tells of a phantom army led by the spirit of the king's nephew and foster son Ka-niho-nui, on Maui, that had left many dead persons in its track.[2] The fullest published description, largely generalized, was written in 1930 by Mary Kawena Pukui whose information came from her Hawaiian relatives and friends in her native district of Kaʻū, Hawaiʻi, and the neighboring districts of Puna and Kona.[3] A few years later, Antoinette Withington published over a dozen narratives obtained mostly on Oʻahu from Hawaiian and Caucasian residents of Honolulu and nearby communities.[4] Additional published accounts in newspapers, if located, might be useful to determine any effect on the frequency and content of experiences later reported. By and large, however, there is little published on the night-marching apparitions.

The four categories of sources are: (1) narratives by persons who have encountered the marching spirits, (2) those about a relative's or a friend's experience, (3) those about someone unknown to the storyteller, and (4) impersonal descriptions of the belief.

The information about daytime and nighttime processions in Hawaiian culture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries comes from Hawaiian scholars writing in Hawaiian, sometimes for publication in nineteenth-century Hawaiian-language newspapers and periodicals. Part of this material has now been translated into English and published. Among these writers are David Malo, S. M. Kamakau, Kepelino Keauokalani, and especially John Papa Iʻi, who was born in 1800 and died in 1870.

Martha F. Fleming has usefully assembled many early nineteenth-century descriptions by Englishmen and Americans about processions conducted for diverse purposes by both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian dignitaries and commoners.[5] In the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the processions held during coronations, funerals, and other events relating to members (or former members) of the royal family, contained elements of still earlier processions. By the end of the nineteenth century the monarchy established by Kamehameha had fallen, and the United States annexed the islands.

Processions are a study in themselves, but my concern in this paper is merely to suggest the nature of those familiar to early Hawaiian writers because they form the background for the phantom marchers of later

years. In connection with the earlier processions, I shall mention occasional elements of the later ones to illustrate the continuity of customs and beliefs.

First, however, I shall quote a story told in 1970 by a Hawaiian fisherman of Pepeʻekeo, Hawaiʻi, about the time he and his companion heard the phantom night marchers and saw their torches.[6]

> The limpet picker related his story this way: One night when I was fishing for *ulua* [crevally, *Carangidae*] Māhu-kona side, I was sitting listening to the waves crash on the rocks. I was with Keoki. We started talking story after sliding fresh *pūhi* [eels] down the line. It was about ten o'clock. Suddenly I heard the sound of a conch shell blowing in the distance. Keoki heard it too. I thought it was the wind. Then a little while later we heard it again. This time it was a little louder. It was spooky because we didn't see anything, Then we heard it again. We looked toward Ka-wai-hae side and then we saw it. It looked like a procession. At first we saw a line of torches in the distance. The procession was moving along the coastline. The conch shell blew again.
>
> I took out my knife and Keoki got the rifle. We went seaward and laid down on the lava rock. We knew about night marchers from other fishermen. We knew you aren't supposed to look upon the marchers and to lay on the ground face down. We did this. The marchers passed about fifty yards in front of us on the sand path. As they passed we could hear the sound of a drum pounding beat by beat. We didn't look up until they were farther down the coast. All we could see now was the line of torches, and all we could hear was the far away sound of the conch shell.
>
> We didn't know if they were going to come back that night, but we didn't want to stick around and see. We got our sleeping bags and made it to the car and went to Spencer Park to spend the rest of the night. In the morning we went back and picked up our rigs and equipment we left behind.

Processions in Hawaiian Culture

In the earlier culture, processions of living chiefs and chiefesses were numerous and varied in purpose. This was because such personages seldom appeared alone in public owing to taboos as onerous to them as to people ranked above and below them. They could escape these taboos only if they temporarily withdrew, unrecognized, to the backcountry, but by doing so they lost their privileges of rank.

Rank, as Kamakau said, was obtained in the womb and known to people by the taboos and laws belonging to a specific man or woman.[7] A herald often accompanied a dignitary in order to command people to get off the road and, if the principal marcher was of very high rank, to prostate themselves *(kapu moe),* or, if of lower rank, to squat down *(kapu noho).* The herald might also require the onlooker to close his eyes or to remove all or part of his clothing. Because anything belonging to a ranking person was also taboo, the solitary bearer of a chief's possessions always shouted a warning command. The most sacred chiefs and chiefesses were carried in litters because their feet would taboo the ground. They seldom went out except at night, thus preventing the disruption of daily labor and the chance of a polluting shadow falling on anything or anybody. A taboo-breaker might be killed or seized for a sacrifice at a high chief's heiau (place of worship). Sometimes the penalty was extended to the violator's entire family group.

Reports about latter-day phantom marchers occasionally refer to these taboos and attribute mysterious deaths to punishments inflicted by the marchers for violations of their highborn leaders' taboos.

Wherever a dignitary went, there was often a procession. To appease the offended volcano goddess Pele, Kamehameha the Great led a procession through the danger area in North Kona, Hawai'i, with his lesser chiefs, chiefesses, priests, and two of his wives--Ka-'ahu-manu and her sister, Ka-heihei-mālie. After accepting the king's offerings, Pele stopped the lava flow and manifested herself as a woman leading a "multitude" of other goddesses, also in human form, who danced and chanted praises of Ka-'ahu-manu whom Kamehameha had been neglecting at the time in favor of her sister.[8]

An observer of a latter-day procession of gods and goddesses in the volcano area recognized Pele's youngest sister, Hi'iaka. Although Pele herself is not named, this suggests to me that the other marchers may have included Pele's numerous younger sisters.[9]

Another memorable occasion was a magnificent social affair on Hawai'i, "the talk of the time," according to Kamakau, that lasted several days and consumed much wealth.[10] Kamehameha gave it to honor Ka-'ahu-manu and celebrate peace following his final decisive battle at Nu'uanu Pali, O'ahu, in 1795 which united the archipelago. Kamakau implies that a procession was part of the celebration, for chiefs carried Ka-'ahu-manu in a litter cushioned with feather cloaks while chiefs and chiefesses held the hems of her garments. The king's other four wives were also richly attired and attended by many high chiefs and chiefesses. Two chiefs held heirloom *kāhili* (royal feather standards) belonging to two of

the wives, each *kāhili* with a personal name and history. One belonged to Ke-ʻōpu-o-lani, the king's sacred wife, who outranked him. She was attended by one of the other wives, who was her aunt, and by many taboo chiefs. Beholders prostrated themselves because of her taboo.

Latter-day observers note that phantom processions frequently appear on anniversaries and at places of important national or local events that took place in the marchers' lifetime. In 1970, a great-grandmother on Hawaiʻi explained that spirits of dead chiefs and their retinues still traveled from village to village to attend festivities such as they had enjoyed in life. She also noted that a very high chief had heralds to order people to prostrate themselves off the trail; anyone failing to do so risked being instantly killed by the chief's guards (*mū*).

In the old culture, a chief and his followers marched to battle arrayed in feather cloaks, helmets, and other finery. In the chief's personal party were his wife, closest friends, and bearers of stick images representing his gods. Also in his procession were his general, priests, astrologers, as well as variously trained, equipped, and specialized ranks of warriors.[11] Observers of phantom marchers frequently identify them as the spirits of a chief and his warriors.

Two important daytime processions occurred at a ten-day ceremony to bring health and peace to Kamehameha's kingdom, the king himself, and his ailing sacred wife. During this time he resided in Papa-ʻena-ʻena Heiau on Lēʻahi (Diamond Head) under strict taboo. The first procession, part of a ritual, marched only before an assemblage of chiefs *(aliʻi),* priests (*kāhuna*), and thatchers of the several heiau structures, and remained within the heiau precincts. First came a man bearing a taboo stick to warn that sacred personages were approaching. Then came a man-god and the feather images of gods--each carried by its keeper. The next day the king with many priests and other attendants marched from the heiau to a mountain to cut sacred logs to be carved into a new image of his principal god. The many rites connected with this "fearful and terrifying procession," as Iʻi called it, included human sacrifices--taboo-breakers seized from the king's procession or along the route.[12] Observers of phantom processions frequently interpret them as either going to or from the site of a former heiau.

An annual daytime procession around each island or district was made during the Makahiki, a four-month-long harvest celebration to honor the god Lono and to collect tribute for redistribution. On Oʻahu in Kamehameha's time, two processions set out from the Diamond Head heiau. The more important one--led by Lono's stick image and banner--included priests and collectors of offerings who marched with the land on their.

right, the ocean on their left, and the land toward the ocean taboo. The other procession with its stick image, images of other gods and goddesses, and numerous officials, marched with the land on the left and the ocean on the right.[13] I‘i, in telling of several processions of gods and people during the Makahiki, adds that like many of the populace he followed one of the tax-collecting processions part of the way in order to learn about it and partake of the food contributed by residents at each stopping place.[14] On the second night before the principal processions the feather gods were taken out and paraded, and on the third night the parade was repeated with wooden images.[15]

Of special historical interest are processions to and from Hiki-au Heiau, Kona coastal area, Hawai‘i. In this heiau, Captain Cook, who happened to anchor in January during the Makahiki season, attended a welcoming ceremony honoring him as the returned Lono. As it was a *luakini,* a heiau where human sacrifices were made, it was probably dedicated to the war god **Kū,** although it is often described as the principal heiau for Lono in the islands. Images of gods, including that of Lono, were kept there, and priests during the Makahiki carried these images on a circuit of the island (or wherever they were to be honored) and then back to the heiau. They followed The Pathway of the Gods (Ke Ala-ke-kua) for which the bay is named. Cook and his retinue were met on shore by four heralds who escorted them to the heiau. The sentence the heralds repeatedly shouted was probably *kapu moe,* for the populace disappeared except for those nearby who prostrated themselves on the ground. During the heiau ceremony two solemn processions arrived, each bearing offerings to Lono. The procession back to the boats resembled the arrival.[16]

Phantom night marchers have been seen frequently along the entire Kona coast including Kealakekua Bay and along The Pathway of the Gods, Kamehameha’s birthplace, and other sacred and historical sites. In 1970 the great-grandson of the woman who described the march of chiefs to festivities conjectured that the night-marching spirits might on occasion be connected with the Makahiki. In 1931 a Maui woman interpreted a phantom midnight festival as a reenactment of a Makahiki fertility rite.

In 1827, eight years after Kamehameha the Great’s death and the official (but incomplete) abolition of the taboo system by his successor, Liholiho (Kamehameha II), Ka‘ahu-manu, now a Christian, made a circuit of O‘ahu to preach the Gospel. Making a religious or political circuit was customary in the old culture; I‘i has described the O‘ahu trails used.[17] Ka-‘ahu-manu stopped at **Māeaea,** Wai-a-lua district, where Liholiho, her stepson, was in residence. Because all fires, including fishermen’s torches, were taboo during this period and fishing shrines closely guarded, the

Dowager Queen's retinue was puzzled by strange lights at night from nearby Moku-lē'ia. They decided they were diamonds sparkling on the beach--calcite crystals in rocks like those that had given Lē'ahi its English name of Diamond Head.

Kamakau, describing the event, added that "people of old" *(ka po'e Kahiko)* called the lights "the innumerable fires of the *'aumākua o ka Pō,* the divine ancestors of the Night."[18] *'Aumākua* are protective and disciplinary gods of a family or an individual. Each may have more than one inanimate or animate manifestation; each may be an ancestor and may appear in a spectral procession, usually in human form. Gods born in the era of Pō during creation are in the vegetable and animal kingdom. Those of the later era, Ao (Light), include great gods and mankind.[19] People today believe the lights are carried by spirits marching to the many sacred sites in the area or are sent by an offended shark god who, offshore in rock form, wants to spoil fishermen's catches.

Malo, in applying the term *'oi'o* to a living person's spirit and to "a group (or procession) of spirits," implies that spirits temporarily detached from living bodies also paraded in olden days.[20] More frequently "people of old" saw processions of spirits of dead ancestors who had been transfigured into volcanic flames, sharks, water spirits *(mo'o),* humpbacked thunder beings, or whatever the principal embodiment *(kinolau)* was of either a family's ancestors or its guardian gods. Marchers escorted the dying person's spirit to the afterworld. The person saw these spirits with joy and happily joined their march. Once a person's remains had been deposited in his family god's natural element, his living relatives anxiously watched for traditional signs of the arrival of a procession.[21] Latter-day marching apparitions seen by day or night are still believed to be escorting a dying person's spirit if they stop at his house.

The Phantom Processions

Having indicated the nature of old Hawaiian nocturnal and diurnal processions of living persons and supernatural beings, I shall next examine the published and unpublished information about phantom processions of the later culture as to (1) observers' identity and evidence, (2) marchers' identity and time and place of marching, (3) observers' behavior and reaction, (4) listeners' reaction, and (5) functions of narratives and beliefs about phantom marchers.

Observers' identity. Men, women, and children have heard or seen marching apparitions. Most observers are of Hawaiian descent, but at

least a half dozen or more are Caucasian, some are Chinese, and two families are Filipino. Individuals from these and other ethnic groups, including Japanese and Korean, have also heard or seen Hawaiian spirits singing, dancing, or drumming after they have assembled. Several ascribe otherwise inexplicable deaths and accidents of people and animals to night marchers having found them on their routes.

Nothing suggests that one sex is more likely than the other to witness these specters. The effect of literacy, education, and occupation is difficult to determine, but the range of observers includes well-educated men and women with professional or other college degrees and those with perhaps no more than primary-school education in rural districts. Among adult observers are farmers, fishermen, ranch hands, U.S. soldiers, youth-camp counsellors, schoolteachers, a former interpreter in King Kalākaua's court, a plantation owner, a physician, a tourist, a prominent politician, and the sister of another politician.

Most observers, in relating their experiences, state that they were not alone at the time, and their companions, in all but one instance, saw and heard what they did. Occasionally a whole family, a community, or a group of people see the marchers.

Some Caucasians, and in one instance a Japanese, in describing experiences of people outside their own ethnic group, characterize the observers as respected, steady, truthful, not given to drink, and of good family.[22] Only one of these commentators had observed the phenomenon himself.[23] On the other hand, Hawaiians, when describing others' experiences, feel no compulsion to establish credibility or narrative interest by emphasizing an observer's good reputation. In fact, they may respect observers of these phenomena as highly as they respect visionaries.[24]

Opinions differ as to whether children can see or hear night marchers. A young O'ahu girl whose mother aroused her during a procession was able to hear but not see it. Another heard the drums although her young companions could not, and as an adult this same girl heard, saw, conversed with, and marched alongside of the spirit of an ancestor.[25] On Hawai'i a family sat up with their children to wait in a safe place for the procession. As an adult, the daughter recalled that she had heard the marchers distinctly but had seen them only rather dimly. One evening two young boys at South Kona heard the marchers' drums and saw their torches before their mother did, And a young Kohala girl, playing during the day in a forbidden field, was terrified when she heard a whistling wind, drums, heavy footsteps, and voices, and was knocked off the marchers' path by a protective spirit who whispered a name in her ear which

she later learned was that of a dead relative. A Moloka‘i family was happily excited when a son heard the spirits’ drums.[26] On the other hand, a Maui woman as a child could not hear, and presumably could not see, the marchers, but as an adult she heard them so clearly that had she been able to record musical notation she could have put down the sounds of their chants, flutes, and drums.[27] In the 1960s, an O‘ahu man stated flatly that only adults could hear and see the spirits, for as a child he had been unable to hear them although his parents and grandparents could.

More than one Hawaiian, while unconscious or seemingly dead, has subsequently told of joining spirits who were gathered for celebrations or were proceeding to an entrance of the afterworld. The person returned to this life because spirits of dead relatives, who said it was too early to die, drove the reluctant wraith home and forced it back into its cold, abandoned body. They pushed the spirit under the big toenail and up through the torso until a slight sound showed that the person was recovering consciousness.

Dogs appear to hear spectral marchers before human beings do and race along beside them.[28] In Hawaiian belief, everything animate in nature, and even what Westerners call inanimate, is very sensitive to the presence of spirits. Some Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians state that horses and even automobiles have this sensitivity and come to a dead stop when a spirit is around. However, no one on horseback or in an automobile has met a spectral procession although many have met a single night-prowling spirit.

Observers’ evidence. Either visual or auditory evidence reveals the presence of phantom marchers, with the auditory more important to most observers, and the combination less often mentioned. One Hawaiian observer also felt the earth shake under him. Two “responsible” Caucasians had an “uncanny and unexplainable” experience of a “moving sound around their feet--which was more felt than heard--[that] gradually disappeared in the distance.”[29] Feeling the wind and its direction are significant because marchers can smell an observer, and one should not mistake in Hawaiian belief distant, uncanny sounds for wind or windblown vegetation.

Indirect evidence of the passage of night marchers includes such things as fallen branches where gods have marched due to the fact that nothing must be above their heads.[30] Other examples of indirect evidence are the peculiar and recurring deaths at night of a Japanese man’s horses until he moved his stable off what a Hawaiian neighbor told him was a route once used by Hawaiian warriors and now by their spirits. Then

there is the mysterious disappearance of a Japanese fisherman from his favorite and very solitary camp site. He had told villagers of hearing strange music that moved ahead of him when he followed it. Although warned by knowledgeable villagers not to return to that place, he did; villagers assumed that the spirits had finally lured him to join them. This is a familiar convention in Hawaiian belief and mythology--Pele herself followed such phantom music from Hawai‘i to Kaua‘i but later returned to her volcano. A South Kona fisherman found dead after the neighborhood had seen the night marchers was believed to have died of fright. Another Kona man found bruised on the rocks at the shore was believed by some to have been beaten by night marchers because he was in their path; more skeptical neighbors said he had probably fallen on the rocks while drunk.

Auditory evidence of spirit sounds or voices (*ʻūlāleo*) may be merely the sound of ancient drums or marching feet loud enough to awaken living sleepers. More detailed evidence may be the creaking of litters or food calabashes carried on poles, chanters and instrumentalists, heralds shouted warnings, and conversation about the observers whose presence is always detected. An O‘ahu woman heard some spirits shout, *“Pepehi”* (Kill), but others, presumably her dead relatives, called, *“Kali, kali”* (Wait, wait). Another person heard, *“Oia”* (Go ahead), meaning to kill, but a relative’s spirit called *“Alia!”* (Stop!); other spirits answered, *“‘A‘ohe!”* (No!), and still others, *“‘Auhea aku nei?”* (Where has he gone?) and *“‘A‘ohe la”* (Not here) because the dead relative’s spell prevented them from seeing the observer.[31] A fortunate observer may be recognized as a marcher’s namesake, or a relative, or a god’s favorite.[32] An O‘ahu girl, descended from high-ranking people, recited these ancestors’ names to the marchers until in a strange small voice, a man told her he was her ancestor; she talked and walked with the marchers until they disappeared.[33] Even if a spirit recognizes an observer and intervenes to protect him, he rarely calls him by name, and few who have recognized a dead kinsman in the march have stated his name.

The spirits’ music is said to be weird, strange, beautiful, old Hawaiian, and very clear. An O‘ahu woman recognized chants of the kind unaccompanied by dance *(olioli),* gourd rattles (*ʻulīʻulī*), musical bows (*ʻūkēkē*), or drums which, if they sound faint, she said, are close by. To others, the sounds, which at first seem like wind or baskets squeaking, become louder as marchers approach and are distinguishable as chants, conch shells, flutes, drums, and other unrecognized ancient instruments. Gods and goddesses march only to the chanting of their names and deeds; personal and family guardian gods have both chants and instruments; and spirits of

chiefs follow the traditions established in life by marching silently or with the accompaniment of musical sound.

The emphasis on auditory rather than visual evidence can be linked to several beliefs: that spirits generally march when the moon is dim and little can be seen; that listening to their talk and music is permissible; that observers should be hidden as far away as possible; and that observers' knowledge of appropriate behavior may include not watching the procession, particularly if the marchers are gods.

In my collection, only one observer said that he and his companion, having heard that marchers must not be watched, hid off the road, face down, without looking. All they ever saw were distant lines of torches approaching or receding, but they heard the music and tramping clearly. An O'ahu girl failed to see the marchers because her aunt enforced the prostration taboo. The observer caught on the road, if unable to do anything else, should lie down or sit without looking.[35] However, observers who are safely hidden usually watch, even if they hear far more than they can see. As part of her cure, a girl wounded by night marchers was required by a Hawaiian healer to watch the next procession from a window.

Visual evidence rarely includes torches except in certain regions. A Kona community, however, knows the procession only by the sight of different-sized torches emerging from burial caves on a nearby cliff. Night-marching family gods in Puna, **Ka'ū**, and Kona carry very bright torches, except in the daytime when a whirlwind marks the end of their line. Higher-ranking gods have brilliant torches that burn red (a sacred color), with the brightest and tallest marking the front, the rear, and three places in the middle of the procession.[36] The length of the procession can be gauged from the location of the first and the last of the kukui-nut flares.

Weird lights and moving figures are still seen in the Wai-a-lua district where Ka-'ahu-manu's attendants saw lights in 1827. Now they are called Menehune Lights or Menehune Lanterns, and are believed to be carried by legendary little night-appearing people. In the 1940s some Hawaiian fishermen saw an army of torch-carrying Menehune walk over the water to shore and up a hill to a burial ground. According to a teacher, who has often seen the lights on the water, many people saw spectral figures carrying lights on an undesignated anniversary of a Hawaiian princess. A Caucasian physician, who had frequently seen and heard the marchers, took with him a mainland-educated Hawaiian girl when he thought there might be a spirit procession. After midnight both saw a long line of torch-carrying people, the faces almost visible, emerge chanting in Hawaiian from the water and climb a hill to the site of a former heiau where drums began to beat.[37]

At Waikīkī one night in the 1930s, a tourist, unfamiliar with the belief in phantom marchers, saw strange, unidentifiable lights move along the shore toward Diamond Head.[38] A Hawaiian said the procession is going to the heiau not the Hawaiian. The heiau is Papa'endena going to a ceremony at the old heiau there.

Occasionally an observer, even if able to identify the race, rank, sex, relative age, and occupation of the phantom marchers, notes that they have relatively nonmaterial substance. A grandmother at Hōlua-loa, Hawai'i, told her skeptical granddaughter that the marchers were men led by a headless chief and accompanied by musicians, and looked like moving shadows. O'ahu observers describe marchers as looking strange, white, and shimmeringly radiant; or they may look at first like a silvery cloud of dust, then like smoke, and finally like young and old people of all sorts, with faces distinct enough for the observer to look closely in the hope--unrealized--of seeing a recently dead cousin.[39]

In summary, observers' auditory and less often visual evidence is that phantom marchers can see, hear, smell, talk, walk, perform specialized occupational duties, and exert force, with or without weapons, that can stun, wound, or kill living people and animals. They can also cast spells on each other. Although some phantoms are heavy enough to shake the earth or tread loudly, others float above ground.

Marchers' identity. As part of their evidence, observers specify or imply that marchers are identifiable as Hawaiian men and women or only men; sometimes these marchers have dogs. A procession may be limited to a single group: gods and goddesses *(akua);* family gods (*'aumākua*); spirits of living Hawaiians' ancestors *(wailua, kino wailua)* who may also be family gods; Menehune warriors; regular-sized warriors; or high-ranking people traveling with their retinues, not to war, but perhaps to places of entertainment or religious ceremonies. Some Hawaiians today claim descent from the little Menehune.

On Hawai'i, a night-marching phantom chief may or may not be accompanied by every imaginable kind of attendant. If his back is very sacred (and therefore deadly to those who come near) he marches at the rear; if his face is taboo he is in front; if he is of lesser mana (supernatural power) or was well protected in life, he marches among his attendants. For example, a Kona man saw a large phantom chief carried in a litter in the middle of his retinue of seven-foot-tall men and women who marched four abreast without their feet touching the ground.[40]

People frequently see phantom warriors, large and small. Moloka'i, like O'ahu, has marching Menehune armies. Some phantom armies of regular-sized warriors on Maui, O'ahu, and Hawai'i are led by a headless

chief, unnamed except on Maui. On O‘ahu, where his feet do not touch the ground he marches behind a dog that has its head in place but can expand or contract in size. This size-shifting dog, now headless, is the only leader of another phantom O‘ahu army in which its human warriors look as they did at death--some headless, others missing arms or legs.

The Maui headless chief followed by his army is Ka-niho-nui (The Long Tooth), Kamehameha’s foster son and nephew, whom the king reluctantly ordered strangled (some say beheaded) in 1809 for adultery with Ka-‘ahu-manu.[41] These apparitions are said to have left several dead in their path. Why Ka-niho-nui’s apparition appears on Maui I do not know for, according to I‘i, his body was placed as a sacrifice to decompose it Papa-‘ena-‘ena Heiau.[42] The grieved and outraged Ka-‘ahu-manu then plotted the overthrow of the kingdom as she surfed at Waikiki and wept whenever she looked up toward Diamond Head. Her plot aborted when the king’s chosen successor, Liholiho, refused to kill his father and seize the kingdom. Thereupon Kamehameha, who knew of the plot, disbanded his army.

Also among the phantom marching armies on Maui, dressed in oldtime array, may be members of a famous class of warriors of old: the shape-shifting dog-men (*‘ōlohe*), recognizable by their canine heads or tails and (unlike other warriors who had long hair) their hairlessness. *‘Olohe* were also old-time cannibalistically inclined male and female wrestlers, bone-breakers, and waylayers of travelers.[43] Warriors were sometimes metaphorically termed “bristling dogs.”

The size-changing, often shape-shifting dog, with or without a head, is usually the spirit of Kamehameha’s pet dog Poki (from the English “Boss”). So many dogs were named Poki for the king’s dog that finally it became the proper name for phantom O‘ahu dogs seen in clouds as omens, or stretched across roads as family gods to warn a Hawaiian traveler of trouble ahead, or stationed like *‘ōlohe* to extract tributes of pork, fish, kava, or *ōkolehao* (home brew) from travelers. On Mokoka‘i and Hawai‘i any size-changing, supernatural domestic animal, whether dog, cow, or mule, is now generically called a *poki.* Because Chief Boki, who disappeared on a voyage to the New Hebrides in 1829, may have been named for Kamehameha’s pet dog, a phantom dog is sometimes said to be one form of the dead chief’s spirit.

The most illustrious historical chief whose spirit has been seen leading a phantom army is, of course, Kamehameha the Great.[44] With “an imposing array” of officers and men, he marches in Hawai‘i with his club-carrying executioner (*ilāmuku*) nearby. Unfortunately, there is no documentation as to when this army or that of Ka-niho-nui was first seen, but

references indicate that the legends were circulating by the mid-nineteenth century. Kamehameha's giant spectre leading an army of kings and chiefs was also seen the night before Princess Likelike died. They marched silently through Nu'u-anu Valley, O'ahu, going to escort the spirit of the princess (who died February 2, 1887) to the afterworld. She was the younger sister of Kalākaua and Lili'u-o-kalani.

The grandest phantom march reported is one on Hawai'i of gods and goddesses with their red-burning torches and chanters who glorified their names and deeds. One of the three goddesses in the last row was recognizable as Hi'iaka, Pele's favorite and youngest sister, probably an ancestor and guardian goddess of the observer.[45]

Except for Hi'iaka and references to Kamehameha, Ka-niho-nui, and the dog Poki, observers rarely give the proper names of any marchers they happen to recognize or who recognize them. The Kohala girl whose ancestor told her his name is an exception. The Kona man who saw the seven-foot-tall marchers later saw them at play and heard them identify him as the grandson of Kekuanoi, a living visionary, and let him watch their games.

In 1917 in Ka'ū, a Chinese saw a procession of phantom chiefs and called it to the attention of his Hawaiian companion, a noted visonary, who recognized it as an escort procession. Then came word the next day of the death of former Queen Lili'u-o-kalani whose ancestors had been closely associated with the Ka'ū district since Kamehameha's time. Whom the escort is calling for is sometimes known by a dying person's neighbor who sees the procession of ancestral gods pause at that person's house.[46]

During World War I, a family in Wai'anae, O'ahu, saw, a ghostly procession of Hawaiian warriors in feather capes and helmets and took it as a sign that a son had been killed in action in France. News came later that he was indeed dead. One day his grieving mother saw the ghostly marchers again and knew that she would soon join her dead son in the afterworld; she died two days later.[47]

Time of marching. That the spirits usually march at night is either definitely stated or implied except when family guardian gods or spirits of dead relatives come for someone dying during the day. Marches usually occur between nightfall and dawn; several informants are specific about the hour, which may be around midnight or whenever it is very dark.

Hawaiians familiar with the old thirty-day lunar calendar say that spirits return to their former areas on earth on certain days and nights sacred to the worship of specific gods. The marches are most often on Pō Kāne, nights between the 27th and the 29th sacred to the god Kāne, the most important of the great gods in the early historic period. Other nights

for phantom marchers are the 29th, sacred to Lono; nights between the 24th and the 26th (some say the 23rd and the 24th), sacred to Kaloa (Kanaloa); two of Kū's nights when the moon is still new; and Akua's, the 14th, when the moon is distinctly round. Usually the processions are observed when the moon is either waning or new. A Maui woman, without using the Hawaiian name, said marchers appear every month, "the day before the new moon rises and always about 3 or 4 A.M. when the night is darkest." On the other hand, a Moloka'i woman said a Menehune army and singers appear during the full moon. Torch-carrying wraiths from Kona cliff burials "appear at certain times of the year."

Anniversaries of a death are psychically delicate, even dangerous. An O'ahu boy saw night marchers about a year after a young cousin's death and looked for her spirit but could see no one he knew.[48] His still unresolved grief, it seems, had continued beyond the customary year of acute mourning. Other Hawaiians who continue to mourn do not see night marchers, but the mourned person's spirit may appear alone in a dream or a waking vision. An exception was the grieving Wai'anae mother.

The loss of an entire army or division in a natural disaster is now marked by the warriors' spirits marching on the anniversary of death. Two fragmentary narratives give neither the date of the disaster nor when marching spectres were first seen. The first disaster, according to a brief summary of a Hawaiian guide's narrative about phantom marchers, was on Hawai'i where the second of three divisions of warriors died when Kīlau-ea volcano suddenly erupted soon after their leader, an unnamed "king of Ka'ū," had gone ahead with the first division. The second division was trapped; all were found dead by the third division which arrived later. Spirits of the dead second division are now seen marching in the area on the undesignated anniversary of death.[49]

Kamakau and the Reverend Dibble describe the event, which, according to Kamakau (whose dates are not always reliable), occurred in November, 1790, after a battle in eastern Hawai'i, Hāmākua district, between Kamehameha and Keōua Kuahu-'ūla, the latter the ruling chief of Ka'ū, Hilo, and Puna.[50] The great battle ended indecisively but Kamehameha had the edge. Keōua then marched south to Ka'ū with three companies which, as was usual on such expeditions, included the warriors' wives, children, and domestic animals. The army, when camped at Kīlau-ea volcano, was beset by repeated eruptions which showered it with sand, heavy rocks, and fire. Some of the advance company died, others were injured, but the greatest death toll from gases was in the middle company. The rear company, hurrying forward after the eruptions had ended, thought at first that this company was at rest, for some were sitting,

others were lying down, and still others were clasping wives and children and pressing noses with them. They then discovered that all were corpses, the only survivor a hog. Keōua, it is said, lost four hundred fighting men and an untold number of women, children, hogs, and dogs. He thought Pele was angry with his army for having rolled rocks into the crater, but a seer said that her youngest sister, Hi‘iaka, was angry because Keōua had left Hilo where she had been enjoying the fat mullet. Whether “fat mullet” is meant literally or metaphorically is unclear, because the spoils and lands Keōua had seized before Kamehameha’s arrival are called “fat mullet.” Hi‘iaka was the chief’s principal object of worship, for he carried her image with him and she was called “his beloved.” It was also said that his wife’s name was Hi‘iaka.

The story of the other army that met disaster, an orally transmitted narrative by a young man of Japanese descent in 1953, briefly states that on very dark nights one can see lights along the reef at Moku-lē‘ia, O‘ahu, forming a long line of continuous light, an effect not produced by people out torch-fishing. The explanation is that an invading army from Kaua’i was killed by terrific waves during an invasion, and every year on the undesignated anniversary the lights are sure to be seen at night. I have found nothing about this invasion from Kaua‘i or any such disaster. The incident is reminiscent of the heavy loss of American men due to a strong current and Japanese fire during the American invasion of Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, during World War II.

Two published narratives tell how spirits gather on dates significant in Western culture, namely the Fourth of July and Christmas Eve. A Moloka‘i boy heard phantom drums coming from a former heiau site the night before the Fourth of July.[51] Whether the night was a sacred time in the old lunar calendar I do not know. The Christmas date has been tentatively identified by Mrs. Wichman with a Makahiki ceremony.[52] One night three employees of different ethnic origins on her plantation had heard, and one of them had seen, a phantom army. She was then told by another employee, a Japanese, that for three successive years after midnight on Christmas Eve he and his friends had seen spirits of young and old Hawaiian women chanting, playing old instruments, and dancing in an old-style performance near a sixty-foot-high rock, the so-called “male rock” (the “female rock” is in the river nearby). This is a sacred phallic rock, *pōhaku a Kāne* (rock of Kāne). One year the Japanese watchers saw a strange white canoe pass by on the river, and the celebration began soon afterwards. Mrs. Wichman, from information passed on in her family by the Reverend William Hyde Rice, her grandfather, and corroborated

by two old-timers, learned that in ancient times a yearly fertility rite important to women was held at this rock when taro planting was finished. Mrs. Wichman learned further that the old calendar ended the year with an uneven period of sacred days between December 23 and 28. She concluded that the ceremony of which the Japanese had seen "a mirage" on Christmas Eve perhaps coincided with one of these taboo days when the god Lono, or a chief representing him, came over the water in a canoe to be greeted by welcoming throngs and festivities on shore.

In 1930 on Hawai'i, people said that the phantom marchers did not manifest themselves as often as in earlier years.[53] Other Hawaiians have said the same. In 1950, an O'ahu woman said one is less likely to see them in the city because of the many houses, but they still march in the country. Most observers have encountered them in rural or isolated areas that in the earlier culture probably had a large population. Even in early August, 1978, just as I finished this paper, a fellow anthropologist told me that an informant had told him of a friend meeting the marchers on Hawai'i about two weeks earlier. Both informant and observer were convinced of the reality of the phenomenon.

Place of marching. Place, like time, may provide clues to the night marchers' purpose and destination. They appear in places familiar to them in life to do what they did in life. They are seen or heard on ancient roads like Ke Ala-ke-kua and on trails along the coast and over mountains, some of them now parts of modern highways; others use trails frequented only by fishermen, hikers, and campers. The ocean side of any coastal road was traditionally taboo when personages were traveling. Phantom travelers proceed between once-populous communities toward the site of a former heiau, battlefield, burial ground, leaping-off place to the otherworld, playing field, or *loku*. Sometimes they are seen or heard already assembled and performing in these places. A *loku* was a secular area in the district of a chief's or king's court where men and women gathered at night in order to enjoy sports, games, dances, and storytelling. In the years that I'i served Kamehameha and Liholiho at court there were two such *loku* in downtown Honolulu at the comer of what are now Merchant and Alakea Streets and Nuuanu Avenue and King Street.[54] From seven o'clock to midnight the living were joined by spirits of former *habitués.*

Marchers are said to travel in a straight line, but this means only that they do not deviate from their traditional route and may kill or hurt anyone in their path. Rarely deterred by physical obstructions, they march through a house, stonewall, or automobile, or over a fisherman's gear without causing damage. Some marchers, however, don't adapt to modern culture and find parts of it baffling. Closed doors led one group to change

its route during World War II because Schofield Barracks, central O‘ahu, was on its path. As long as the soldiers left the doors at opposite ends open at night, the phantoms paraded through. When their tread repeatedly disturbed sleepers, an old Hawaiian’s advice to close the doors proved correct as no more marching was heard. In windward O‘ahu, their clatter in an old-style Hawaiian kitchen awakened and terrified the family. Next morning the. modern table, chairs, and dishes were found neatly stacked to one side as if to clear a path for the marchers.

Because many accounts pinpoint localities fairly precisely, I shall discuss them by island. Only a few records do not name the island but it is assumed to be the storyteller’s.

Hawai‘i. In South Kona night marchers with drums and torches apparently frightened a fisherman to death although earlier they had turned back from a home in their path where a woman was alone with her two young sons. A neighbor had warned her to turn off the lights and a Hawaiian policeman had telephoned to find out what was going on, but neither he nor the woman’s absent husband (according to Russ and Peg Apple) would take the chance of crossing the ghosts’ path to help her. Farther north a whole community sometimes sees the marchers leaving the Ho‘okena cliff burial caves, and at Hōlua-loa marchers have often been seen on Pō Kāne nights. Two fishermen at Māhu-kona Bay saw the marchers come from the direction of Ka-wai-hae and move on to an unknown destination. Also along the coast two camp counsellors were kept awake at night by the tramping ghosts; an old Hawaiian explained that the ghosts were relocating to the mountains from the ruins of a nearby sacrificial heiau because the campers had disturbed it. At Koko-iki, in Kohala, where Kamehameha was born and the Mo‘o-kini sacrificial heiau was located, a Japanese farmer’s horses died until, on a Hawaiian neighbor’s advice, he moved the stable off the spirits’ path. Napua Poire, as a girl in the Kohala district, was knocked off a path during the day by spirits marching from the mountains to the sea.

In eastern Hawai‘i, Kamehameha’s phantom army marches on the Mahiki-waena Road between inland Waimea and coastal Kukui-haele, a name meaning “Traveling Lights.” The torch-carrying marchers are said to be traveling through Waipi‘o Valley on their way to a *lua-o-Milu* (pit of Milu, named for the god of death), an entry to the otherworld. Southward in Puna, Keōua’s second division that died in the eruption has been seen on the road toward Kalapana. It was also in Puna that a man gathering *ko‘o-ka-lau* (light green leaves from the center of a cluster of pandanus leaves) to make tea, was later found dead and presumed a victim of night marchers who had found him on their trail. The man’s son said, “He

was draped in the branches as though he had been thrown there." To the south in Ka'ū, Hi'iaka and other divinities march from Honu-'apu to Kahuku. Inland at Wai-'ōhinu, formerly a populous area, a Chinese and a Hawaiian saw during the daytime a ghostly procession escorting the spirit of Queen Lili'u-o-kalani to the otherworld. On nights sacred to Lono, god of health and peace, drums and chanting are heard, "even in post-Christian times," at a heiau at Nā-'ā-lehu.[55] On the south coast at Kāwā, a Nā-'ā-lehu fisherman vanished, perhaps lured away by ghostly music.

Kaua'i. Poli-hale, site of a former heiau and a leaping-off place to the afterworld, is located in the Waimea district and is the destination of spirit processions. Near Lāwa'i Kai Bay, a horse frightened by Hawaiian music "from nowhere" threw and killed its rider. On another occasion two boys out crabbing heard the same music and raced home in terror, leaving a companion "flat on his face" in fear until searchers found him the next morning.

In Wai-lua Valley, phantom armies follow an old war trail from the base of a mountain to Wai-lua. Near the town are many formerly sacred places--a royal residential compound, a coconut grove, birthstones at which chiefesses gave birth, and Holoholo-kū Heiau, a place of refuge. In the valley is the rock of Kāne where Mrs. Wichman was told that female spirits hold an annual Makahiki fertility dance. Emma De Fries relates how her grandfather's Chinese rice-plantation workers at Hanalei saw a phantom army march through a stone wall and disappear into Hanalei River.[56] In a Hā'ena house, Ann Joesting told me people say the marchers' drums can be heard only in a certain room as the ghosts march from the mountains to the sea. The place is near a fishing shrine and a hula heiau--perhaps that of Lohi'au, Pele's dream sweetheart whose music lured her from Hawai'i to Kaua'i.

Maui. Today in Honokōhau Valley, West Maui, people still remember legends of headless Ka-niho-nui's phantom army; a Hawaiian woman told Lesley Bruce her grandfather had seen these marchers. The ghostly dogmen were first seen marching at 'Oma'oma'o, Kula, East Maui. I am told that spirits of the dead march each month at Hāna, East Maui, to visit their living relatives. On nights of Kāne at Honua-'ula, phantom warriors gather at Pokalani Heiau to the beat of drums and make a circuit of the island.[57] In 1776, Honua-'ula was attacked and ravaged by High Chief Ka-lani-'opu'u of Hawai'i, whose army had landed on the coast. Later the army fought a battle with High Chief Ka-hekili on Maui which the invaders lost.

Moloka'i. Here a boy heard ancient drums on the Fourth of July; and "on the old horse trail over by Ah Ping's [grocery]," Menehune warriors

and kings march during the full moon to a heiau site where they sing. They kill anyone on their path. Not everyone can hear their singing about which a Hawaiian woman exclaimed, "Oh, but it's beautiful music when you hear them!"

O'ahu. Around 1940, a Hawaiian woman saw phantoms of oldtime Hawaiians of every class march with their dogs down the middle of Gulick Avenue, Kalihi, through automobiles and other obstructions. The district, which long retained a village-like ambience, has many different ethnic groups sharing in common certain of each other's beliefs and customs. A Hawaiian man has searched Kalihi Valley in vain for the heiau sites "heard of' by Thomas G. Thrum. He has, however, heard drums on nights of Kane, evidence to him of one site's existence.[58] In Moana-lua Valley more than one person has reported that night marchers travel from the head of the valley to the sea.[59] Caucasians have "more than once" heard their heavy footsteps and drums. A Hawaiian patriarch has heard the hiss of their burning torches and chanting that became so loud after two hours that he had to cover his ears. A sailor on a ship off Pearl Harbor also saw torches moving down the valley for two hours.

In Wai-'anae a family saw a phantom army in which a son, recently killed in France, was believed to be marching; his mother saw the army again two days before she died. At **Pūhā-wai,** Lualualei, drums and conches sound at a sacred spring near a heiau site.[60] People still report mysterious lights at Wai-a-lua, like those seen by Ka-'ahu-manu's retinue, along with bands of shadowy figures walking over the ocean and up a hill to a sacred place where they drum and chant. At **Ka-wai-hāpai,** fishermen have seen torch-carrying Menehune armies parade over the top of the water and up to a hillside graveyard; one man saw them twice, once with companions and then alone as he guarded their gear while they laid nets. inland at Schofield, World War II soldiers complained that the tramping of phantom armies through their barracks kept them awake at night. A Hawaiian, after explaining that the building was on a night-marching army's trail, suggested closing the doors. This baffled the apparitions so that they no longer came through the building. Sentries had other uncanny experiences there and at Dillingham Airfield. At **Moku-lē'ia,** where many eerie events have been reported, torch-carrying ghostly warriors march over the reef, and herds of phantom horses gallop at night on the beach (horses were introduced around 1803).

Windward O'ahu also has its night marchers and ghostly music, usually on nights of Kane. When the ghosts hurt a girl who had tried to attack one, she was treated by a *kahuna* who specialized in healing. He ordered her to watch the next procession through a window, and her father was to

gather herbs for her treatment while going around the house naked three times at night, an experience he found frightening because of the ghosts outside. A Hawaiian woman in Kailua has minutely described the ancient music she has heard from a battle-mutilated army led by a headless dog. Two Filipino families in this same region, after hearing ghostly music for two years, could stand no more and moved. Inland from He'eia, hula drums beat on nights of Kāne at a sacred spring near a heiau site.[61]

Whether phantom marchers have been seen at Ka Lae-o-ka-'ō'io (The Cape of the Bonefish) is uncertain; any sightings there may be due to mispronunciation of the word for bonefish (*'ō'io*) as *'oi'o* (spirit procession).[62] At Koko Head Crater, it will be recalled, two Caucasian men felt a "moving sound," which they considered uncanny, and at Waikīkī a tourist saw a line of torches moving toward Diamond Head. In Nu'uanu Valley, Kamehameha's phantom army was seen the night Princess Likelike died.

Observers' behavior. Not all accounts tell what should be done or was done by observers on seeing or hearing marchers approach. A few, having gained some information from friends and relatives as they "talk story," know that they must at least get off the road and out of sight and perhaps lie face down on the ground. If an observer is unable to get off the trail in time, everyone knows he is out of luck unless a marcher recognizes him as a relative and protects him. Even if a marcher recognizes a prostrate figure on the trail he may, as on Maui, give him such a shock that he suffers temporary insanity. On Hawai'i, the observer lies naked face up on the road for a procession of a chief or strips only to his malo (loincloth) and sits with eyes closed if gods are marching. Either way is dangerous, for the marchers will argue whether to shame or pity, condemn or save him.[63]

It is important to determine the direction of the wind; some say this is to prevent the marchers from smelling the observer. A Maui woman says that a person unable to lie down in the road or hide should "walk with the breeze." An O'ahu woman claims that the unlucky observer should remove his clothing, rub his body with urine, and "go where the wind blows"--not to prevent the spirits from smelling him but to ensure that they do--because, she says, they like the smell. On the other hand, some who have encountered one or more night-prowling spirits use urine to repel them. According to beliefs also held in earlier times, urine, like ocean ("Hawaiian") salt and ti leaves *(Cordyline terminalis),* may either please or repel spirits, depending on circumstances. All three figure prominently in black and white magic and the old religion. Many non-Hawaiians, accepting Hawaiian belief that these three items affect spirits in some way, generally negatively, carry "Hawaiian" salt or ti leaves if they have to travel at night in isolated rural areas, and in an emergency they resort to

urine to drive off wandering spirits. Hawaiian belief may reinforce their own ancestral beliefs and customs.

A Moloka‘i woman warned that an observer caught on the road and unable to hide must say “the right words out loud” or be trampled to death. An O‘ahu grandmother always used a long prayer or spell when she and her family met marchers at night; the gist of it was to let her party go safely on its way.

Observers’ reactions. To many Hawaiians the phantom processions are sacred things about which they may be reluctant to talk. They often say, “I really shouldn’t tell you, I don’t ordinarily talk about them.” The ancient gods, some Hawaiians believe, may punish those who reveal family secrets and stories about gods.[64] Other Hawaiians enjoy talking about such matters and nostalgically reliving the past, particularly when they describe the chanting and the ancient instruments of the night marchers.

Generally observers are proud of having had the experience and feel awe with its compound of reverence, wonder, and fear. Several of these Hawaiians say that not all people have the ability to see or hear bands of spirits. A person without the ability who unknowingly encounters marching spirits is safe, says a Moloka‘i woman. Only those whose heart is right have this spiritual experience, according to an O‘ahu man; others agree. Those who have encountered the marchers are happy and others admire them; those who have not feel unfortunate and deprived. An O‘ahu man who met the marching phantoms as a boy was told by his father never to forget this great event. A woman whose aunt could see and hear spirits has felt deprived all her life because when she was a child her aunt called, *“Kapu moe,”* when the spirits were marching and would not permit the prostrate child to watch until they were safely past; as an adult this woman has heard their drums but has never been able to see them. A Hawaiian couple thought it peculiar that they had never heard the spirits’ drums although their neighbors, two Filipino families, were so bothered by them for over two years that they moved.

The Hawaiian world is full of many different kinds of spirits distinguishable by class, function, sex, attitude toward mankind, and so on. The attitude toward the night-marching spirits or those gathered for celebrations is that they are not basically malevolent; observers get hurt or killed only by being in their way or violating other taboos connected with processions of personages. These apparitions are not what Hawaiians call *lapu,* the evil, spiteful, trouble-making spirits of the dead who wander the earth, forlorn and uncared for by the living. The evil spirits are unwanted by their ancestors and family gods. Either they never had an escort to the afterworld, could not find their way to a jumping-off place, or if they did,

these particular spirits landed in an unpleasant area. They even the score for their rejection by harassing all living things that happen to be physically or spiritually vulnerable. The night-marching spirits, however, are not *lapu* but family gods (*ʻaumākua*), other gods and goddesses, and spirits *(kino wailua)* of dead human beings whose protection of the observer reveals that they are his relatives and are acting as family gods. Phantom marchers therefore inspire awe, excitement, pride, and happiness in the observers.

Emotionally and intellectually, observers accept the reality of the occult phenomenon they witness. Several, knowing of phantom marchers, seem unafraid and curious as long as they are a long way ʻoff the road and with other people. The Oʻahu fishermen even followed the Menehune marchers until they vanished. On the other hand, the two fishermen on Hawaiʻi, taking no chance on the uncanny marchers returning, left their gear and went to a park. Newcomers and others unfamiliar with the phenomenon are puzzled or annoyed when they encounter it until an old Hawaiian explains its cause and, where indicated, the cure.

Many believe that the phantoms, if they do not immediately disappear on detecting observers, cause them to drop dead. People directly in their path are therefore terrified and later feel thankful to be alive. An originally skeptical Hawaiian, although well off the path, was so frightened her knees shook and she had to sit on the ground to pull herself together. Subsequently she said, "Never again will I say that I do not believe what I have been told about these sacred things."[65] A Caucasian man who laughed at his Hawaiian wife's "superstitions," as did a daughter, became with the girl a true believer when the girl was wounded by a night marcher and later cured by watching the next procession; the father--as part of her cure--had to race naked around the house (pursued, he knew, by spirits) to pick herbs. The brother of the missing Japanese fisherman, who was generally matter-of-fact about other strange events in their village, said, "Ever since his disappearance we have all gained much respect for what goes on in Nā-ʻā-lehu [village]."

Children's reactions depend in part on whether their elders fostered fear or respectful curiosity. A woman who sat up as a child with her family to wait for night marchers seems to have been unafraid. A girl who had previously heard drums when her companions had not, fearlessly talked and walked with marchers until they vanished.

Another Hawaiian said that her father told stories at night about spirits and *kāhuna* (here meaning evil sorcerers) to frighten and make the children behave, and she now does the same with her children. Many elders tell children about spirits, especially *lapu*, to make them hurry home

before dark when, as many elders believe, spirits are especially active. A young man has heard such stories told to control children on playgrounds and at camp; another heard them as a boy when fishermen wanted to get rid of him before nightfall. Many other adults, recalling similar stories from childhood and adult years, are perturbed if they must travel at night, particularly if they are carrying food attractive to spirits--fish, pork, kava, or home brew. An adult who always tried to get home before dark when he had a catch of fish started back too late once and had to pay tribute to a spirit. A man was frightened as a child because his parents and grandparents--but not he--could see and hear night marchers, and his grandmother would pray to them not to harm the family. He has never subsequently heard or seen marchers, unlike a woman also frightened as a child, who got over her fear when she heard their beautiful music as an adult.

Listeners' reactions to beliefs and stories. Social and medical workers, as well as teachers and other professional people unfamiliar with Hawaiian culture, wonder if a Hawaiian telling of such psychic experiences is deranged and hallucinating. This doubtless has occurred to those who, in transmitting a story about phantom marchers, feel compelled to explain that the observer is a reputable person.

Of children's reactions, psychologists explain that even children too young to talk are very susceptible to visual-aural experiences and, like domestic animals, are sensitive to the moods and tensions of those around them.[66] Adults whose automobiles have stalled where spirits are known to lurk have found that if they remove pork, fish, or liquor from the vehicle the car will start without further difficulty.

Psychologists also find the Hawaiians' own criteria useful in judging whether or not a Hawaiian client or patient is hallucinating.[67] To a Hawaiian, a culturally normal psychic experience is a "true vision" if a group of people together share it; if only one in the group has the vision it is a hallucination, a "wrong vision" that originated in that person's guts, the Hawaiian location of emotion and intelligence. If the visionary is alone his experience is true if it is culturally comprehensible and does not later lead to danger or failure. Malo also distinguishes between Hawaiians who are genuinely inspired, albeit eccentric perhaps, and crazy people and maniacs who eat filth and indecently expose themselves.[68]

Thus by Hawaiian criteria, a vision of night marchers is true when more than one person has it at the same time. If the person is alone and lives to tell of it, the vision is true because it fits cultural tradition and had no permanent unfortunate effects on him physically or emotionally. That he may have had to remove his clothing if caught on the path is culturally

normal for such a situation. The criteria occasionally become ambiguous. For instance, the Japanese fisherman's hearing of spirit music was true because people with Hawaiian cultural experience recognized that spirits were trying to lure him away. Although they warned him not to return, he did and disappeared. The first aural experience was true because it fitted cultural tradition and later events supported it, but it was a wrong vision because it ended disastrously. Instances also occur of people whom the marchers injured or made temporarily deranged because they were on the path.

A few Hawaiian commentators on night marchers offer materialistic explanations without indicating whether or not they have observed the phenomenon. Such explanations by listeners are directed only to two aspects, the torches and the mysterious deaths and injuries, but never to auditory stimuli or other visual evidence. To Kamakau, the peculiar lights at Wai-a-lua were due to phosphorescence. A few years ago a Hawaiian minister attributed the strange lights from the Ho'okena cliff burials to fireballs of phosphoric elements from decomposing bodies, an explanation probably related to the amount of lore from various ethnic groups in the islands about fireballs.[69] A drunk's injuries at Hōlua-loa, Hawai'i, were due, said skeptics, not to night marchers but to his falling on the rocks at night. A white doctor, said a Hawaiian woman, would attribute mysterious roadside deaths not to phantom marchers but to heart attacks.[70]

Some Hawaiians--and non-Hawaiians--who have only heard about the marchers and offer such materialistic explanations are nonetheless dissatisfied and conclude that maybe the experiences are indeed supernatural. A Caucasian physician who had seen and heard night marchers on O'ahu more than once never found a satisfactory materialistic explanation, even after having scientists visit the region. The chanting and the drums particularly puzzled the physician until his death.[71]

Functions of narratives and beliefs. People tell about the night marchers for many reasons. When they are with others fishing at night, sitting around a campfire, or gathered at a party, they like to "talk story," as the island expression goes. The sociable communication, the much enjoyed entertainment, may also educate and inform listeners on how to behave and what to expect if they meet the phantoms. Listeners of every age may gain confirmation of their own beliefs and experiences by hearing other such stories, and repetition may strengthen the storyteller's own conviction of truth. Children, while learning about these things, may be frightened into obedience and fear being out after dark. Newcomers to the islands are initiated into Hawaiian beliefs and, through their empathy and rapport, may actually see the marchers one night or hear their drums.

Occasionally the narratives are a kind of casual oral history or an ethnographic description of past and present beliefs and events. They may help to protect natural phenomena and historical and sacred sites connected with the phantom marchers and other spirits by endowing them with a supernatural aura of danger, importance, and value.

Local people gain pleasure by nostalgically recalling the past and telling of their ethnic heritage. The wish for the return of "the good old days" of their ancestors is not always unconscious; it may be verbalized and these days is often connected with the claims of some Hawaiians against the U.S. Government. Others, less militant but equally proud of their heritage, may still describe the past romantically but also recognize realistically its disadvantages and the benefits of Western culture. Narratives and beliefs about the phantom processions, like other visionary experiences related to the immediate or distant past, give a sense of cultural continuity. Not all of the river of the old culture has vanished forever into the sands of time; it continues to bubble up to the surface or wind along in little streams.

An individual who has experienced the night-marching phenomenon gains, along with some of his listeners, a sense of personal continuity. Spirits of his dead kinfolk and some of his family guardian gods (by no means all forgotten or unimportant) may be in the procession. They are a joy to see, and their presence offers hope that his own spirit may continue its existence like theirs and perhaps march in such a procession some night in the future along familiar roads in familiar surroundings among the living. Said one Hawaiian social worker, "In the back of our minds, there's always the old. It does come back. You have a feeling that your ancestors are always here--always with you."[72]

Besides the sense of cultural and personal continuity, there is the thrill of danger to alleviate boredom and hasten the passage of time while waiting, say, for the fish to bite. If one has the will to see, hear, believe, and respond, one may, during the long, quiet night, hear spirit drums, a conch shell, or marching feet and see lights and shadows moving closer. There's no need to be ashamed, for others have had the same experience and been proud of it, although relieved to be alive to speak of it.

Whatever the storyteller's own conviction may be about the reality of what he witnessed, and in many instances he is undoubtedly strongly convinced, it is part of good storytelling convention to tell the story as "true"; otherwise some of its entertainment value is lost. A listener who asks the storyteller if it "really" happened to him or someone he knows is not likely to find out "for sure."

An emotional need to believe in supernatural forces that affect both inanimate and animate phenomena is evident in observers' and many listeners' dissatisfaction with explanations based on natural phenomena--earth tremors, erratic local winds, phosphorescence, methane gas from decomposing organic matter, shadows, and the like. Narratives leave no doubt as to the effects of emotion and suggestibility when added to these beliefs. Some people are predisposed to see the marchers, particularly those anxious about danger to an absent loved one, or filled with unresolved grief about the dead, or who anticipate their own or another's imminent death. After someone's death becomes known, the living recall out-of-the-ordinary events and perhaps unconsciously elaborate them to fit the traditional local pattern in order to establish that supernatural forces were trying to warn them of what was to happen. Other predisposing factors evident in the narratives are guilt and uneasiness arising from disobedience in being in a forbidden place, fear of lonely darkness, violation of still meaningful Hawaiian or foreign taboos, and the burden of beliefs about ghosts that foreign ethnic groups bring from their homelands to add to what is already present. Also conducive, as the stories show, are anniversaries that activate memories of the dead or of historical events. The innumerable ruins of sites and the many place names relating to the traditional culture are further stimuli, as is an individual observer's information or misinformation about traditional Hawaiian culture.

Summary

Narratives and beliefs about Hawaiian phantom night processions (and occasional daytime ones) that have circulated during the last century in the Hawaiian Islands are based partly on unique, individual experiences of Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians of both sexes, various ages, and diverse occupations and education. Accounts of these experiences have circulated mainly by oral transmission. They are also partly based on cultural memories of fragments of knowledge about Hawaiian processions of living people and of spirits of the previous century before Hawaiian culture had changed due to Western contact. This cultural knowledge about processions, taboos, and rank has circulated orally for the most part, but may also reflect written information in publications in both Hawaiian and English.

Two often inseparable processes have fostered the night-marcher beliefs and narratives: tradition--oral transmission in time from one generation to another--and diffusion--oral transmission in space and across generations. To these processes has been added communication through

writing. Each narrative and belief is the product of these processes and that of each individual's uniquely personal experience in seeing, hearing, or both seeing and hearing the marchers.

Each narrative and statement of belief is highly individualized because the observer's situation is unique to him although it shares common elements with the situations of other observers. He is most often with companions but sometimes alone. The experience is unsought if he is out fishing, at camp, or at home. It is deliberately sought if he has gone to a place where he can witness the phenomenon or awaits it at home. The time is most often night, except when the marchers are traveling to escort a dying person's spirit to the afterworld. Generally, the moon is dim, and the period is one sacred to the worship of a particular great god, usually Kāne, but may occur during the Makahiki when worship of other gods is suspended and the god Lono's return celebrated. The place is usually specifically localized and is in the neighborhood of one of the innumerable sites of formerly sacred places *(wahipana)* connected with a variety of functions. The phenomenon has been reported from all five main islands in the archipelago.

Auditory evidence is more often advanced than visual evidence. A person might hear marching feet, instrumental and vocal music, conversation, and commands. Visual phenomena may include torches and shadowy figures, usually human but sometimes including dogs. The figures may become recognizable as to sex, rank, age, occupation, senses, and appearance. The observer's dead kinfolk, guardian gods, and--rarely--historical figures may be identifiable. An observer seldom reports the names of marchers known to him. His behavior follows such taboos as he has heard about in order to prevent the marchers from killing or injuring him.

An adult reacts to the experience with awe and later with relief at being alive, because marchers are known to kill people and animals who are on their path. Children and animals generally recognize the presence of spirits, but a child earlier frightened by parents into obedience by terrifying "ghost stories" lacks that ability. An adult is proud to have had the experience or to have a relative who has, for if the experience is a "true vision" in conforming to cultural tradition and is nondamaging to him, it is normal and nonhallucinatory, and shows that his heart is right.

Listeners to accounts of the experience, if professionally trained or otherwise imbued with knowledge, rapport, and empathy about Hawaiian culture, including the relationship to spirits, may accept an observer's sincerity and feel no need to question whether he is mentally and morally normal. Both listeners and observers may offer materialistic explanations

for the phenomena, but some feel that too much that is important is thereby left unexplained.

Stories of experiences with night marchers or beliefs about them are told for many reasons: to entertain; to discuss a puzzling, inexplicable, perhaps frightening phenomenon; to pass the time and relieve boredom; to dispense knowledge about the phenomenon and proper behavior in regard to it; to frighten children into obedience and fear of night-wandering spirits; to endow sacred and historic sites with supernatural protection and value and protect them from further damage; to communicate oral history; or a combination of several of these things. And very importantly such stories function to express the storyteller's sense of cultura,l and personal continuity with old Hawaiian culture--that all of it has not disappeared, that the processions are like those of the past in which both living human beings and spirits marched, and that someday the speaker may return to familiar roads and surroundings to march with fellow spirits and to look about for any living kinfolk who are watching and listening as he once did.

Katharine Luomala
University of Hawaii

NOTES

1. The collection in my possession includes items obtained by myself and by student collectors in my folklore classes at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. A summary of this paper was given at the "Creatures of Legendry" conference, arranged by Dr. Richard S. Thill, UN0 Folklore Archives, September 28-October 2, 1978, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Ghost marchers reported from other parts of the world are outside the scope of this paper.

2. Joseph S. Emerson inserted the Kamehameha legend into "The Myth of Hiku and Kawelu," *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1883* (Honolulu), 38. The Rev. L. Lyons who told it to him said the sighting had been "twenty to thirty years ago." Emerson retold it in "Some Hawaiian Beliefs Regarding Spirits," *Hawaiian Historical Society, Annual Report* 9 (Honolulu, 1902), 16; reprinted by Sibley S. Morrill, *The Kahunas. The Black--and White--Magicians of Hawaii* (Boston, 1968), 37-38. T. G. Thrum reprinted the story under Emerson's name in his *Hawaiian Folk Tales* (Chicago, 1907), 49. It is often mentioned without a source, as by N. B. Emerson in David Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities (Moolelo Hawaii),* trans. Dr. Nathaniel B. Emerson, 2d ed. (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Special Publication 2, Honolulu, 1951), 115, n. 3. It was retold, along with the legend about Ka-niho-nui's ghost marchers, by W. D. Alexander, *Brief History of the Hawaiian People* (New York, 1891), 79; reprinted by Morrill, 99. It also appears in F. C. Riehl, "The Phantom Armies," *Paradise of the Pacific,* 39 (August, 1926), 31, a poem based on the legend of Kamehameha, and in Herbert H. Gowen, *The Napoleon of the Pacific* (New York, 1919), 316, along with a later legend about Kamehameha's ghost marchers and Princess Likelike.

3. Mary Kawena Pukui, "The Marchers of the Night," *Kepelino's Traditions of Hawaii,* ed. Martha Warren Beckwith (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 95, Honolulu, 1932), 198-200; reprinted by Helen P. Hoyt, *The Night Marchers* (Norfolk Island, 1976), no pagination.

4. Antoinette Withington, *Hawaiian Tapestry* (New York, 1937), 133-55.

5. Martha F. Fleming, *Old Trails of Maui* (Maui, 1933), 5-13.

6. The student collector was Alan Los Banos. My explanations are in brackets.

7. Samuel Mahaiakalani Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko. The People of Old,* trans. Mary Kawena Pukui from the newspaper *Ke Au 'Oko'a,* ed. Dorothy B. Barrère (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Special Publication 51, Honolulu, 1964), 9.

8. Samuel Mahaiakalani Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1961), 185-86.

9. Pukui, 199.

10. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 183-84.

11. Malo, 196-97. Kamakau's *Ruling Chiefs and Ka Po'e Kahiko* have many references to warfare.

12. John Papa Ii[I'i], *Fragments of Hawaiian History,* trans. Mary Kawena Pukui, ed. Dorothy B. Barrère (Honolulu, 1959), 33, 41-43.

13. Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko,* 19-21.

14. I'i, 70-76.

15. Malo, 141-59.

16. E. S. Craighill Handy and Elizabeth Green Handy, *Native Planters in Old Hawaii, Their Life, Lore, and Environment* (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 233, Honolulu, 1972), 373-84.

17. I'i, 98; map, p. 96.

18. Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko,* 80.

19. Martha Warren Beckwith, trans., ed., *The Kumulipo. A Hawaiian Creation Chant* (Chicago, 1951; Honolulu, 1972).

20. Malo, 114, 115, n. 3.

21. Kamakau, *Ka Po'e Kahiko,* 50,64-89.

22. J. S. Emerson, "Some Hawaiian Beliefs Regarding Spirits," 16; Juliet Rice Wichman, *Hawaiian Planting Traditions* (Honolulu, 1931), 23; Withington, 137, 144-46; Luomala collection.

23. Wichman, 24.

24. Pukui, 200; Handy and Handy, 589.

25. Withington, 150-51.

26. Withington, 144, for Moloka‘i; Russ and Peg Apple, “Victim of the Night Marchers,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, September 5, 1980, for South Kona; Napua S. Poire, “Night Marchers Scared Her,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin/Advertiser*, C-7, October 31, 1971, for Kohala.

27. Pukui, 200.

28. Wichman, 28.

29. Withington, 147-48.

30. Pukui, 199.

31. Withington, 141-42. W. D. Westervelt, *Legends of Gods and Ghosts* (Boston, 1915), 251, says *“o-i-o”* means “throw the spear.”

32. Pukui, 199; Poire, “Night Marchers.”

33. Withington, 151.

34. Pukui, 198-99.

35. Ibid., 199.

36. Ibid.

37. Withington, 145-46.

38. Ibid., 147.

39. Ibid., 134, 146.

40. Pukui, 198-200.

41. Alexander, 79, mistakenly states that Ka-niho-nui was beheaded, probably because that form of execution became common, as storytellers also know, after metal axes were introduced. However, Ka-niho-nui was strangled by a method which prevented any one chief from bearing sole responsibility for executing this very popular young man who also had many influential relatives who might rebel. Those who report that he was strangled are: Otto von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery in the South Seas and Beering Straits . . . 1815-1818,* vol. 3 (London, 1821), 251; Abraham Fornander, *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-lore,* vol. 6 (Memoirs, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, 1919), 317; and Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition . . . 1838-1842,* vol. 4 (New York, 1856), 40. Wilkes states that the king, ignoring the chiefs’ pleas for leniency, ordered them under pain of death to execute Ka-niho-nui. They then went openly to his house, put a rope around his neck, “and the ends of it being passed through the opposite sides of the house, they took hold of them and strangled him.” The uprising that Kamehameha had prepared for did not occur. Wilkes says only that the young man had violated a taboo. However, Kamehameha had once expressed it metaphorically to his chiefs: “Six of Kamehameha’s islands are free to you all, but the seventh is sacred to Kamehameha.” He then explained that the seventh “island” was Ka-‘ahu-manu. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 282, states that in 1827 Malo, in defending the Rev. William Richards against Captain Buckle’s charge of libel, recalled the old scandal to Ka-‘ahu-manu and other chiefs, adding that in reporting wrongdoing Richards was no more guilty than the guard Kamehameha had placed over Ka-‘ahu-manu. The charge against Richards was dismissed.

42. I‘i, 50-51.

43. Martha Warren Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* (New Haven, 1940; Honolulu, 1970), 343-44; *The Kumulipo,* 89.

44. See n. 2.

45. Pukui, 199.

46. Pukui, 198-99. Handy and Handy, 589.

47. Hoyt, no pagination.

48. Withington, 134.

49. Sol L. Sheridan, “Down in Puna,” *Mid-Pacific Magazine* 3 (1912): 521.

50. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 152; Sheldon Dibble, *History of the Sandwich Islands* (Lahainaluna, Maui, 1843), 65; A. Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race. Its Origin and Migrations,* vol. 2 (London, 1880), 324-26, from Dibble. Fornander, 335, names Hi‘iaka as Keōua’s wife; he may have misunderstood Kamakau’s reference. Early foreigners praise the delicious fat mullet from the Wai-ākea fishpond. I‘i, 14, without referring to the eruption, states that Keōua “was routed and fled to Kau.” Thomas A. Jaggar, *My Experiments with Volcanoes* (Honolulu, 1956), 120-21, discusses the 1790 eruption of Hale-ma‘uma‘u Crater in Kī-lau-ea and the footprints of men, women, children, and pigs headed both up and down the mountain; facing p. 120 is a photo of a footprint.

51. Withington, 144.

52. Wichman, 29-30. Some Middle American Indians also regard the last few days of the year as peculiarly and supernaturally sensitive.

53. Pukui, 200.

54. I‘i, 64.

55. Handy and Handy, 596.

56. Emma de Fries, “Marching Warriors at Hanalei,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin/Advertiser,* C-4, October 31, 1971.

57. Handy and Handy, 510.

58. J. Gilbert McAllister, *Archaeology of Oahu* (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 104, Honolulu, 1933), 88.

59. Lois Taylor, “Spook Stories,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin,* F, October 31, 1972. My thanks to Anna Bond Howe for this reference and other ghost-marcher stories from Moana-lua.

60. McAllister, 110.

61. McAllister, 177.

62. Handy and Handy, 443, 450, spell the name as *'oi'o* but it is given as *'ō'io* by Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel H. Elbert, and Esther T. Mookini, *Place Names of Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1974), 72.

63. Pukui, 199.

64. Laura C. Green and Martha Warren Beckwith, "Hawaiian Customs and Beliefs Relating to Sickness and Death," *American Anthropologist,* 28 (1926):198.

65. Withington, 146.

66. Mary Kawena Pukui, E. W. Haertig, M. D., and Catherine A. Lee, *Nānā i Ke Kumu (Look to the Source)* (Honolulu, 1972), 12.

67. Ibid., 15-16.

68. Malo, 114.

69. William K. Kikuchi, "The Fireball in Hawaiian Folklore," *Directions in Pacific Traditional Literature, Essays in Honor of Katharine Luomala,* ed. Adrienne L. Kaeppler, H. Arlo Nimmo (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Special Publication 62, Honolulu, 1976), 157-72.

70. Pukui, 198.

71. Withington, 145.

72. Pukui, Haertig, Lee, 43.