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## Mauna Kea and a culture of respect

By Richard Ha

I'm a Native Hawaiian, and I hear lots of talk about respect. Yet when I go up Maunakea, I don't see anything representing Hawaiian values. I don't see any respect for Hawaiian culture, tradition, or thinking there, or for Hawaiian approaches to astronomy and voyaging.

All I see are telescopes, standing like massive temples.

Where is the physical presence on the mountain that houses the Hawaiian view of the universe? Where is the respect? There is none — but there should be.

House Resolution 33 convenes a working group to make recommendations for a new Maunakea governance and management structure. The working group was requested to consider the independent evaluation of the implementation of the Maunakea Comprehensive Management Plan Resources by Kuiwalu.

Its report concluded that the University of Hawaii (UH) did effectively implement most of the management actions about protecting natural and cultural resources.

However, it found that UH neglected to implement management actions designed to respect Hawaiian cultural practices and resources and allow for education and outreach. Those actions were intended to restore trust between the native Hawaiian community and UH, which is

still lacking.

It's time for a big-picture change here in Hawai'i. Let's create a culture and science center above the clouds on Maunakea, one that supports present and future generations of Hawaiians who work in cultural preservation, education, language, research, science, and ecology.

We're not talking about a small building the size of your garage. We're proposing a thoughtfully designed center that's large enough for meaningful work. The center could incorporate Papaku Makawalu, a methodology for teaching and understanding Hawaiian culture, including Hawaiian knowledge and values.

Papaku Makawalu is documented in the Kumulipo, and it's being revitalized by the Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation. The culture and science center above the clouds would be the papaku (foundation). The makawalu (seeds) would be the Hawaiian culture and science nourished there and spread around the world.

There is a state Department of Land and Natural Resources-controlled piece of land a quarter-mile west of Hale Pohaku, at the same elevation, that would work well for this center.

The governor, state Legislature,

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Richard Ha is a Big Island resident and board member of PUEO (Perpetuating Unique Educational Opportunities).

and DLNR should hand over that piece of land to an appropriate independent group. Once that's done, we don't anticipate any problem raising the needed funds to build the culture and science center.

It's about respect.

Right now, I'm watching the kolea birds that migrate between here and Alaska every year. Their only source of energy is the food they eat, and that energy lets them fly all the way from Hawai'i to

Alaska. They've evolved to use the resources available to them.

Our Hawaiian ancestors, too, used the resources around them and created a successful environment and culture that thrived. They understood science and ecology, and we can learn from how they thought and acted.

In contrast, our modern society has evolved to use external resources for energy. The problem? Our resources are starting to decline. We've created a complex economic system that depends on oil, and we expect it to always be there, but it won't be.

Let's learn from our ancestors and honor that knowledge by creating a center for Papaku Makawalu on the mountain. Let's show respect for our Hawaiian ancestors and our grandchildren yet to come.

## The Castros are history; time for U.S. to lift embargo



KATHLEEN PARKER

All hail: The wicked Castros are finally gone.

With the official retirement on Monday of Raúl Castro as head of Cuba's Communist Party, the last of the revolutionary brothers has relinquished control of the tiny, redoubtable island-state. The Communist Party remains in place. The president and new party boss, Miguel Díaz-Canel, vows continuation and unity. But the official end of the 62-year rule of the Castro family proffers a glimmer of hope that things could change.

And none too soon. Cuba's economy, thanks in large measure to the long-standing U.S. embargo, has long been a shambles. But the pandemic has made life in Cuba even more challenging. Gross domestic product dropped 11% last year. Basic necessities, including food, toiletries, cleansers and medicine, are subject to continuing shortages, though widespread hunger was eliminated long ago.

Díaz-Canel, 61, was born a year after the revolution. As a rising leader in the Communist Party, he oversaw some modest free-market reforms. Will Cuba's direction change with a new party leader? That seems unlikely. Still, the departure of the Castros after more than six decades gives both Washington and Havana a chance to reconsider their failed relationship.

It is revealing that Raúl's departure received only a modest coverage here at home; even 10 years ago, we might have heard about little else. But most people alive today, both in Cuba and elsewhere, were born long after the 1959 revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed government of Fulgencio Batista and put Fidel, the young rebel, in charge. The fatigued leader wasn't a communist when he traded his rifle for a microphone, but the Soviet Union's early financial support convinced him of the unifying power of state control.

Fidel's legacy, continued by brother Raúl with some minor modifications, has meant continued misery for the island's 11 million people. These days, COVID-19 restrictions have exacerbated circumstances that can only be described as dire.

It's easy to romanticize Cuba. Tourists love the colorful if decaying architecture, the sight of 1950s Fords and Chevys chugging along Havana's streets, having a drink at Ernest Hemingway's favorite bar and visiting his 38-foot fishing boat, Pilar, and his Finca Vigía (Lookout Farm), now a museum.

But only tourist hotels

and government offices have air conditioning, assuming reliable electricity.

In contrast to these images is a booming biotechnology industry prompted by the blockade, as well as an exemplary state-run medical system. Not only has Cuba kept COVID infections remarkably low, but Cuban researchers are also developing five vaccines, two of which seem promising. Cuba says it plans to export its vaccine for free to South America and Central America.

Meanwhile, every Cuban citizen receives an annual medical checkup, wanted or not, while the state maintains health profiles, categorizing people according to healthy, not-so-healthy, elderly (one in five is over 60) or predisposed to illness because of obesity, diabetes and so on. So, yes, a state-run system focused on prevention can boast enviable health outcomes, but the trade-off is a loss of privacy and freedom, which is no choice at all.

**Two generations post revolution, it is a propitious time to end the madness. Open the gates, flood Cuba with U.S. goods and goodwill, and trust that freedom will speak for herself.**

With Raúl stepping aside at 89, now would seem a good time for President Joe Biden to ask Congress to lift the embargo once and for all, allow for expanded tourism and remittances, and re-establish more formal diplomatic relations. That would end the absurdly long standoff between the United States — a superpower, after all — and the beleaguered little nation that lies 90 miles from Key West.

Surely, the big dog can afford to let the little dog eat.

The embargo is an aging farce perpetuated in the spirit of a folie à deux — a shared delusional disorder. Fidel, who reportedly owned many homes, a yacht and a private island where he entertained countless guests, has never shared his countrymen's fate. Like any run-of-the-mill dictator, he lived a big life at the expense of the oppressed and used the embargo as an excuse for his fundamentally failed policies.

The United States, meanwhile, has clung to the embargo largely out of habit. It has given hard-line Cuban Americans some measure of revenge against the regime that drove the capitalists and landowners out of Cuba, and enabled the United States to complain about the Cuban government's disregard for basic freedoms. But it has changed nothing.

Two generations post-revolution, it is a propitious time to end the madness. Open the gates, flood Cuba with U.S. goods and goodwill, and trust that freedom will speak for herself.

Kathleen Parker writes for The Washington Post.



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The Keck Observatory telescopes could be seen on a clear day atop Mauna Kea in 2015.

## A visitor industry that inspires students

By Julie Morikawa

As Hawaii legislators consider a wide range of cuts to cultural, educational, safety and research programs run by the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), it is critical to understand how this will affect our keiki today and for generations to come.

Now more than ever as we emerge from COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, we must encourage our keiki to embrace the many opportunities our hospitality industry provides. As the state's lead agency promoting tourism, the HTA is central to this mission.

Earlier this month, more than 1,000 students from high school and intermediate schools across the state participated in the Leadership, Exploration, Inspiration (LEI) hospitality industry program, held virtually for the first time. This program, sponsored by the HTA, was created by the nonprofit organization ClimbHI in 2011 to inspire Hawaii's youth to pursue careers in the state's visitor industry by providing them with the means to achieve success.

Since then, the program has helped thousands of students across the state with networking and hands-on educational opportunities in the hospitality industry.

In one discussion, our students discussed the value of tourism and how it directly and indirectly benefits them — including tax benefits, jobs, education, environmental protection and more. They also spoke about less-tangible benefits, such as

forming friendships and having conversations with people from around the world, as well as sharing our aloha, culture and history with others.

I'll share a few of their stories here:

"The pandemic really opened my eyes as to how important tourism really is to me and to everyone living on the Hawaiian islands. Recently, with the islands slowly starting to open back up, stores and restaurants are up and running, and a lot of people are beginning to work again. The tourism industry is especially important to me because as a junior, I am trying to find my passion, take on activities that will improve my leadership skills, and also learn about real-life situations." — *Lahainaluna student*

"The tourist industry in Hawaii is important to me because it gives so many locals opportunities to work and find a passion. I also find that the importance of the tourist industry falls under the knowledge that we can spread to visitors that come from all over. We can share our culture, mana, and 'aina with them. The tourist industry supports so many of the needs and wants of the islands, from agriculture to stores. The money from the enormous industry gets funneled back into our communities, schools,

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Julie Morikawa is president of ClimbHI, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that encourages students to finish high school and proceed to post-secondary education or employment by exposing them to future career paths.

roads, and government. The people of Hawaii should be so grateful to have such a once-thriving industry and soon to be brought back once again. I know that I'm so very thankful for this industry not only because of the profits that Hawaii gets but for the opportunities that are given to many local keiki and future generations." — *Molokai High School student*

"The tourism industry is important to Hawaiians because it is where 30% of our income comes from. Despite the fact that we sometimes rely on tourists, I think the important thing is that we are able to

share and show these people who we are in person. The tourism industry is not all about money, but about exchanging cultures and practices, through tourism we are able to share our aloha and the true spirit of our people. Through these opportunities we are able to not only welcome them but we are able to make them feel like a part of our ohana." — *Waianae High School student*

Our keiki need support, education and resources to make well-informed decisions about their interests and careers. Cuts to the HTA would undermine the progress made by so many to help our students find valuable opportunities right here at home.

### How and when to get COVID vaccine

There is urgency to get Hawaii COVID-vaccinated, but the rollout has stirred many questions. The optimal link to access vaccination info and sign up (currently by appointment-only to anyone age 16 and up): [hawaii-covid19.com/vaccine](https://hawaii-covid19.com/vaccine).

Other sign-up portals include Hawaii Pacific Health ([hawaiipacifichealth.org/hph-covid-19-updates/](https://hawaiipacifichealth.org/hph-covid-19-updates/)) and Queen's Health Systems ([covid.queens.org/vaccine/](https://covid.queens.org/vaccine/)).

Also, the state Health Department has a weekly online newsletter of COVID updates: [808ne.ws/2Kfz13n](https://808ne.ws/2Kfz13n).