

Kailua Hawaiian Civic Club

Club Song from 1989 to present

“The Windward Side (of the Island)” – credited to Don Ho – was the club’s original song.

## **Nā Pua Lei ‘Ilima**

*Haku mele:* E. Kau‘i Zuttermeister.

*Our text:* As sung by Jerry Santos and Haunani Apoliona with the blessings of Aunty Kau‘i; translated by Kīhei de Silva.

Nani wale nā pua lei ka ‘ilima                      Lovely are the flowers of the lei ‘ilima  
‘O ka u‘i ho‘oheno o Kākuhihewa                      The cherished beauties of Kākuhihewa

Ho‘ohihi ka mana‘o lā i laila                      My thoughts are entranced there  
Nā pua lei ‘ilima e kaulana nei                      With the pua lei ‘ilima whose fame is spreading

Kūlana hiehie me ka hanohano                      Delightful and dignified in character  
Ha‘aheo i ka maka ke ‘ike aku                      Stirring pride whenever seen

Kaulana nā pua lei ka ‘ilima                      The ‘ilima lei blossoms are well known  
Ke kikowaena o nā ‘ailana                      Belonging to O‘ahu, the center of the islands

‘Ohu‘ohu wale ai nā malihini                      Thus are the malihini adorned  
Ka nani kaulana poina ‘ole                      With this unforgettable, famous beauty

Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana                      The story is told,  
Nā pua lei ‘ilima e kaulana nei                      Famous are the flowers of the lei ‘ilima.

The meaning of “Nā Pua Lei ‘Ilima,” as with many of the best Hawaiian songs, can be as simple or as complicated as we care to make it. We can start with Aunty Kau‘i Zuttermeister’s central, kikowaena image of flowers in a lei and read into it the message of aloha ‘āina – of the unbroken, ‘ai kamaha‘o connection we share with our homeland as its children, family, and lāhui. Or we can examine the opening description of u‘i ho‘oheno – cherished youthful beauty – and marvel at how the song slowly adds to it the more enduring blossoms of charm, grace, and dignity: u‘i becomes hiehie, hanohano, ha‘aheo, and – finally – nani kaulana poina ‘ole. We children, Aunty Kau‘i says, aren’t about to fade away. Or we can view the song as a parable of strength in unity, as a koan of one and many, or as a nane of part-to-whole synesthesia. Lots of pretty little flowers, she says, can be made with love and patience into a lei of regal impact and beauty.

When all is said and done, simple is best. We take all of these meanings and collapse them back into the explanation that Jerry Santos gives whenever he sings the song for us:

it is Aunty Kau‘i’s song for the flowers of Kākuhihewa, for the children those flowers represent, and for the land that gives life to both.

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*The text, translation, and explanation given above have been excerpted from Hālau Mōhala ‘Ilima’s Merrie Monarch Factsheet of 2007.*