

Wisdom is Mana!

Tarisi Vunidilo
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

What does Pacific Island/Oceanic wisdom mean to you?

Oceanic wisdom is part of my being and my DNA. I feel, think, dance, speak and breathe my Fijian-ness. This wisdom grounds me and shapes my view of the world. It reminds me of how blessed I am today due to the wisdom that my ancestors have passed on to my 'vuvale (family). It continues to re-connect me to my rich indigenous iTaukei past, strengthens me today and enables me to dream and envision my future with great optimism. This wisdom has substance, mana (power) and can propel me to a brighter future in front of me. WISDOM IS MANA!

How/why do you bring island wisdom into your scholarship?

I made a promise to myself to lead by example and 'walk the talk.' With my teaching profession spanning Fiji, Aotearoa and Hawaii, I have tried my very best to bring my island wisdom to all whom I meet, and to teach and empower my students never to forget their roots. I believe that imparting such wisdom is important to our students' identity. I encourage my students to value their language, their culture and indigenous knowledge. They can sing, dance, and write about these knowledges too. I enjoy being a teacher! Mahalo nui.