Born in Hawaii, Alton Takiyama-Chung, was the best Japanese-Korean howler in the whole hospital. Upon taking him home, his exhausted parents decided that enough was enough and that is how he became the youngest child of his family.

Growing up in Hawaii, he listened to elders, friends, and family “talk story.” (In Hawaii, people don’t gossip, they “talk story.”) He learned about the stories and superstitions of the islands and gained respect for the beliefs of different cultures. As a performer, Alton tells Asian folk tales and Hawaiian legends with respect and authenticity.

Terrified of the local ghost stories “in small kid time,” it took him years to understand how important they were in shaping the culture and texture of the Hawaii of his childhood. Today, Alton collects, researches, and shares strange tales which range from the mildly mysterious to those in which the shadows talk back.

Alton also tells stories of the Hawaiian Monarchy from the reign of Kamehameha, the Great through Queen Liliuokalani and the Annexation of the Islands by the United States. In addition, he has also conducted oral history interviews with elders at the Hawaiian Plantation Village in Waipahu, HI to gather their stories of growing up in the 1930’s and 40’s during the Plantation Era in Hawaii.

He also tells stories of the Japanese American Experience of WWII. Through extensive research and oral history interviews he brings to life what it was like to be a Japanese American before, during, and after WWII; a new immigrant from China to the US in the 1850s; and a young picture bride getting off of a ship, meeting her new husband for the first time, and beginning their life together ,working in the sugarcane and pineapple plantations of Hawaii in the early 1900s.

In 2005, Alton was awarded the first J.J. Reneaux Emerging Artist Award by the National Storytelling Network. His DVD *LIFE IS THE TREASURE: Okinawan Memories of WWII* and his CDs *TALES FROM THE LANAI: Legends and Stories from Hawaii* and *Coming to Gold Mountain* have all won Storytelling World Honors. He has performed at the Congress of Asian Storytellers in Singapore, International Storytelling Festivals in the Cayman Islands, Thailand, Vietnam, and India, storytelling festivals across the country, and has been a Featured Teller at the Timpanogas Storytelling Festival in Utah and at the National Storytelling Festival in Tennessee.

Alton received a B.A. in Zoology (*cum laude*; Phi Beta Kappa) from the University of Washington and an M.S. in Oceanography and an MBA from Oregon State University. He is also a graduate of the Barbara Brennan School of Healing, is a former Chairman of the National Storytelling Network, and is the Editor-in-Chief of the e-Publication, *The Story Beast* (storybeast.org).