

He wahi leo mahalo – Kalihi Uka is legendary, a significant place. Those who visit the valley often feel the strong and pervasive mana of this ‘āina. It is beautiful. It is elemental. It is commanding. These feelings are intimated in the mo‘olelo of Kalihi from ka wā‘kahiko. The mo‘olelo often describe the strong wind that buffets us today; they describe the cold rain that still cuts through the valley; our mo‘olelo talk of cloud formations we can still see, and pōhaku we still touch. We are blessed to continue to live our mo‘olelo. We are eternally grateful for the kupa‘āina of Kalihi, especially those who came before us, who remember and perpetuate the mo‘olelo of Kalihi.

To the Harvey/Miles ‘ohana, we are very grateful for their sharing of mo‘olelo and their intimate connection with Kalihi Uka. We understand that their ‘ohana, and potentially others, were the unnamed “informants” that provided Clarice Taylor with legends of Kalihi Uka for her articles that were published in the Star-Bulletin newspaper in 1955. Mahalo for keeping the mo‘olelo alive!

Many of the written legends of Kalihi come from the work of scholar Joseph Moku‘ōhai Poepoe. His 1906 mo‘olelo of Haumea and Wakea and their triumphs and tribulations in Kalihi Uka and around O‘ahu are invaluable for our understanding of this very special place. English-version legends about Kalihi, such as those found in Beckwith’s *Hawaiian Mythology* and Summer and Sterling’s *Sites of O‘ahu*, often use Poepoe’s stories and collections at Bishop Museum as source material. Poepoe’s father, G.W. Poepoe, wrote *He Mo‘olelo no Kamapua‘a* under the penname G.W. Kahiolo. In that mo‘olelo, Kahiolo (1998:83) self-identifies himself as Kalihi’s child, “ko Kalihi keiki.” The depth of understanding and clarity of details within J.M. Poepoe’s 1906 mo‘olelo of Kalihi prove that he too, like his father, was a kupa of Kalihi, a child of this land. We are extremely grateful for his perpetuation of mo‘olelo Kalihi.

Home of Gods

In our mo‘olelo, Kalihi Uka is a wahi pana, a storied and sacred place. It is the ancestral home of many of our gods – our akua. The akua dwell in the rocks and the plants, in the birds and the silence, in the clouds and the mountains of the valley. Some of the most well-known akua of Hawai‘i choose to live in Kalihi Uka. It is home of Papahānaumoku. She is Haumea, and her humble hale is at the peak of Kilohana, at the far upland point of the valley. She lives there with Wakea – the father of the expansive sky. Kapō‘ulakina‘u – a goddess of hula experts – was born in Kalihi valley from the eyes of Haumea (Beckwith 1970:186). She lives in the streams, rocks, and waterfalls of Kapō. Kamohoali‘i, the great shark god and elder brother of Pele, was also born in Kalihi Uka. He often dwells in the steep cliffs of his birthplace (Taylor 1955). All of the great gods had stone residences in the upper valley (Taylor 1955).

Papahānaumokuakea, Papa, Haumea

In 1906, the Hawaiian language newspaper, “*Ka Na‘i Aupuni*,” recorded the following concerning the legendary ancestors of the Hawaiian people, Wakea and Papahānaumoku who lived at Kilohana in Kalihi:

O Wakea, he kanaka maoli no ia; a o kana wahine o ia o Papa, i kapaia nohoi o Haumea, a o ko laua wahi i noho ai oia ka pali o Kilohana. Oia kela wahi kaola pali mawaena o ke awawa o Kalihi-uka ame Ko‘olau.

Translation: Wakea is a human and his wife Papa, who is also called Haumea, they lived at the cliff of Kilohana. That cliff trail is between the valley of upland Kalihi and Ko‘olau.

A visitor to the uplands of Kalihi Valley on the island of Oahu, should he start just *mauka* of Kamehameha School grounds and go on to the center of the valley and look straight up toward the Koolau mountains, will see a peak on the north eastern side of the valley. That is the peak or hill of Kilohana, the home dark with mist, of Wakea and Papa, the ancestral *kupua* [a supernatural being possessing many forms] chiefs of Hawaii . . . Of Papa, it is said that she was a woman more than mortal, a *kupua*, and that she bore many names, such as Papa, Haumea, and Kamahaikana . . . Wakea was a man and human and he was the husband of Papa when she was called Haumea. They left the border of Kahiki in the days long past, and became the parents of the Hawaiian people and lived on the hill of Kilohana which stands high up in the valley of Kalihi. (Sterling and Summers 1978:325).

The myths also tell of Papa, in her *kupua*, or mortal shape shifting form, as Haumea, and center around themes concerning the food supply for the life of the 'ohana to ensure the continuation of family bloodline or lineage. At Kalihi, Haumea mates with her children and grandchildren to give birth to the Hawaiian race.

Per Kamakau, "Haumea has six renewals or rebirths, some say in other lands; for example, as Namakaokahai, as Pele, and so forth. She is said to have changed herself into a young woman at the heiau of Hale-papa-a (House of burning land) in Nu'umealani, a land in Pali-ku, and returned to marry her children and grandchildren. Her divine forms and her different bodies are worshiped by later generations as: Papa-hanau-moku (Papa giving birth to islands); Haumea-ka- hanau-wawa (Haumea giving birth noisily); Ka-haka-ua-koko (The place of blood); Hai-uli, because of her visits to the "blue sea" of Kahiki (on Oahu); Lau-mihi, from her gathering crabs (Ku-mihi) and seaweed (lau) there; Kamehaikana, from her entering a growing tree—the last three names referring to the time when she lived as a woman in Kalihi valley."

The mo'olelo of Haumea is associated with Kilohana, but her last three transformations are tied to her life as a mortal, possibly with a heiau that was built for the worship of Haumea, Ka'ie'ie heiau. According to Beckwith (1970):

In her human body as Papa, Haumea lives on Oahu as wife of Wakea; in her spirit body as Haumea she returns to the divine land of the gods in Nuumealani and changes her form from age to youth and returns to marry with her children and grandchildren. Some place these transformations on Oahu at the heiau of Ka-ieie (The Pandanus vine) built for her worship in Kalihi valley.

Ka'ie'ie heiau is most likely located in the 'ili of the same name, immediately WSW of the HA park and anchors one of the earliest stories of the Hawaiian people to the area.

If we know the immediate location of the earthly home of Papa to HA, we can surmise that what grew in Ka'ie'ie also grew in Maluwai.

Ia laua e noho ana ma keia wahi, ua loa ko laua ola, ma na mea o keia nohokino ana ma o na maia palaku i ka nahele, na uhi punapuna moe lepo o ka uka, na kalo aweu manalo a lilo i poi uouo ono; na hooio [ho'i'o] me na kikawaio e lomi pu iho ai me na opae kala ole o ka uka waokele; na lawalu oopu momona i hele a ala i ka lauki, ame na wahi luau palupalu o ia uka iuiu. Pela nohoi me na alamihi kai aala o na kai kohola o kai ae nei o Kalihi, e laa na papai momona a pela nohoi me na wahi hua opihi mai o na Koolau, ame ko laila mau lau limu. A o keia mau mea a pau inai pu iho me ka poi aweu uouo, he ono mai hoi kau a koe (Poepoe, 1906).

While they resided at this place (Kilohana), they obtained their life from the food needed in physical living, such as the perfectly ripe bananas in the forest, the firm and mealy yams laying in the soil of the uplands, the wild, tasty taro turned into delicious sticky poi; the hō'i'o and kikawaiō ferns mixed together with the mountain 'ōpae of the upland rainforest; the sweet 'o'opu cooked in bundles (lāwalu) until fragrant with ti-leaf; and the soft, tender lū'au of these majestic uplands. With that was paired the ambrosial alamihi from the reef flats of the oceans of Kalihi, also with the fatty crabs and the meaty opihi from Ko'olau, as well as the leafy limu of that area. And all of these things were eaten together with the sticky poi made from wild taro, truly and exceedingly delicious! (Translated by Kanoa OConnor)

The name, Ho'oulu 'Āina, was in fact inspired by “the ho'oulu'ai designation of an ancient heiau” (HA Master Plan, 2013:1) in Kalihi Valley. Ka'ie'ie heiau, as described by Thrum (1906:94) was a ho'oulu'ai heiau.

Kapo'ulakina'u and Kamohoali'i

Kapo' was the daughter born to Haumea or Papa while she was living in Kalihi Valley with Wakea, her husband. Kapo' had many names, such as Kapo'ulakina'u and Laka:

E kapu, he ihiiki a he pae akua no hoi

O very sacred tabu of the gods.

Haumea was the leader who was never absent from those skillful in the art of the Hawaiian hula. A very sacred tapu of the gods rested upon her. Some say she was born from the eyes of Papa. One source indicates that there is a stream said to be a kinolau (physical manifestation) of Kapo', patron of hula, of high rank and able to assume many shapes at will, as well as a cliff that was the kinolau of Kamohoali'i, elder brother of Pele, and Lord of sharks:

Kapo-ula-kinau, Kamohoalii, Pele-honua-mea are the three wonderful ones who came from Wakea and Papa. A very sacred tabu of the gods rest upon her. Birds never sing about her tabu home up Kalihi Valley. There at noon when the sun is shining brightly, she may be seen on the hillside beyond the upland of Kilohana where stands her tabu stone (7 feet long and three feet high) into she entered, shaped like a house in front, like a fish's tail behind. (Beckwith 1970:186-187)

Ms. Colleen Aiu, kumu hula who is also the daughter of the late and great kumu hula, Ma'iki Aiu, in an interview recalls a story that was told to her by the late aunty Sarah Kailikea. While Aunty Sarah and Aunty Alice Holokai were traveling through the Wilson Tunnel, Aunty Sarah heard a drum beat. Later, both she and Aunty Alice visited Tutu Kawena and shared her story. Tutu Kawena informed them that “long ago, there was a hula mound and hula gatherings in upper Kalihi Valley. It is the hula maiden of Kalihi Valley, Kapo' or Kapo'-ula-kina'u, Laka, and others. She is the daughter of Haumea.” (Palama, 2005, Appendix C)

Likewise, according to McAllister, David Kama, who was the caretaker of the water reserve in Kalihi Valley, tells him that he heard the drums on the Nights of Kāne (Kāne o ka Pō) above his house but has never found the heiau. However, Thrum (1906:94) mentions three heiau that McAllister had been unable to obtain additional information about:

Kaieie, Kalihi-Uka, on premises of Dr. Huddy, of hoouluai class, Haumea deity. Parts of foundations only remain.

Kaoleo, Kalihi-Kai, no particulars ascertained

Haunapo, Kalihi-Kai, no particulars ascertained. (McAllister 1915:88-90)

However, these three heiau in the valley were ideal for growing 'uala (sweet potato), uhi (yams), wauke (paper mulberry) and mai'a (bananas).

A map of Kalihi dated 1883 indicates the place names of Popoulu and Kapo within the wao akua region (i.e. the uninhabitable mountain region where deities dwell) of the ahupua'a. Sterling and Summers (1978:324) speak of Kapo and Kamohoali'i:

Look now at the steep cliff to the right, to the hill equal in height with the side of Kapo. This hill is Kamohoalii. This is own [sic] brother of Kapo. He was born from the top of the head of Haumea [Papa]. He is the beloved brother of Pele, the one who saved the fire alive when she battled with Kamapuaa.

Kāne and Kanaloa in Kalihi

The gods Kāne and Kanaloa are associated with activities related to 'awa drinking. With 'awa as their principal food, we can assume that water must have been a critical ingredient:

Kane and Kanaloa journeyed along the coast of the island until they came to Kalihi. For a long time they had been looking up the hillsides and along the water courses for 'awa. At Kalihi, a number of fine awa roots were growing. They pulled up the roots and prepared them for chewing. When the 'awa was ready, Kanaloa looked for fresh water but could not find any. So, he said to Kane, our awa is good, but there is not water in this place. Where can we find water for this awa?'

Kane said, 'There is indeed water here.' He had a 'large and strong staff.' This he took in his hands and stepped out on the bed of lava which now underlies the soil of the region. He began to strike the earth. Deep went the point of his staff into the rock, smashing and splintering it and breaking open a hole out of which water leaped for them to mix with their prepared awa. This pool of fresh water has been known since the days of old as Kapukawaiokalihi (the water hole of Kalihi). (Beckwith 1970:63)

Kamapua'a from Kalihi

In *He Mo'olelo no Kamapua'a* (Kahiolo 1998), Kamapua'a identifies himself and his akua mother, Hina, as being from Kalihi. At the end of this mo'olelo, Kamapua'a searches for his parents. He finds Hina at the ocean of Keonealuhi (possibly near Kalalau, Kaula'i). Here, he calls out to Hina, asking for a fish from his mother – identifying himself as a child of the goddess. She does not recognize him as her son, denying his request for fish. There is a prolonged exchange between mother and son -- Kamapua'a insists he is her child and Hina denies his claim. Finally, Kamapua'a performs an oli to prove his connection to his mother. The last portion of the oli states:

No Kalihi 'oe, no Kalihi wau,
No Kalihi ka wahine hāhā pāpa'i,
Moku aku ke kaula, lilo aku ka ipu.
Hahai a ka wahine i ka ipu,
'O ke kai mokumoku ipukai o Kalihi,
He pa'a 'o Kalihi.

E Hina ē, na‘u kahi i‘a,
E Hina ē, he ‘ole manawa ‘ino, aloha. (Kahiolo 1998:79)

After hearing this, Hina realizes that the stranger is indeed her son, Kamapua‘a. In the oli, “No Kalihi ‘oe, no Kalihi wau,” means “you (Hina) are from Kalihi, I (Kamapua‘a) am from Kalihi.”

The mele then references a story of Hina losing her gourd while gathering crabs in Kalihi, O‘ahu. The detail with which Kamapua‘a describes the lost gourd, with its rope breaking (ka moku ‘ana o ke kaula o ka ipu), is what causes Hina to recognize him as her son -- Kamapua‘a.

Kupua and ‘E‘epa

Unknown to many of us, Kalihi Uka remains the home of many akua and supernatural kupua. These spirits protect and guide all of us in times of need, and are also known to be kolohe – playful and mischievous. These akua are very much still alive in Kalihi Uka, and Kānaka still recognize and pule to them today.

Hāpu‘u and Kala‘ihauola

Hāpu‘u and Kalaihauola are stones, and the place to this day is named Hāpu‘u:

“It was said that these two belong to the mysterious little people of Nuuanu Valley who wandered to that place because of the war going on in Nuuanu when some fled. These two came to the up lands of Kalihi -- where are the others. Strangers who visit the valley should pull leaves, braid them into a wreath and lay the wreath on the stones in order to meet with no such difficulty as mists and cold or the loss of their road on the way to Kilohana and back. Should the mischievous little people see that there are no wreaths on the stones when visitors are on the way to Kilohana, they will break a branch of the flowering mountain apple or the leaf of a tree fern, dip it in water and sprinkle the two stones. Soon after, the summit of Kapo will be covered with mist and a drenching rain will cause the stranger to shiver with cold. Sometimes, the little people will throw away the wreaths and do the same.” (Poepoe 1906:65)

Other Kupua

In *Tales of Hawaii* by Clarice Taylor (1955), several other kupua are mentioned living in Kalihi valley. These include:

Kaupe (also known as Poki by modern Hawaiians) – a big dog that also took the form of a stone or cloud formation. When Hawaiians living in Kalihi saw Kaupe over the mountains in Kalihi Uka, they knew he was warning them not to go up to Kilohana or Kapo.

Manukao is a great rock in the form of a bird living at the ridge below Kilohana. Its name literally means “bird warning.” The spirit in this pohaku often takes the form of a great rooster. Manukao could warn Hawaiians of oncoming famine.

Ioleloa is a stone that used to lay next to the old Kalihi footpath. Ioleloa was an ancient Oahu king who made a raid upon the island of Kauai. The Kauai king followed him back to Oahu and fought a hand-to-hand battle with ‘Ioleloa on the ridge of Kamananui overlooking Kalihi Valley. Ioleloa was killed and hurled into the valley where he turned to stone. Many generations later, in the early 1900’s, the stone was dynamited to create Kalihi Street. Hawaiians refused to dynamite the rock – they stood around and watched the foreigners do the job. The foreman who insisted on dynamiting the stone died when a fragment hit him.

Laukīpala is a kupua woman who lives in Kalihi Valley in a big flat stone in a pool under Kapo. She is the deity of yellow ti leaf on land and the lauki fish in the sea. She is sometimes seen as a heavy-set woman with gray hair – she is a wanderer who never stays in one spot. Her stone was known to move up and down the valley, often resting in very surprising places!

Visited by Ali‘i

In historical legend, Kalihi Uka was a favorite place for ali‘i from O‘ahu and from afar. Kalihi’s pools and streams were often sources of enjoyment for visiting ali‘i. The valley and her people offered refuge to Kahahana, King of O‘ahu, when he fled into hiding. After his conquest of O‘ahu, it is said that Kamehameha found respite in Kalihi Uka.

Ka-elemu-wai-o-Kalihi

When one is almost out of the hill valley of Kalihi, on the *mauka* side of Joe Kalama’s residence, there is a spot called “The anus of Kalihi,” “*Ka-elemu-wai-o-Kalihi*.” The exact feature is a solidly planted rock in the middle of the stream; in the center, when the flow is low, one can see a little hole shaped like an anus from which water flows and runs down below. The rock above the hole is shaped like buttocks:

On the ‘Ewa side of Kalihi Stream, the home site is still to be seen at a place called Kupehau. Here, chiefs of Hawaii resorted because of the delicious poi and tender taro tops. Kamehameha I was one of the chiefs who visited the spot. After his battles on Oahu, he went to rest at Kupehau. One day, the chief came down to the stream to bathe when the water was low. Kamehameha stuck his finger into the hole and said, “Kahaha! The water of Kalihi comes from an anus!” (McAllister 1915:90)

He ‘Āina Waiwai

Our mo‘olelo describe Kalihi as an abundant landscape – full of life and spirit. Water – ka wai ola – is plentiful. Water gushes forth from springs (mo‘olelo of Kāne and Kanaloa), gathers in cool pools (Kapo‘ulakina‘u; mo‘olelo of Kamehameha; po‘haku hānau), and leaps down cliffs as waterfalls (Kapo‘ulakina‘u). Our life-giving rain is referred to with affection and our beloved streams are celebrated (Ua po‘olipilipi; Kāne and Kanaloa; Kapo‘ulakina‘u) in mo‘olelo. The lushness of Kalihi uka remains a common theme. Plants grow prolifically in the upland valley. Vegetation used for lei, such as ‘ōhi‘a, palapalai, maile, and lā‘ī, are luxurious and grow abundantly here. There also exist a plentiful amount of edible plants. In his mo‘olelo of Haumea and Wākea, Poepoe (1906) describes the bountiful amount of food growing in Kalihi Uka.

Poepoe uses the word “ola” for the food that Haumea and Wākea find in and around Kalihi Uka. The abundance of food truly is ola – life and health – for Kalihi. The abundance of this ‘āina continues to this day, and continues to grow and expand through the hands of those who mālama ‘āina.