

NOA EMMETT ALULI AND  
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*Mai Ke Kai Mai Ke Ola, From The Ocean Comes  
Life: Hawaiian Customs, Uses, and Practices on  
Kaho'olawe Relating to the Surrounding Ocean*

PROLOGUE

*HALI'A ALOHA O 'ANAKALA/Loving Remembrance*  
Uncle Harry Kunihi Mitchell (1919-1990)

Born in Ke'anae, Hāna, Maui, Uncle Harry Mitchell (fig. 1) was reared in traditional Hawaiian ways by his grandparents to whom he was *hānai* (given to be raised). He was born under *lā'au kūlua*, a moon of Hawaiian healers. He passed away under *muku*, a moonless night.

His grandparents were of the *papa kaula keahikuni* class of *kahuna* (priests). They trained the young Harry in the arts of using Hawaiian medicines made from native plants and marine life for healing of illness and injuries and improving the overall health of Hawaiians.

Beginning in 1986, Uncle Harry dedicated himself to treating the physical health of the Hawaiian people. He actively organized other traditional Hawaiian *lā'au lapa'au* (healers) locally and state-wide, and he conferred with traditional healers from other parts of the Pacific and the world.

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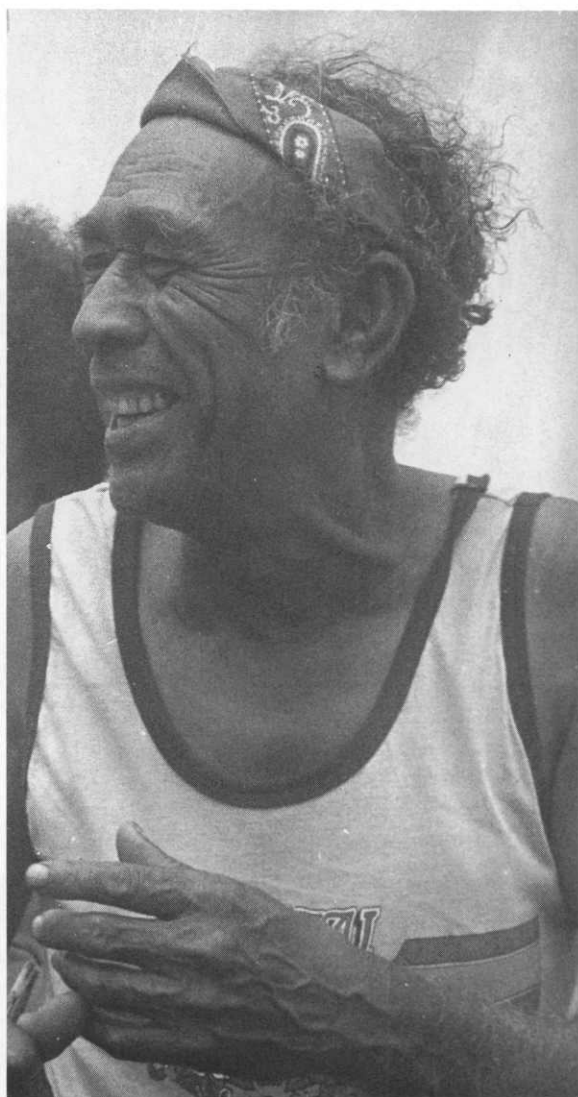


FIG. 1. Uncle Harry Kunihi Mitchell on Kaho'olawe. (Keoni Fairbanks photo collection.)

When he became ill in 1989, he began a series of traditional Hawaiian treatments for cancer which included the use of *lā‘au* (Native Hawaiian herbal medicine) and other healing practices. These treatments extended his life one year beyond what was originally projected by medical specialists.

In his lifetime, Harry Kunihi Mitchell was among the most important leaders, advocates, educators, organizers, and spokespersons for Hawaiian rights of the 20th century.

He joined the Hui Ala Loa protests for beach access across private lands on Moloka‘i’s West End in 1975. In 1976, he helped found the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (extended family) together with Hui Ala Loa leaders, Maui fishermen, and other early Hawaiian activists. He organized the first religious access to Kaho‘olawe.

In 1977, Uncle Harry lost his son, Kimo Mitchell, who with George Helm attempted to stop the bombing and shelling of Kaho‘olawe by the Naval forces of the United States. During World War II, the military began to use the island as a bombing target. Both young men mysteriously disappeared in the waters off of Kaho‘olawe. Ten years later, the epitaph that Uncle Harry selected for Kimo’s memorial plaque on Kaho‘olawe indicated a final acceptance of his deep loss, “*Mai ke kai mai ke ola, Mai ke kai mai ka make/From the ocean comes life, From the ocean comes death.*”

In 1982, the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana succeeded in stopping Japan, New Zealand, and Australia from joining the Pacific rim countries (RIMPAC) in the shelling of Kaho‘olawe. Only Canada and the U.S. insisted on shelling the island. Uncle Harry took it upon himself to make a solo night crossing of the ‘Alalākeiki Channel to protest RIMPAC 1982. While there, he witnessed the extraordinary breach birth of a whale calf at Kanapou Bay.

Uncle Harry served as the guiding force and mainstay of the ‘Ohana. He welcomed access visitors to Kaho‘olawe and taught them how to appreciate the *‘āina* (land). He represented the ‘Ohana at Navy negotiations and meetings with admirals and was their ambassador to international gatherings of nuclear free and independent Pacific activists in Vanuatu and Fiji. He travelled to Japan to testify on behalf of Greenpeace activists. For The ‘Ohana he was *kupuna* (elder), sharing chants, the *kaona* (hidden

meaning) of place names, stories about fishing, astronomy, and navigation—sometimes serious, sometimes joking, and often *kolohe* (mischievous).

Rooted in Ke‘anae/Wailua-Iki, one of the traditional centers of taro growing in Hawai‘i, Uncle Harry became active and a leader in revitalizing *kalo* (taro) cultivation and in protecting the water rights necessary for this cultivation. He taught ‘ōpio (Hawaiian youth) how to re-establish the Nā Lima Hana taro patches on Moloka‘i and the Kānewai taro patches on the Mānoa campus of the University of Hawai‘i. He helped Hawaiian farmers re-open their taro patches in Kipahulu, Maui and Waipa, Kaua‘i.

Uncle Harry had many occupations. He was a good provider, and his children and grandchildren were foremost in his thoughts and his actions. He was a World War II veteran, a cowboy, fisherman, hunter, carpenter, a songsmith and musician, and always a taro farmer. Yet he made time to be *kupuna* for the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, for the Department of Education in the Hāna District, and for an entire generation. He was featured in documentary programs and oral histories about taro cultivation and the Hawaiian language produced by the Bishop Museum, local television stations, and by Hawaiian scholars.

“*Imua nā pua . . . lanakila Kaho‘olawe/Go forward beloved children . . . Win victory for Kaho‘olawe,*” the final lines of Harry Kunihi Mitchell’s *Mele O Kaho‘olawe*, became a challenge, a rallying slogan, and, ultimately, a prophesy fulfilled by himself and the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana. In his songs, actions, and spirit, Uncle Harry inspired the generation of Hawaiians who organized the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana and numerous other organizations of the modern Hawaiian movement. For Uncle Harry, expert fisherman—spear in hand; net on back; stringing a fishing line; sailing the ocean reading nature’s signs—we write this article. We share a part of the *mana‘o* (understanding) he gave us of Kaho‘olawe and its ocean.

#### OVERVIEW

Kaho‘olawe is a center for the revitalization of Native Hawaiian culture (fig. 2), particularly with regard to subsistence gathering

of marine life, canoe navigation, and for honoring Hawaiian ocean and agricultural deities. Historically, Kaho‘olawe’s cultural significance was integrally linked to the ocean that surrounds it. Kaho‘olawe was originally named Kohemālamalama O Kanaloa and just simply Kanaloa, after the Hawaiian and Polynesian god of the ocean, ocean currents, and navigation. Kaho‘olawe is a sacred *kino lau*, body form of the god Kanaloa. Marine manifestations of Kanaloa include coral, the whale, porpoise, and octopus. There are 69 coastal fishing shrines around the island which mark separate fishing grounds for various species of fish which thrive in the ocean offshore. In addition, there are numerous inland shrines which also appear to have a connection to fishing. Kaho‘olawe was one of the residences of Kamohoali‘i, the shark god brother of the volcano goddess Pele. Shrines to Kamohoali‘i are found inland on the cliffs above Kanapou Bay which is a breeding ground for sharks.

Kaho‘olawe also figured significantly in the long voyages between Hawai‘i and Tahiti. Lae O Kealaikahiki/Point Kealaikahiki was a launching and ceremonial area for voyages between Tahiti and Hawai‘i in the 13th century. Moa‘ula iki at the central part of the island was the location of a traditional training school for navigators.

The ocean surrounding the island has continued to be accessed by fisher men and women from Maui for fish, seaweed, limpets, and other forms of marine life for subsistence and medicinal uses. The coral reefs surrounding Kaho‘olawe are in a pristine condition relative to the reefs off of heavily populated areas of our islands. There is still a wide variety and abundance of fish and marine life in the reefs and ocean around Kaho‘olawe. Seabirds live in cliffs and rocky islets on the leeward side of Kaho‘olawe.

Beginning in 1976, the newly organized Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (fig. 3) made Kaho‘olawe a focal point for the revival of Hawaiian subsistence, cultural and religious customs, beliefs, and practices. While on the island, ‘Ohana members fish for subsistence; honor traditional Hawaiian fishing and ocean deities; access the coastline of the entire island by canoe; and seek to reopen fishing grounds in the ocean to re-establish traditional fishing shrines. This article discusses the traditional subsistence, cultural,

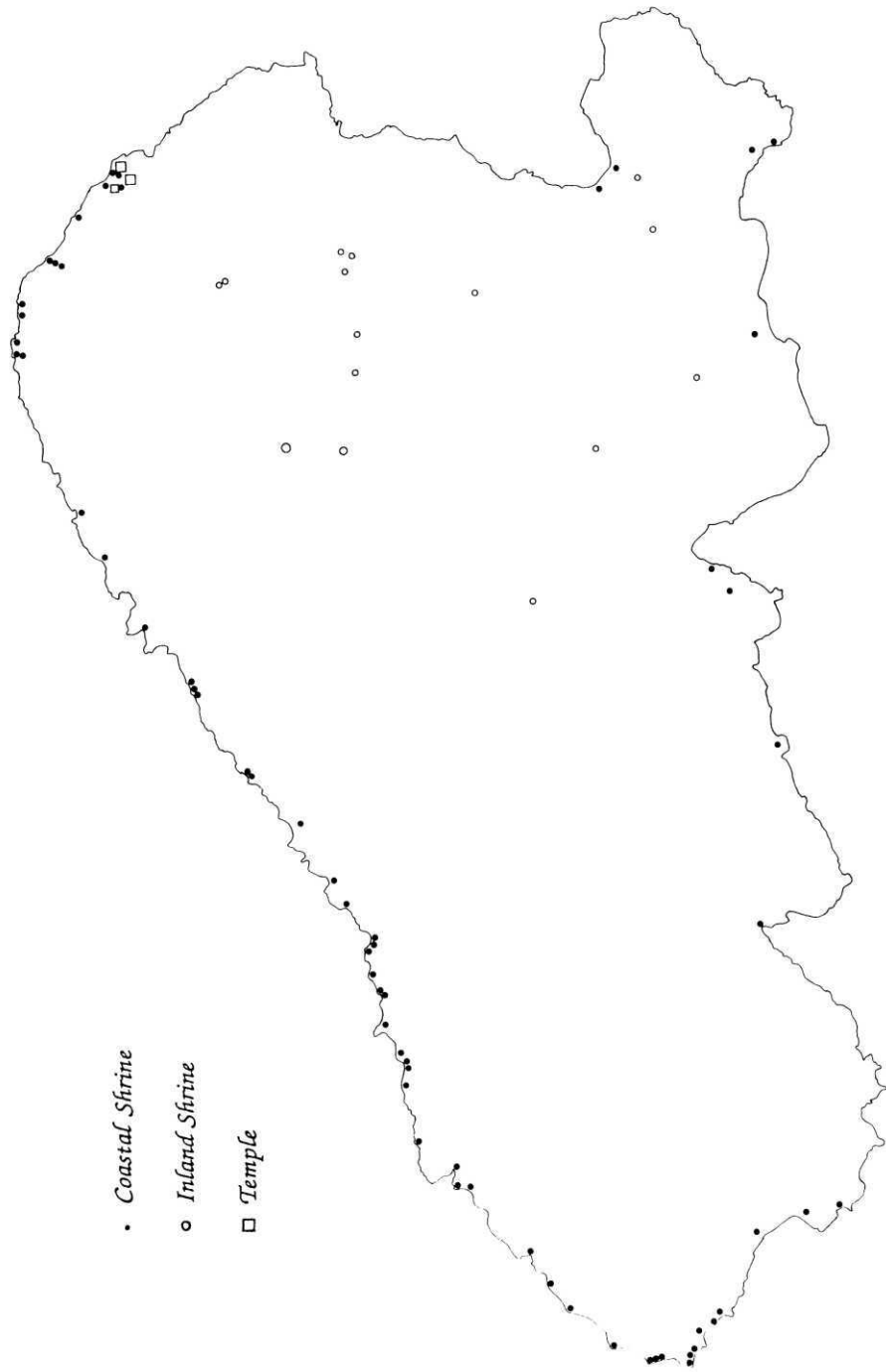


FIG. 2. Map of Kaho'olawe showing approximate locations of Native Hawaiian religious sites known to exist. Information taken from the National Register of Historic Places nomination forms, 1976-1980 archeological survey. (Rowland Reeve drawing, 1992.)

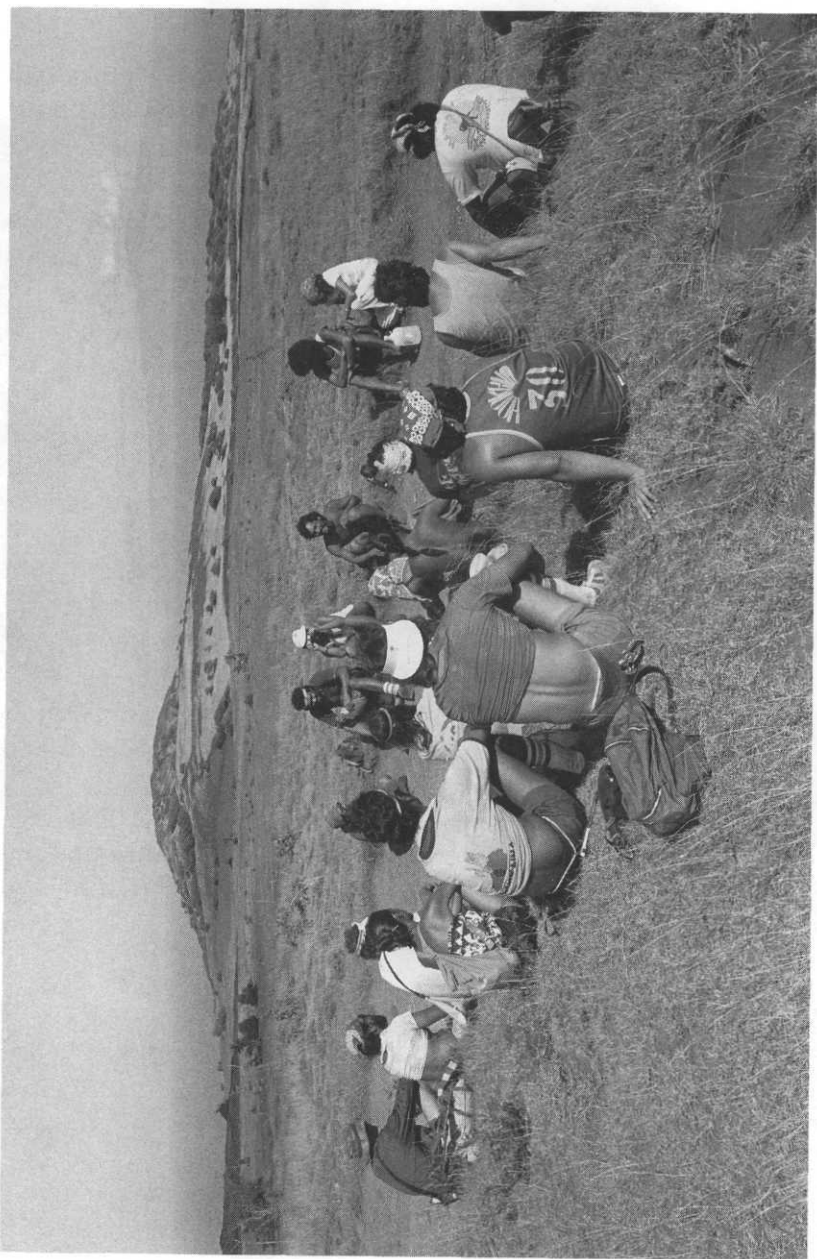


FIG. 3. 'Ohana resting near Pu'u Moa'ula Iki, 1976. Author Aluli is third from left facing the camera. (Franco Salmoiraghi photo.)

and spiritual practices on the island of Kaho‘olawe relating to the ocean surrounding the island.<sup>1</sup>

#### KAHO‘OLAWA AS WAHI PANA

*Wahi pana* means a sacred place. Underlying the concept of *wahi pana* is the Hawaiian belief that the various forces of nature were Gods who formed the earth and imbued it with a dynamic life force and energy. Hawaiian chants and oral tradition linking the island to Kanaloa, Hawaiian god of the ocean, as well as the individual and collective experience of those who visit the island, confirm that the entire island of Kaho‘olawe is a *wahi pana*.<sup>2</sup>

Each of the Hawaiian Islands has its own unique features and characteristics. Each is special, significant, and sacred for different reasons. The following “*Oli Kūhohonu O Kaho‘olawe Mai No Kūpuna Mai/Deep Chant Of Kaho‘olawe From Our Ancestors*” is one of the oral traditions shared by *kūpuna* Harry Kunihi Mitchell. It reveals the four ancient names of the island and its traditional significance. Harry Mitchell’s ancestors settled at Honua‘ula on Maui and fished and gathered marine life in the ocean and along the shoreline of Kaho‘olawe. The family moved to Ke‘anae, Maui after the 1790 lava flow, which inundated Ahihi-Kina‘u, displaced them from Honua‘ula. Nevertheless, they continued to visit Kaho‘olawe, gather marine life from her shoreline, and fish in the surrounding ocean. Harry Mitchell learned this chant when he heard his *kūpuna* sharing chants and traditions of the island which they frequently visited.

*Wehewehe mai nei kahi ao*

Dawn is breaking.

*Kū mai nā wa‘a kaulua*

Two double-hulled canoes are sighted.

*Pue ke kanaka mai ka wa‘a mai*

The men cheer from the canoe.

*Kūkulu ka ‘iwi o ka ‘āina*

Land is sighted.

*‘Ailani Kohemālamalama*

To your left it is like heaven all lit up



*Ho ‘ohiki kēia moku iā Kanaloa*

We dedicate this island to Kanaloa.

*Akua o ka moana ‘ili, moana uli*

God of the shallow and deep ocean

*Ke holo nei me ke au kahili*

We are running in an erratic current.

*‘Ohaehae mai ka makani*

The wind is blowing from all directions.

*‘Alalā keiki pua ali ‘i*

The chief's child is crying [also the name of the channel between Kaho‘olawe and Maui].

*Ka piko hole pelu o Kanaloa*

The island of Molokini is shaped like the navel of Kanaloa.

*Kahua pae ‘ili kīhonua āhua*

The channel between Molokini—Kanaloa and Maui Kahiki Nui is shallow.

*Puehu ka lepo o Moa‘ula*

Dust is spreading over Mount Moa‘ula.

*Pu‘uhonua mo‘okahuna kilo pae honua*

Gathering place of the *kahuna* [priest] classes to study astronomy.

*Pōhaku ‘ahu ‘aikūpele kāpili o Keaweiki*

Stone of deep magic of Keaweiki

*Kaulilua ka makani ke hae nei*

The wind is chilly

*Kawehe hele nei o Hineli‘i*

Light rain is falling

*Napo‘o ka lā i Kahiki Moe*

The sun is setting towards Kahiki.

*Naue mai ke ao Lanikau*

The glow after the sunset is like the colors of the rainbow

*Kapu mai ka honua kuʻpa‘a loa*

The world seems to be standing still.

*Pau ka luhi ‘ana o ka moana*

We shall no more labor on the ocean.

This chant reveals that there are four ancient names for Kaho‘olawe: Kohemālamalama/to your left and lit up like heaven; Hineli‘i/light rain; Kahiki Moe/the sun sets in Kahiki; and Kana-

loa. A fifth name combines two of the above names into Kohemālamalama O Kanaloa/the shining womb of Kanaloa. The more recent name, Kaho'olawe, can be translated as to take and to embrace.

According to Hawaiian tradition, the island was dedicated to Kanaloa. This name singles out the entire island as a *wahi pana* since it is the only island in the Pacific named after a major Polynesian god. The name Kohemālamalama O Kanaloa can also be interpreted as meaning the sacred refuge or *pu'uhonua* of Kanaloa. This identifies Kaho'olawe as a traditional *pu'uhonua* (place of refuge).

Creation myths for Kaho'olawe also reinforce its significance as a *wahi pana*. The island, like Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, Ni'ihau and O'ahu, was born of Papa and Wakea, earth mother and sky father. Two chants by composers of the time of Kamehameha give similar accounts of the birth of the island by Papa. The chant by Kaleikuahulu gives the following version:

Papa was weakened at the birth of the island Kanaloa.  
It was born beautiful like the birds punua and naia,  
It was the child born of Papa.  
Papa foresook her husband and returned to Kahiki;  
Returned to Kahiki she lived at Kapakapakaua.<sup>3</sup>

The chant by Pakui records it as follows:

*Kaahea Papa ia Kanaloa, he moku,*  
Papa was prostrated with Kanaloa, an island,  
*I hanauia he punu he naia,*  
Who was born as a birdling; as a porpoise;  
*He keiki ia na Papa i hanau,*  
A child that Papa gave birth to,  
*Haalele Papa hoi i Tahiti,*  
Then Papa left and went back to Tahiti,  
*Hoi a Tahiti Kapakapakaua*  
Went back to Tahiti at Kapakapakaua.<sup>4</sup>

David Malo in *Moolelo Hawaii* provides a creation chant which attributes the birth of Kaho'olawe to Papa and Wakea and

describes the island as being red, a traditionally sacred color. The part of the chant referring to the birth of Kaho‘olawe is as follows:

*Lili-opu-punalua o Papa ia Hoo-hoku-ka-lani.*

The womb of Papa became jealous at its partnership with Ho‘ohokulani

*Hoi hou o Papa noho ia Wakea.*

Papa returned to live with Wakea.

*Hanau, o Oahu, he moku,*

Born was O‘ahu, an island

*Hanau o Kauai, he moku,*

Born was Kaua‘i, an island,

*Hanau o Niihau, he moku*

Born was Ni‘ihau, an island

*He ula a o Kahoolawe.*

Glowing fiery red was Kaho‘olawe.<sup>5</sup>

Chants of Pele and her family of deities reinforce the significance of Kaho‘olawe as a *wahi pana* and *pu‘uhonua*. Pele is born in Kapakuela. Her husband, Wahieloa, is enticed away from her by Pele-kumu-honua. Pele travels in search of him. With her comes the sea, which pours from her head over the land of Kanaloa/Kaho‘olawe. This is said to be the first time that the sea is brought to Kaho‘olawe. Her brothers chant at this phenomenon:

A sea! a sea!

Forth bursts the sea,

Bursts forth over Kanaloa (Kaho‘olawe),

The sea rises to the hills. . . .<sup>6</sup>

According to the rest of the chant, the sea floods the land three times, then recedes. The floodings are called the sea of Kahinali‘i, the mother of Pele.

Kepelino’s *Traditions of Hawaii* provides the following account of how Pele brought the sea to Hawai‘i at Kaho‘olawe:

It is said that in ancient times the sea was not known here. There was not even fresh water, but with the coming of Pe-le the sea came also. It was thus that Hawaii got the sea. Her parents gave it

to her and she brought it in her canoes to the land of Pa-ku-e-la and thence to the land of Ka-na-loa, and at this place she poured the sea out from her head. That is how Hawaii got its sea. But when the sea burst forth her brothers chanted:

A sea! a sea!  
 The sea bursts forth,  
 The sea bursts forth on Ka-na-lo-a  
 The borders of the sea reach to the hills,  
 Gone is the restless sea,  
 Twice it breaks forth  
 Thrice it breaks forth,  
 The sea borne on the back of Pe-le,<sup>7</sup>

The brother of Pele, who navigates for the family in their voyage through the Hawaiian chain of islands, is Kamohoali'i, a principal male shark god. There are two sites on Kaho'olawe which are associated with Kamohoali'i. The first is Lua O Kamohoali'i, or the abyss of Kamohoali'i. This is one of four *pu'uhonua* for Kamohoali'i in Hawai'i.<sup>8</sup> It is located in a deep cave that opens onto the ocean on the northeast side of the island. No one has explored it in modern times.

In the story of Laukaieie, Kamohoali'i and his shark people are said to be living at Kaho'olawe. This is likely to have been at the site identified on maps as Kahua Hale O Kamohoali'i, or the house foundation of Kamohoali'i in the central portion of the island.<sup>9</sup>

Shrines to Kamohoali'i have been re-discovered on the cliffs above Kanapou Bay, which is a breeding ground for sharks.

The Abraham Fornander account of Pu'uoinaina, the legendary *mo'owahine* (dragon woman) who lived on Kaho'olawe, refers to the island as a sacred land. According to the tradition:

This daughter of theirs was placed on Kahoolawe; the name of Kahoolawe at that time, however, was Kohemalamalama; it was a very sacred land at that time, no chiefs or common people went there.<sup>10</sup>

The concept of *kapu* as applied to places is closely related to the concept of *wahi pana*. *Kapu* means sacred or consecrated. *Wahi*

*pana* and *pu‘uhonua* are *kapu*. These sacred areas are respected as places of power.

#### KAHO‘OLAWE AS A CENTER FOR TRADITIONAL NAVIGATION

One of the important cultural sites on Kaho‘olawe is located at the center point or *piko* of the island at Moa‘ula iki. Moa‘ula is a place name associated with a place in Tahiti. There are other places in Hawai‘i named Moa‘ula: the waterfall in Hālawā Valley on Moloka‘i; a falls, stream, ridge, and *heiau* (place of worship) in Waikolu on Moloka‘i; a *heiau* in Waipi‘o Valley on Hawai‘i island; a gulch in Ka‘ū on Hawai‘i island; and a *heiau* in Kipapa Gulch on O‘ahu. Moa‘ula was one of the powerful *kahuna* associated with Kaho‘olawe. An important feature of this site is a bell stone which was broken in half and carried to this point in two parts and placed back together. The split in the rock is oriented north to south. The ancient name of the rock is “*pōhaku ‘ahu ‘aikū-pele kāpili o Keaweiki*”/the put together rock that kneads the knowledge of the mo‘okahuna priest Keaweiki. The *kahuna*, Keaweiki, was associated with the school for training in astronomy and navigation at Moa‘ula iki. At Moa‘ula iki are found the foundations of a platform used for the navigational school and of a housesite for the *kahuna* who instructed the students in navigation. Moa‘ula iki affords a panoramic view of the islands of Lāna‘i, O‘ahu, Moloka‘i, Maui, and Hawai‘i, and all the interconnecting channels and the currents which run through them. It was and remains an ideal site for astronomical observation in relation to the surrounding islands and channels.

Oral traditions identify Lae O Kealaikahiki as the major departure point from where Hawaiians left when they traveled between Hawai‘i and Tahiti in the 13th century. The name translates into Point of the Pathway to Tahiti. The Hawaiians probably waited here for the ideal winds, currents, and other conditions to launch their voyages to Tahiti in the strong southerly Kealaikahiki Channel and current. Members of the *Hōkūle‘a*, the double-hulled canoe that retraced the 6,000 mile voyage in 1976, estimate that they could have saved five days sailing if they had left from here rather than from the Big Island.<sup>11</sup> Lae O Kealaikahiki is located on the Kealaikahiki Channel. Just above the high water mark,

inland from Lae O Kealaikahiki, is a traditional compass site comprised of four large boulders. The lines formed by the placement of the stones are paved with coral and mark true north, south, east, west, as has been verified by placing a compass in the center of the stones. Jutting out from the shoals, just south of Lae O Kealaikahiki, is another key traditional and contemporary navigational marker. On the charts it is identified as Black Rock. The traditional name for it is Pōhaku Kuhi Ke'e I Kahiki/the rock that points the way to Tahiti. The rock was an important marker for boats sailing along the Western side of Kaho'olawe because it indicated how far the shoals extended into the channel. It mysteriously disappeared in 1984.

The legend of Mo'ikeha, Tahitian chief who settled on Kaua'i, places Kaho'olawe as the centerpiece in navigation between Hawai'i and Tahiti when he sends his son Kiha to bring his other son La'amaikahiki back to Hawai'i. Fornander offers the following translation of the La'amaikahiki account:

As the place [Kahikinui, Maui] was too windy, Laamaikahiki left it and sailed for the west coast of the island of Kahoolawe, where he lived until he finally left for Tahiti. It is said that because Laamaikahiki lived on Kahoolawe, and set sail from that island, was the reason why the ocean to the west of Kahoolawe is called 'the road to Tahiti.'

After Laamaikahiki had lived on Kahoolawe for a time, his priests became dissatisfied with the place, so Laamaikahiki left Kahoolawe and returned to Kauai. Upon the death of Moikeha [his father] the land descended to Kila, and Laamaikahiki returned to Tahiti.<sup>12</sup>

The tradition of Tahiti nui also refers to Kealaikahiki as central to the voyaging between Hawai'i and Tahiti. Fornander writes:

After Hawaii Loa was dead and gone, in the time of Ku Nui Akea, came Tahiti-nui from Tahiti and landed at Ka-lae-i-Kahiki (the southwest point of Kahoolawe, a cape often made by people coming from or going to Tahiti). Tahiti-nui was moopuna of Ki, Hawaii Loa's brother, and he settled on East Maui and died there.<sup>13</sup>

In the account of the voyage of Wahanui, a chief of O‘ahu who went to Kahiki, they sailed from O‘ahu to Hale o lono on Molo-ka‘i, then on to Kaunolū on Lāna‘i, and finally left for Kahiki by way of Kealaikahiki. Samuel Kamakau writes:

Wahanui was a chief of O‘ahu who went to Kahiki. With him were Kilohi the kilo, who knew the stars, Mo‘opuaiki the kahuna, and the crewmen. They sailed from O‘ahu and landed at Haleolono on Molo-ka‘i. Early in the morning they sailed by Kaholo on Lana‘i and by broad daylight were passing Kaunolu Cape. A little to the southeast of there is ‘Apua Cape, where lived a man called Kane‘apua . . . After repeated attempts to sail, Kane‘apua was given a place on the canoe, and they sailed for Kahiki by way of Ke-ala-i-kahiki at Kaho‘olawe.<sup>14</sup>

Peter Buck concluded through his research that Ke-ala-i-kahiki was the primary departure point for voyages to Tahiti:

The point of departure for the south was the passage between Kahoolawe and Maui which was named Ke Ala i Kahiki (The Course to Tahiti). In a translation from Kamakau, Alexander (1891b) refers to the southern sailing directions. Hokupaa, the North Star, was left directly astern; and when Hokupaa sank below the northern horizon on reaching the Piko o Wakea (the Equator), Newe became the guiding star to the south. No sailing directions were given for the return voyage to the north.<sup>15</sup>

Two known accounts also place Kealaikahiki as a point of landing in Hawai‘i after the long journey from Kahiki. Placing Kealaikahiki as a point of arrival would coincide with the oral tradition related in the chant shared above from Harry Kunihi Mitchell, “*Oli Kūhohonu O Kaho‘olawe Mai No Kūpuna Mai.*” Samuel Kamakau wrote about the coming of the gods. A recently published translation provides an account of the arrival of Kana-loa to Hawai‘i by way of Kealaikahiki on Kaho‘olawe:

According to the mo‘olelo of Kane and Kanaloa, they were perhaps the first who kept gods (‘o laua paha na I kahu akua mua) to come to Hawai‘i nei, and because of their mana they were called

gods. Kaho'olawe was first named Kanaloa for his having first come there by way of Ke-ala-i-kahiki. From Kaho'olawe the two went to Kahikinui, Maui, where they opened up the fishpond of Kanaloa at Lua-la'i-lua, and from them came the water of Kou at Kaupo.<sup>16</sup>

Kamakau's account of the legend of Kukanaloa again identifies Kealaikahiki on Kaho'olawe as a point of arrival to Hawai'i from Kahiki:

In the wanana and pule and mele of Ka po'e kahiko, it is said that Kukanaloa came during the time of Kaka'alaneo . . . It is said that Kukanaloa ma landed in Waihe'e from Ke-ala-i-kahiki; Kiwi was the spot where they came ashore, and Kahahawai the place where they panted and stammered.<sup>17</sup>

In Hawaiian tradition, a point of land on the ocean is envisioned as the nose of on the face of a person. The entire feature naturally extends inland to the hills above to include the forehead to complete the image. More exploration and research of Lae O Kealaikahiki extending inland to the hills behind it would complete the modern understanding of the entire complex and how it was used to guide the ancient Hawaiians in their voyages back to Tahiti.

#### FISHING RESOURCES OF KAHO'OLAWE

Primary evidence for the rich and varied fishing resources of the waters surrounding Kaho'olawe are 69 fishing *ko'a*/shrines around the island. Each *ko'a* (fig. 4) is a unique marker for a distinct type of fish which frequents the ocean offshore. Of special interest to archaeologists and historians are what appear to be fishing shrines inland, around the *mauka* (toward the mountain) perimeter of the island. Fishing shrines are usually found near the coast. However, these shrines are found at about 1,200 feet above sea level overlooking the ocean. There are *ko'a* or branch coral, as well as opihi and cowry shells on the shrines.

The first settlers may have been attracted to Kaho'olawe from Maui by the fishing resources and decided to make a home there.



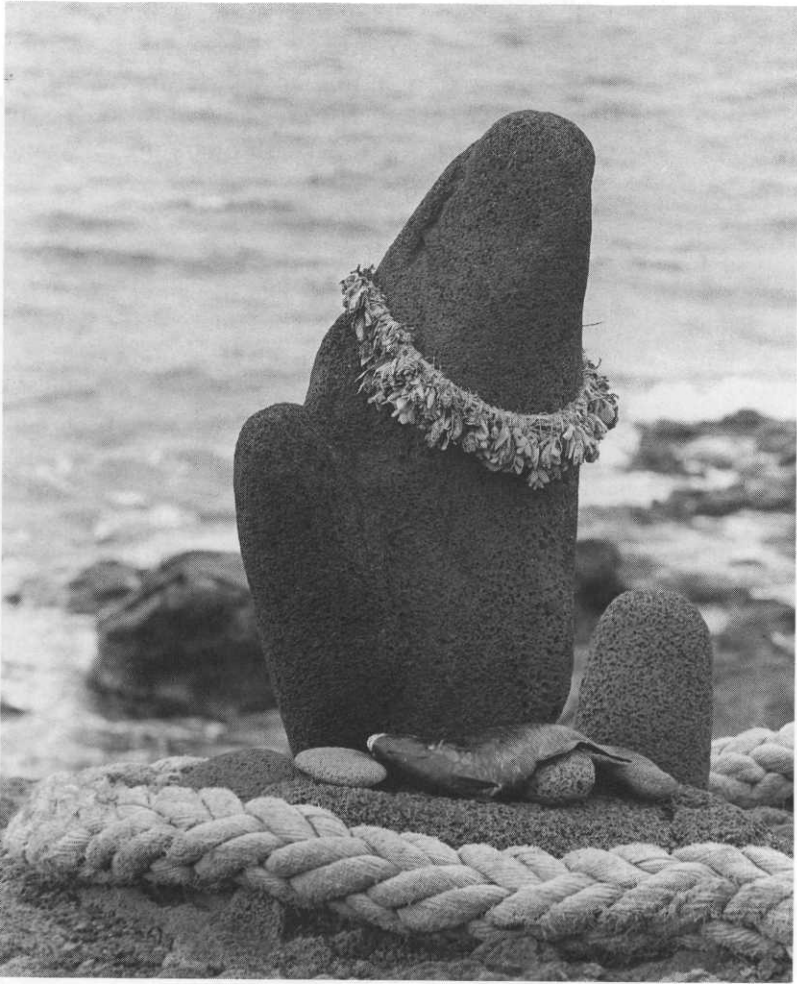


FIG. 4. A contemporary *ko'a* fishing shrine on Kaho'olawe is in addition to the 69 traditional *ko'a* found on the island. (Franco Salmoiraghi photo.)

*Ko'a* were used by fishermen to mark and develop their fishing grounds. The first caught fish were given as offerings on the *ko'a*, upon returning from a day of fishing, as gratitude for the guidance of the diety of the shrine. The *ko'a* serve as land markers for ocean fishing grounds. In some cases, the fish were fed at certain grounds to assure that they would be plentiful in those designated areas, and the *ko'a* serves as a land marker.

Kū'ula, the patron of fishing, is honored at the fishing *ko'a*. He is represented on the shrine as an upright stone. A broader stone is usually placed next to the upright to represent Hina, the wife of Kū'ula. The practices honoring Kū'ula were introduced in Hawai'i by his son A'ia'i. Martha Beckwith offers the following explanation of the Kū'ula custom:

The god lived as a man on earth on East Maui in the land called Alea-mai at a place called Leho-ula (Red-cowry) on the side of the hill Ka-iwi-o-Pele (the bones of Pele). There he built the first fish-pond; and when he died he gave to his son Aiai the four magic objects with which he controlled the fish and taught him how to address the gods in prayer and how to set up fish altars. The objects were a decoy stick called Pahiaku-kahuoi (kahuai), a cowry called Leho-ula, a hook called Manai-a-ka-lani, and a stone called Kuula which, if dropped into a pool, had the power to draw the fish thither. His son Aiai, following his instructions, traveled about the islands establishing fishing stations (koa) at fishing grounds (koa aina) where fish were accustomed to feed and setting up altars (kuula) upon which to lay, as offerings to the fishing gods, two fish from the first catch.<sup>18</sup>

One of the early shrines built by A'ia'i in Hawai'i was on Kaho'olawe at Hakioawa. It is described as a square-walled Kū'ula like a *heiau*, set on a bluff looking out to the sea.<sup>19</sup> The following account of how A'ia'i constructed the shrine on Kaho'olawe was published by Thomas Thrum in his *Hawaiian Folk Tales*:

Thus was performed the good work of Aiai in establishing ku-ula stations and fish stones all around the island of Maui. It is also said that he visited Kaho'olawe and established a ku-ula at Hakioawa, though it differs from the others, being built on a high bluff overlooking the sea, somewhat like a temple, by placing stones in the form of a square, in the middle of which was left a space wherein the fishermen of that island laid their first fish caught, as a thank offering. Awa and kapa were also placed there as offerings to the fish deities.<sup>20</sup>

*Kū'oko'a* newspaper published "He Mau Kuhikuhi No Ka Lawai'a 'Ana" or "Fishing Lore" by A. D. Kahaulelio.<sup>21</sup>

Kahaulelio was trained as a fisherman by his parents and grandparents. His grandparents were born in Keone'ōio, Honua'ula, Maui, and then moved to Lahaina. Kahaulelio fished inshore and in the deep sea for a living. He and his grandparents were familiar with the ocean around Kaho'olawe. His articles provide extensive information about the fishing resources around Kaho'olawe. He described the boundary of over 100 fishing grounds that he frequented between Lāna'i, Kaho'olawe, Ukumehame, and Lahaina:

From the cape of Hawea at Kaanapali running directly to the cape of Hema on Lanai, close to Maunalei; then to the cape of Kamaiki on Lanai; thence directly to the cape of Paki (the same as the cape of Kelaikahiki) on Kahoolawe; thence to the cape of Kukui on Kahoolawe then straight to the cape of Papawai are the places that are well known and have been fished in by your writer, in sunshine, in rain and in the winds that rage and blow into a terrific gale.<sup>22</sup>

Kahaulelio described in detail the methods used for catching some of the various species of fish caught off of Kaho'olawe: mālolo, weke, ulua, and uhu. He also gathered he'e and 'opihi from the reefs and coast of the island. According to Kahaulelio, mālolo were numerous at Kaho'olawe and sold for \$20 a canoe load at Lahaina. He fished for weke with a net and with fish hooks. On dark nights, he did kukui fishing for ulua with his father along the hilly and rocky coast of the island. They used paka eel for bait and a stout wooden pole and three-ply olonā cord. To catch uhu near the beaches of Kaho'olawe, Kahaulelio used a kind of bamboo pole that was also used to catch aku, with haukeuke, wana, and ina sea urchins as bait. According to Kahaulelio, the fishing ground on the seaward side of Kealaikahiki, called Laepaki, was one of the most productive of the three deep sea fishing grounds of Kaho'olawe.<sup>23</sup>

Kahaulelio wrote at length about the big sized 'opihi makaiauli of Kanapou Bay:

It is at that large stream facing Honuaula. The opihi are as large as the bowls found in shops, not large ones, but the smaller ones.

Kaho'olawe's marine resources. A comprehensive study of the place names of Kaho'olawe is being conducted by the Kaho'olawe Island Conveyance Commission. It will yield a more thorough inventory of significant cultural areas and develop a more complete understanding of the natural ecosystem of Kaho'olawe—from the land, to the ocean, to the sky, the winds, and the rain—as utilized by the Hawaiians who settled the island.

#### PRESENT AND FUTURE PRACTICES ON KAHO'OLAWE

On October 22, 1990, President George Bush directed then Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III to stop all ordnance delivery training on Kaho'olawe. In November 1990, the U.S. Congress passed its annual military appropriations bill which included provisions suspending ordnance training exercises on Kaho'olawe for two years and 120 days. It also established a Kaho'olawe Island Conveyance Commission to recommend conditions for returning the island to the State of Hawai'i.

The commission contracted scholarly and field studies to document the significant cultural and natural resources of the island. The studies validate information gathered by the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana through *kūpuna* informants, chants, visions, and direct experience. The commission also developed plans to clear the island of ordnance, stabilize cultural sites, and stop soil erosion. The authors, the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana, and many others urge establishment of a marine sanctuary in the ocean surrounding the island. Such a sanctuary would offer continued protection of the island's abundant fishing grounds while perpetuating customary use by Hawaiians of its valuable marine resources for subsistence.

The Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana, as steward of the island, manages the land and ocean resources of Kaho'olawe under traditional *kapu* (conservation) practices. Only mature, developed marine life over a certain size are fished and gathered and only for consumption on the island. Nothing is taken off of the island to sell commercially.

In addition to protecting the island's resources, a marine sanctuary would afford contemporary Hawaiians the opportunity to

re-establish the extensive complex of fishing grounds in the ocean which are marked by numerous fishing *ko'a* on the island. Eventually, the entire marine ecosystem of Kaho'olawe, together with its associated cultural sites, will be restored and flourish. *Imua nā pua . . . lanakila Kaho'olawe. Go forward beloved children . . . win victory for Kaho'olawe.*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This article is based on information collected by the co-authors in numerous oral interviews and talks with *kūpuna*, principally Harry Kunihi Mitchell. Information was also obtained from Carol Silva, "Historical Documentation," Part I of the *Kaho'olawe Cultural Study* (Honolulu: Prepared for the Department of Defense by Environmental Impact Study Corp., 1983), hereinafter cited as Silva, "Historical Documentation." The information for this article was originally compiled and submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to assist in its deliberations on whether to establish a marine life sanctuary around Kaho'olawe.
- <sup>2</sup> Edward Kanahēle, "Wahi Pana" in *Literature & Hawaii's Children: Spirit, Land and Storytelling—The Heritage of Childhood* (Honolulu: Hawaii Committee for the Humanities, undated) 2 and 10.
- <sup>3</sup> Abraham Fornander, *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folklore*, vol. 6 (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1916-19) 360, hereinafter cited as Fornander, *Collection*.
- <sup>4</sup> Fornander, *Collection* 4:12.
- <sup>5</sup> David Malo, *Moolelo Hawaii*, trans. by Nathaniel B. Emerson into *Hawaiian Antiquities*, BPBM Special Publication 2 (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1951) 243. McGregor reinterpreted the Hawaiian translation.
- <sup>6</sup> Martha Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1970) 170, hereinafter cited as Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*.
- <sup>7</sup> Martha Beckwith, ed., *Kepelino's Traditions of Hawaii*, BPBM Bulletin 95 (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971) 187-8.
- <sup>8</sup> The other three sites are located in Halema'uma'u Crater at Palikapuo Kamo-hoali'i on Hawai'i island; in a shark cave in the reef near the entrance to Pearl Harbor, O'ahu; and on Ni'ihau.
- <sup>9</sup> Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* 129.
- <sup>10</sup> Fornander, *Collection* 5:514-19.
- <sup>11</sup> Nainoa Thompson and Gordon Pi'ianaia related this to McGregor in Oct. 1991 when *Hōkūle'a* and its training crew visited Kaho'olawe.
- <sup>12</sup> Fornander, *Collection* 4:128.
- <sup>13</sup> Fornander, *Collection* 6:281.
- <sup>14</sup> Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, *Na Mo'olelo a ka Po'e Kahiko/Tales and Traditions of the People of Old*, trans. from the newspapers *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* and *Ke*

- Au Okoa* by Mary Kawena Pukui, ed. by Dorothy B. Barrere (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1991) 104-5, hereinafter cited as Kamakau, *Na Mo'olelo*.
- <sup>15</sup> Peter H. Buck, *Arts and Crafts of Hawai'i*, Section 6—Canoes, BPBM Special Publication 45 (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1964) 283.
- <sup>16</sup> Kamakau, *Na Mo'olelo* 112.
- <sup>17</sup> Kamakau, *Na Mo'olelo* 114.
- <sup>18</sup> Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* 20.
- <sup>19</sup> Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* 22.
- <sup>20</sup> Thomas G. Thrum, "Aiai, Son of Ku'ula," in *Hawaiian Folk Tales* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1907) 238.
- <sup>21</sup> *Kuokoa*, 28 Feb.-4 July, 1902, trans. Mary Kawena Pukui, Hawai'i Ethnographic Notes (HEN), BPBM archives and Hawaiian Collection, Hamilton Library, U of Hawai'i, hereinafter cited as HEN.
- <sup>22</sup> HEN, 7 March 1902.
- <sup>23</sup> HEN, 1902.
- <sup>24</sup> HEN, 1902.
- <sup>25</sup> Harry Kunihi Mitchell, videotaped interview, Nov. 1989.
- <sup>26</sup> Nathan Napoka, "Kaho'olawe Place Names," in Silva, "Historical Documentation."
- <sup>27</sup> Napoka, "Kaho'olawe Place Names," in Silva, "Historical Documentation."
- <sup>28</sup> Napoka, "Kaho'olawe Place Names," in Silva, "Historical Documentation."