

Nā Hunahuna no Laniwahine

Laniwahine: Guardian of ‘Uko‘a

According to the mo‘olelo of *Keaomelemele*, a procession of mo‘o was brought by Kamo‘oinanea to this archipelago from the land of Nu‘umealani, gathering them first at Pua‘ena, Waialua. Among them was Laniwahine, a *mo‘o aii* (female water guardian) who resides in the sacred ‘Uko‘a and Loko Ea fishponds of Waialua, O‘ahu.

Mo‘o are shape-shifting reptilian water guardians described in the epics as being kupaianaha (awesome). The yellowing of foliage around their ponds foretells their presence. In some mo‘olelo, they are described as being adorned in yellow kapa (mulberry cloth) with long locks of lustrous hair. In the story of Kihaapiilani, the mo‘o, Kihawahine, appears before the young chief in a form called ka‘apahu, split in two, both mo‘o and human. Famously, mo‘o are said to wear a lei ‘āpiki made from the yellow ‘ilima blossom, which can be found in the kula regions of the islands. As yellow is their color, the houses that held their effigies would be constructed with yellow kapa installed upon the interior walls.

In the mo‘olelo of *Keaomelemele*, all mo‘o are said to have been created from the body of Kamo‘oinanea, who is the elder of the gods Kāne and Kanaloa. The land of Nu‘umealani, far off in Kahiki, is her domain. From this land, she is able to communicate through her preternatural voice, which can be heard in far-off lands. Kamo‘oinanea also controls the clouds and their formations. The divination of such cloud formations was a profession in old Hawai‘i, performed by experts called *mea kilokilo* (observers). In the mo‘olelo of *Keaomelemele*, Kamo‘oinanea teaches Kū and Hina the craft of reading clouds and their omens so that they may communicate to their daughter *Keaomelemele* in the land *Kealohilani*. Mo‘o, therefore, are strongly connected to clouds, as they are water deities. For example, the powerful mo‘o *Kuwahailo* had the ability to shape-shift into a large and ominous cloud.

Similarly, Laniwahine appears in many forms, sometimes fearsome, sometimes human, but is known for her benevolent presence. She sustains ‘Uko‘a and its waters, and the fish within— fish that appeared strange and extraordinary were understood to belong to her and not meant for humans.

This installation unfolds Laniwahine’s story through episodic, discrete scenes, recentering the bones of a 1930s pavilion situated at Pua‘ena on the sands of Māeaea, a *wahi pana*. The mo‘olelo of Laniwahine reminds us that this place is defined not by tourism, surfing, or plantation history, but by an abundance sustained through care and respect.

“He Moolelo Kaa no Keaomelemele” *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, Apelila 11, 1885

<p>I ka pau ana o keia mau olelo a Kamooineana, o kona hele mai la no ia. Ua oleloia ma keia moolelo, mamua ae o kona hele ana mai, ua uhi paa ia aku na aina e na ao ua me ka pouli nui, a aole he ike ia o na aina ona ma ia po a ao, ua hiki mua mai oia ma Puaena Waialua, aia malaila kona wahi i hoonoho pono ai i kana huakai nui, oia hoi ka huakai o na moo. Aia ma ke kula o Lauhulu ma Waialua, ua pani paa loa ia ia wahi e na moo. O ka hiki mua ana keia o na moo kupua ma keia paeaina, mamuli no ia o ka makemake o Kamooineana, a penei e maopopo ai ka nui o na moo. Ua hoonoho palua ia ka hele o ka huakai, o ka makamua o na moo, aia i ka pii'na o Kapukaki, a o ka hope no hoi aia no i Lauhulu; a mawaena mai o keia wahi mai Waialua a Ewa, ua pani paa loa ia e na moo.¹</p> <p>(<i>Aole i pau</i>)</p>	<p>As soon as these words of Kamooineana were spoken, she left. It is said in this mo'olelo that before she left, the lands were completely covered by dark rain clouds, such that they could not be seen during the day or at night. She arrived first at Pua'ena, Waialua, it was there that she assembled her great procession known as the procession of the mo'o. There at the plain of Lauhulu at Waialua, it was completely covered by mo'o. This was the very first arrival of the demigod mo'o to this archipelago, because of the desire of Kamooineana, and this is how to understand the amount of mo'o. They were arranged in pairs in the procession. The first of the mo'o were at the incline of Kapūkakī, and the last were at Lauhulu, and between these two points from Waialua to Ewa was completely covered by the mo'o.</p> <p>(TBC)</p>
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“He Moolelo Kaa no Keaomelemele” *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, Apelila 25, 1885

<p>O Maunauna mauka o Lihue a me Puhawai ma Waiana-e-uka, he mau moo ino keia, O Laniwahine ka moo ahi [pn, alii] o Waialua, aia kona wahi noho maloko o ka lokowai o Ukoa, a no keia moo kela mele o Kamehameha V, “Keke ka niho o Laniwahine, opi ke-a lalo ke-a luna.” Aia maloko o keia lokowai o Ukoa, e ikeia ai ke ano e o ka Ana-e ke nana aku i ka olo mai iloko o ka wai, he ulaula kekahi aoao a ane e loa ae ma kekahi aoao, a ua ike pono ka mea e kakau nei i keia moolelo, a aole no paha e hoole mai ana na</p>	<p>Maunauna, inland of Lihue, and Puhawai at Wai'anae-uka; these mo'o are evil. Laniwahine is the <i>mo'o alii</i> of Waialua; her place of residence was in the freshwater pond, Uko'a, and it was for this mo'o that the song of Kamehameha V was for, “The teeth of Laniwahine are exposed, the upper and lower jaws bend [open].” Within this freshwater pond, Uko'a, strange mullet can be seen swimming, red on one side and very strange on the other side, and the author of this mo'olelo has witnessed it himself, and the locals of the</p>
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¹ Translations and research by Paige Okamura. “He Moolelo Kaa no Keaomelemele,” *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, Apelila 11, 1885, <https://www.papakilodatabase.com/pdnupepa/?a=d&d=KNK18850411-01.2.4&srpos=2&dliv=none&e=-----en-20--1--t xt-txIN%7CtXNU%7CtXTR%7CtXTI-Lauhulu+moo+Waialua----->.

<p>kamaaina o ke “Ehukai.” A o Alamuki, Kamooloa, a me Kemoo, he poe moo aku [pn, akua] keia malalo o Laniwahine [pn, Laniwahine], aia ko lakou ola i ke ahe a ka makani. O Punahoolapa ma Kahuku a me Laniloa ma Laie-wai ma Koolau-loa. O kahi noho o ka moo mua, aia kona kiowai nui hohonu e waiho nei i ke kula maikai ae o ke alanui ma hope mai o ka lae o Kahipa. O laniloa hoi he lae ia e pili la i ke kai o Laie-wai, oia kona wahi noho maloko o ke kiowai o Kapuna ma kahi o ka hale o JH Kaeohano, a oia ke kumu o ka wai o na loi kalo malaila, na ko laila poe e ike iho i ka mea oiaio, aole keia he mau moo alii.²</p>	<p>“Seaspray” would probably not refute it. And Alamuki, Kamo‘oloa, and Kemo‘o were the other mo‘o who served under Laniwahine, <i>they lived as the breeze blows</i>. Punaho‘olapa, Kahuku, and Laniloa were at Lā‘ie-wai in Ko‘olauloa. The residence of the first mo‘o, their large, deep spring, was laid out at the plain below the road after Kahipa point. Laniloa is the point along the sea of Lā‘ie-wai, that is where their residence is, in the spring called Kapuna, near the house of J.H. Kaleohano, and that is the source of the water for the lo‘i kalo there. Only that place’s people will know the truth, these are not chiefly mo‘o.</p>
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“Ka Moololo Hawaii. Na S.M. Kamakau,” *Ke Ao Okoa*, Apelila 28, 1870.

<p>[...] a he nui no ka poe i ike maka i ke kino hooweliweli o ka moo, a ua ike ia mai Hawaii a Kauai, a o ko lakou wahi e waiho ai kela mau kino kupanaha, aole i ike ia ko lakou punana, a me kahi e waiho ai ia mau kino eepa. O kela kino weliweli wale no anei ko ka moo? Eia he haili wale no maluna oia ano kino, he mau kina anela no ko lakou, a ua ike pinepine ia a ua halawai kino kanaka pinepine o Laniwahine o Ukoa me kanaka, a ua ike pinepine ia no i ke au palapala iho nei, a o ka hoike pinepine ana i keia au palapala a naauao hoi, he mau hope weliweli no ka hope e loa mai ana mahope olaila, oia ke ano mau o na mea kupana ke hoike ia mai na mea huna.</p>	<p>... and there were many people who witnessed the terrifying form of the mo‘o, and it has been seen from Hawai‘i to Kaua‘i, and the place that they leave their wondrous forms - their nest is not known, nor where they leave their strange forms. Do mo‘o only take on that terrible kind of form? This is just a memory of the kind of form, they have angelic forms as well that have been frequently seen; Laniwahine of Uko‘a frequently met with people in her human form, and is still seen often in this time of documentation. As often proven in this time of documentation and wisdom, there are terrible consequences that occur after that, which is common when mystical secrets are revealed.</p>
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“Ka Moololo Hawaii. Na S.M. Kamakau,” *Ke Ao Okoa*, Apelila 28, 1870 continued.

<p>O Laniwahine ke kiai no Ukoa ma Waialua, a o Ukoa kona halehalau e noho ai, aole e</p>	<p>Laniwahine is the guardian of Uko‘a at Waialua, and Uko‘a is her residential <i>gathering place</i>, the</p>
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² “He Moololo Kaa no Keaomelemele,” *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, Apelila 25, 1885,

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hoohehewa na keiki kamaaina i kana mau hana, he wahine kamaaina oia no Ukoa, aole nae he nui kana mau hana hoomaikai, ua pili no kana mau hana hoopomaikai ma kela loko ia o Ukoa, a o kana mau pulapula i koe, ua uuku loa, a ua pau paha, aka, he loko ia kupanaha no nae a Ukoa, aia ma ia loko na ia kupanaha, he ku-mu kekahi aoao, a he anae kekahi aoao, he weke pueo kekahi aoao he anae kekahi aoao, a he moe lawakea, a he ano nui o ka ia a i ka unaunahi ana he onionio moelua ka onionio o ka ili maloko, a o ke ano kupanaha o na ia pela, a ua maopopo i na pulapula a pau, aia na Lanawahine kela mau ia, a he mau ia kupono ole io no i ka ai ana, aka, o ka anae o Ukoa, ua piha i ka momona, aole nae e piha mau i ka momona, aole no he ia ke hiki i kekahi manawa a e lilo no he mea wiwi a poo laau ka ia, a i kekahi manawa e nalowale loa no ka ia, aole e ike ia, a he mea maa loa ma na loko a pau. Aia no a hana ia, aia no a hoomanao ia ka poe kiai kamaaina o na loko, alaila, e piha no na loko i ka ia, a e piho no i ka momona ka ia. Pela no o Hauwahine i kona mau loko o Kawainui me Kaelepulu, a pela hoi o Laukupu i kona loko o Maunalua, he poe kiai keia me ka malama i ka pomaikai o ka ia, a me ke ola pu kekahi o ke kino, a me ka pilikia ulia wale maluna o ke kino a me ke ola o ka ohana a me na hoaloha.³

local children never mistake her work, she is a local of Uko'a, although she did not do/receive a lot of praise, her works benefited that fishpond, Uko'a, and her progeny that are left are very few, perhaps none at all, but Uko'a is a magical fish pond and within it are strangely fantastic fish: a kūmū on one side, a mullet on the other side; a weke pueo [most likely the same as a weke pahulu, or a *nightmare weke*] on one side, a mullet on the other side; a white trunkfish, and a lot of fish that when scaled, the flesh is mottled and striped, and those strange fish were known to all to belong to Lanawahine, and they were not fish fit to be eaten, but the mullet of Uko'a were fat, but not always so, sometimes there were no fish; the fish would become skinny with wood-like heads [*I think this is due to their emaciated appearance*], and sometimes the fish would completely disappear, not to be seen, and this was a common thing amongst all the ponds - until they are taken care of, until the guardians of the ponds are remembered, they will be full of fish and the fish will be fat. Thus it was so for Hauwahine and her ponds, Kawainui and Kaelepulu, and so it was also for Laukupu and their pond, Maunalua - these are guardians, they bless us with fish and good health, and

³ "Ka Moolelo Hawaii. Na S.M. Kamakau," *Ke Ao Okoa*, Apelila 28, 1870, <https://www.papakilodatabase.com/pdnupepa/?a=d&d=KAO18700428-01.2.3&srpos=41&dliw=none&e=-----en-20--41--txt-txIN%7CtxNU%7CtxTR%7CtxTI-Laniwahine----->.