

Hālau Mōhala ‘Ilima
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Britny Kauahiokula Ching
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Kahiko: **Hula Ho‘okūkū**

Kekamame‘eualani

Haku Mele: Kīhei de Silva, Kealahulukūpuna, Oct. 2019.

All of what is related below is much better told by J. M. Poepoe in the June 7, 8, and 9, 1906, issues of the nupepa *Ka Nai Aupuni*.¹ This is my summary of an episode in the extended conflict between Haumea-as-Papa and the O‘ahu chief Kāne Kumuhonua; it belongs to the third mokuna of Poepoe’s “Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko,” more specifically, to the sections entitled “Ka Moolelo o ko Wakea Noho ana ma Kalihi — Ka Loaa ana o ke Akua Ulu o Kameha‘ikana.” Penei au e ho‘opokole ai:

- Forced by Kumuhonua to retreat from Kalihi to the Palikū cliffs of Kualoa, Haumea instructs her husband and their people to take shelter in the cave of Pohukaina. They are to “noho malie” while she stands alone against the enemy. She then offers Wākea “kekahi lihilihi o ko‘u ano papalua” (a glimpse of my powers of foresight) by explaining that Kumuhonua’s army will soon be stricken by her pōhuehue skirt and defeated “i ke ahu-lau o ka make” – in a pestilence of heaped-up bodies.
- As the day of battle draws near, a legion of women, all with kukui nuts in their hands, appears on the pathways and level spaces of Ko‘olaupoko and Ko‘olauloa. These places, from Ka‘ahu‘ula Pūnāwai to Ka Lae o Ka‘ō‘io,² are “paa pono, mai uka a kai, i na wahine me na hua kukui ma ko lakou lima.” They are a multitude, and all of them are avatars of Haumea who reveals herself, again, as a “wahine kino lehu, kino mano, kino pahaohao hoi” (a woman of 400,000 bodies, of 4,000 bodies, of transfigured bodies, indeed!).
- Seeing only women, the warriors of Kumuhonua repeat among themselves the following insult whose surprise and disdain defy adequate translation: “Ka! He wahine ka! ko kakou mau hoa paio?” (approximately: “Tsā! Is it only women that we are going to fight?”). They decide, somewhat to their credit, that they should first find and consult with Wākea and his men before engaging in battle with these “poe maka palupalu” (these tender-eyed, pretty-faced people).
- But the ‘elele of Kumuhonua are deterred in their search for Wākea by a woman of great beauty. They address her as “Kekamameeualani”³ and ask for Wākea mā. She rebukes them with a warning: “E hoi oukou, a mai hooluhi ia oukou i ka huli ana i ka poe a oukou i imi mai nei. Aia ka loa‘a ma ka ikaika.” Go back, don’t bother with looking for these people; they can only be gotten by force.
- When these ‘elele deliver Haumea’s “pane pakike” (her insolent retort) to Kumuhonua, he decides to engage in battle and calls for his po‘e koa to advance on the “wahine ku alanui a

kuamoo o na Koolau” (the women rising up on the roads, trails, and pathways of the Ko‘olau districts). Poepoe describes the outcome as follows:

O keia wa a ua poe nei i nee aku ai, o ka manawa no ia i lele mai ai na hua kukui ma na lima mai o na kino wahine lehulehu o Haumea, oia no oe o na poka-ua hekili e pa ana ma na lae o ua poe koa nei o Kane Kumuhonua. Pa no ka hua kukui i ka lae o ke kanaka, lawe ka hanu i Olepau. He hua kukui ka mea nana i luku i na poe kanaka la; a oia ke kumu i puka ai keia hopunaolelo a kahiko:

“A-hua-lala-kukui ka make.”

When Kumuhonua’s army advanced, this was when the hua kukui flew from the hands of the many bodies of Haumea and were like hail striking the foreheads of the warriors of Kāne Kumuhonua. The hua kukui struck the foreheads of these men, and their breaths were carried to ‘Olepau (Completely Negated). The hua kukui were the means by which these kānaka were vanquished, and this is the source of this proverb of old:

The defeated were like kukui branches strewn in heaps.

I wrote “Kekamame‘eualani” (Ke-kama-me‘e-ua-lani) in August and September of 2019 during a pair of five- and six- night stays on the Mauna Kea Access Road. Wrote it in the kūpuna tent, in a pink camp chair, over Yeti mugs of John Evans’ coffee, with Poepoe xeroxes on my lap and yellow notepad papers flapping underfoot. Wrote it with the laughter of Aunty Max them – Momi, Billy, Cindy, Gwen, Calvin, Jos, Pi‘i, Dutchie, Sparky, John, Ricky, Noe Noe, Pua – in my ears, not realizing until later how many of us are pua Ko‘olau, children of O‘ahu’s windward side, flowers on the alahahele kuamo‘o from Waimānalo to Kahuku. Wrote it with the ‘ūlili beat of Tūtū Kawena’s “Poli‘ahu” in my head because Māpu was teaching and reteaching it, trying to polish it, dancing it at every ‘aha, three times a day. Wrote it in the presence of the women of the kōkua-kūpuna crew, wahine ‘ōpū ali‘i like Jacy, Deena, Kalena, Mika, and Mahinapoepoe, who step down to sacrifice and serve, sacrifice and serve, and in humbly stepping down to do this are raised up in our amazed eyes. Wrote it in awe of and in tribute to the people around me. My lāhui.

There was, of course, an initial “mist” of inspiration. That came a month earlier, at the end of July, on the week of Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, when we were driving from Waimea to the Mauna with Noenoe Silva in the back seat. None of us had been there for the July 17 kūpuna arrests, but we had all watched them repeatedly on our social media feeds. I overheard Noenoe, maybe in conversation with one of my daughters, drawing a comparison between Haumea-pāha‘oha‘o and the line of chanting, arm-linked women who defied the State and its māka‘i on the afternoon of those arrests. *The kia‘i wahine remind me of Poepoe, she said, and his mo‘olelo of the line of Haumea women who threw their hua kukui at the army of Kumuhonua.*

I had been studying Poepoe’s mo‘olelo because of its echos in Pukui’s “Poli‘ahu,” our Merrie Monach 2018 hula kahiko. So the reference, thankfully, was not lost on me. *Yes, I thought, those Haumea threw kukui, and ours threw light.* So a new mele had to be written.

To sum it up: “Kekamame‘eualani” was sparked by Noenoe’s backseat conversation, founded on Poepoe’s Haumea, and driven by Pukui’s “Poli‘ahu.” It was written on the Alahulukūpuna in the months that followed my Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea visit because no where else would do.⁴ Its phrasing is almost all Poepoe’s with a nod to Pukui. Its five-line, two paukū structure is also hers, as are its ‘ūlili feet and old-school hands. Its meaning, in my eyes at least, rests on our alahēle kuamo‘o – on the backbone-pathway of the stories we embody, stories told one after another, generation after generation, of our guardians and their omnipresence. Its meaning resides in a tent on a backbone-pathway that carries our kūpuna to us, and us to them, bringing sacredness to Pu‘uhuluhulu.

Kekamame‘eualani

‘O Kekamame‘eualani i ke kuamo‘o⁵
Wahine a ka manomano heke i ke kapu⁶
Alahēle kuamo‘o⁷ i ke alo o Wākea
“He wahine kā ko kākou hoa paio?”⁸
‘O ke ahu a lālā kukui ka hopena.⁹

‘O Papa uno‘a ‘āwa‘awa‘a kua¹⁰
O nā kino mano, lehu, pāha‘oha‘o¹¹
O ke kāhonua¹² pa‘a pono i nā wāhine
O nā hua kukui o ke ehu ahiahi¹³
Ho‘ānoano wale ana i Pu‘uhuluhulu.¹⁴

He inoa no Haumeapāha‘oha‘o.

Kekamame‘eualani of stories told one after another
Woman of the highest of heaped-up kapu
Of the mo‘o’s backbone, a pathway in the presence of Wākea
“Tsa! Is it only women who oppose us?”
The outcome: kukui branches strewn in heaps.

Papa of the scorched and furrowed back
Of the 40,000, the 400,000 transfigured bodies
Of the landing place filled with women
Of the hua kukui in the dust of evening
Causing awe and reverence at Pu‘uhuluhulu.

A name-chant for Haumeapāha‘oha‘o

NOTES:

¹ Haumea's mo'olelo, as told by Poepeo, is also summarized with brilliant analysis by Noenoe K. Silva in *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen*, 2017, pps. 197-205.

² "A spring in Ka'a'awa...and the seaward boundary line between Ko'olaupoko and Ko'olaupoko" (Silva, p. 202).

³ My rough, more-or-less literal translation of the name is: The-heavenly-rain-hero-child. Poepeo explains that this is a term used in reference to a beautiful, youthful woman ("he wahine ui ke ano o keia hualelo" and is similar to the term "lolani" which Pukui defines as "acclaimed, as a chief" ("Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko," *Ka Nai Aupuni*, June 7, 1906). In the mouths of Kāne Kumuhonua's men, the name is somewhat condescending: "you brave little royal-rain beauty," so in the old tradition of naming, we commemorate the insult, we memorialize it as Kekamame'eualani.

⁴ I should admit, however, that the mele was put into final form – over quite a few beers – at a place in Disney's California Adventure called Sonoma Terrace.

⁵ "Kuamo'o," in this context, is both a backbone of stories told in sequence and a backbone of pathways that follow in sequence. The story of Kekamame'eualani is part of the Haumea-Papa-Kāmehai'ikana sequence, and the pathway on which Haumea-Papa-Kekamame'eualani stands with her arsenal of hua kukui is one that follows, in sequence, from Ko'olaupoko to Ko'olaupoko.

⁶ This line is an echo of "Ka manomano heke i ke kapu" ("The highest and strictest of the kapu") which is the second line of "Eia 'o Kalani Manomano," a hula pahu 'ūlili that belongs to the Pukui legacy and celebrates an ancestral turtle-guardian of her family. The complete text (as recorded by Mader from Keahi Luahine) and Pukui's translation can be found in Adrienne Kaeppler's *Hula Pahu, Volume 1*, Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, 1993, pps. 167-8.

⁷ "Alahele kuamo'o," literally the "backbone pathway." Poepeo further compounds the imagery of vertebra, sequence, pathway, and story in describing the alahele Ko'olau on which Kumuhonua's men were strewn as: "ke alahele, ke alanui a kuamoo" ("Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko," *Ka Nai Aupuni*, June 9, 1906).

⁸ This is my slightly shortened version of the response of Kumuhonua's men to the prospect of doing battle with pretty-eyed women: "Ka! He wahine ka! ko kakou mau hoa paio?" ("Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko," *Ka Nai Aupuni*, June 7, 1906).

⁹ This is my slightly modified version of "A-hua-lala-kukui ka make" and "Ahu-a-lala kukui o ka make," the proverbial expression given by Poepeo for the destruction that was visited on Kumuhonua's warriors by Haumea's kukui-wielding multitude ("Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko," *Ka Nai Aupuni*, July 8 and 9, 1906). I find it interesting that Poepeo, in his July 8 installment, describes the saying not as an 'ōlelo no'eau but as a "hopunaolelo a kahiko." Pukui gives it as "Ahu a lālā kukui. *The kukui branches lay about in heaps*" – *Ōlelo No'eau*, #12.

¹⁰ This description of Haumea-Papa is derived from a line in "He Inoa no Kualii" that Poepeo cites in his June 9 installment of "Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko." The scorched, furrowed back of Papa might be a reference to the attempt, by Kumuhonua's men, to chop down and burn the 'ulu tree into which Papa and Wākea vanished. It might also be a reference to the sacred, burning-back kapu of the Pele family of which Haumea is said to be the mother.

¹¹ “Kino mano, lehu, pāha‘oha‘o” is a much-used epithet for the multiple bodies of Haumea-the-transfigured. These appear regularly in the mele ko‘ihonua “‘O Uliuli Wahine” discussed in the MAH oli section of this Merrie Monarch fact sheet as well as in Poepoe’s June 7 and 8 installments of “Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko”: “kino lehulehu” and “kino lehu, kino mano, kino pahaohao hoi.”

¹² “Kāhonua,” level landing-place, is a word Poepoe uses to supplement his descriptions of the wahine-packed “alahahele, alanui a kuamoo.” He writes in his June 7 installment: “Ua ike mai la na kanaka i ka paa pono o ke ka-honua...paa pono i na wahine me na hua kukui.”

¹³ Because of Kumu Hina’s “‘O ke ehu kakahiaka o nā ‘ōiwi o Hawai‘i nei,” (from the mele “Kū Ha‘aheo e Ku‘u Hawai‘i”), we have come to think of the phrase “ehu kakahiaka” as a thing of hope and promise, as a “new dawn.” Some of our older writers, however, use the phrase in less positive terms. Poepoe, for example, employs it in contrast to “ehu ahiahi.” The first refers to the early and therefore inconclusive victory of Kumuhonua on the Kona side of O‘ahu; the second, the “dust of evening,” refers to the later and therefore more conclusive victory of Haumea in the waters off the island’s Ko‘olau side. In Haumea’s words: “Nona ka ehu kakahiaka, a no‘u ka ehu ahiahi” – For Kumuhonua is the premature victory, for me is the final victory (Poepoe, June 7, 1906). It is for this reason that I use “ehu ahiahi” to characterize Haumea’s kukui-throwing activities on the alahahele of the Ko‘olau and on the Alahulukūpuna of the Mauna. Pukui records a similar sentiment in ‘*Ōlelo No‘eau* #2337: “No ke ‘ehu kakahiaka...Said of one who is not well versed.” I should acknowledge, however, that the contrast is not always used in favor of the ahiahi; for example: “‘Oia la he koa no ke ano ahiahi; ‘oia no ke ano kakahiaka... That person has had his day...but this person is strong, brave, and ready to show his prowess” (‘*Ōlelo No‘eau* #2383).

¹⁴ This is almost the complete last line of the first verse of Pukui’s “Poli‘ahu”: “Ho‘ānoano wale ana i Paliuli ē.” Mine ends with a place-name substitution – Pu‘uhuluhulu for Paliuli – that is meant to: 1- acknowledge the influence of Pukui’s mele on my own, 2- connect Haumea to the wāhine of the Maunakea Access Road and Pu‘uhonua o Pu‘uhuluhulu, 3- identify Pu‘uhuluhulu with the Paliuli of old (both are places of profound intersection between the wao akua and the wao kanaka), and 4- recognize the old-time sacredness brought to the modern-day asphalt kāhonua by its modern-day light-wielding guardians.