

E ō e Kaumakaokāne

An Essay by Kīhei de Silva

Haku Mele: Kaiehu.

Source: Paukū ‘elua of “He Inoa no Kaumakaokane,” *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 28 Mei, 1864, p. 1.

Our Text: Transcribed from *Kuokoa* above, translated by Kīhei de Silva.

“E ō e Kaumakaokāne,” is the second part of “He Inoa no Kaumakaokāne, two-part name chant for High Chiefess Kaumakaokane Papaleaiaina Keauiaole Cummins (1812 to 1849) of Waimānalo. The chant was published in its entirety in 1864, fifteen years after her death but only two years after the birth of her granddaughter Matilda Kaumakaokane Papaleaiaina Cummins to John Adams Kuakini Cummins and High Chiefess Rebecca Kahalewai. Although we have found nothing to corroborate a connection between Matilda’s birth and the chant’s publication, it is possible that the Cummins family released the elder Kaumakaokane’s mele inoa in celebration of the continuing life of that inoa in the person of her mo‘opuna.¹

The elder Kaumakaokane was born to Keauiaole (k) and Liloa (w) and was a direct descendant, through her father, of Liloa and Akahiakuleana. She was not, in fact, the first Kaumakaokane of her line; that distinction belongs to her grandmother who is cited in the “Mookuauhau Alii” of 1896 as belonging to the 7th generation after Liloa:

7. Kowali k noho ia Kaumakaokane w loa o Keaweaua k.
8. Keaweaua k noho ia Kamehaiku loa o Keauiaole k.
9. Keauiaole k noho ia Liloa w loa o Kaumakaokane II²

Keauiaole is identified by Māhoe as a “mamakakaua (war leader) under the regime of Kameeiamoku and Kamanawa who are known as the Royal Twins of Hawaii. Keauiaole [as] an old chief was put in charge of the Fort Lands of Honolulu and [was] Konohiki of Nu‘uanu.”³ We don’t know if the old warrior approved of his daughter’s marriage to Thomas A. Cummins, a wealthy Massachusetts haole who arrived in the islands in 1825, fathered John Adams Cummins in 1835, and began his Waimānalo Ranch with a lease from Pākī in 1842. We do know that Kaumakaokane died within seven years of taking up residence at their Mauna Loke home – when she was 37 and her only child was 14. And we know from her name chant that she had quickly worked her way into the hearts of the people of Waimānalo (“ua oni paa iloko o ke kanaka”) who had witnessed her beauty and goodness (“‘ike ‘ia ka nani ka maika‘i o ia pua”), and found her to be “ke po‘okela...o nā kuahiwi.”

This po‘okela imagery is, in fact, the dominant poetic device of “He Inoa no Kaumakaokane.” In part one, she is placed high on the peak of Pu‘u o Kona and is associated with Olomana, Pāku‘i, and the Waimānalo-Maunawili ridgeline of Aniani. In part two, she appears atop Ka‘iwa Ridge and Nu‘uanu Pali, and she is associated with the cloud-suspended pool of Kūlanihāko‘i. At each of these vantage points, she is regaled with descriptions of the scenery below, of Mānana spinning dizzily in the sea of Maluaka, of throbbing “horse noses” on the plain of ‘Āpuakea, of

the “nui nepunepu maika‘i” that is to be found amidst the sedges of Moelana, of fragrance-swollen hala fruit at Kekele, and of palai fronds that respond to the touch of the Mololani rain.

All of this speaks of the poet Kaiehu’s undiminished love for his lady of the highest places and for a land aroused and made fertile by her presence. Nothing is not beautiful there, nothing not unfolding, reaching, fragrance-drenched, or near-to-bursting. He concedes that there is “little for her to gain” by his suit – other than that he be refreshed by her touch – and he acknowledges that she has been stricken by the “hala leaf of ‘Alaekini.” The specific reference is lost to us (although “‘alae” hints at the prayer-denying cry of the mudhen), but the concluding lines of the mele suggest that Kaiehu cannot have Kaumaka. He will only find relief by accepting his lot and binding his thoughts to the tranquility of Kahuailanawai until they become like native children of that place.

Kaiehu’s poignant composition is 58 lines long; we’ve chosen to focus on his second paukū – still long at 32 lines – because its catalog of place names, beginning with our own Ka‘iwa, is nearly identical to that by which we have defined ourselves in dance and composition since we founded our hālau in 1976. “E ō e Kaumakaokāne” is also of considerable interest to us because of its connection to the three-part Kapi‘olani feather chant “He Inoa Nu‘a Hulu No Ka Mō‘īwahine Kapi‘olani” published in 1866 by “Mrs. ALK” in commemoration of the Queen’s visit to the Cummins’ plantation in perhaps 1883. The first paukū of this chant, “Aia i Waimānalo Ko Nu‘a Hulu,” begins at He‘eia (the very place at which “Kaumakaokane” concludes) and brings us back, on the steamship *Waimānalo*, to the Mokulua islands, to Wailea point, and then on to the landing at Waimānalo. In our minds, the two pieces complete each other: the first travels by land, the second returns by sea, and Kailua is thus contained in their embrace.

He Inoa no Kaumakaokane

...

E o e Kaumakaokane ka wahine nona inoa
O oe ka kai luna o Kaiwa,
I ka wai lele-huna a Kamanu⁴
Ke nana iho oe i ke one o Kalapawai,⁵
Me[a] e wale no ia i kuu manao
Aia la o ka wai o Kawainui,
Ke i aela i hoa pili nona ke Kalukalu o Kapaa,⁶
E paa oe e ke kanaka i kou manao,
He uuku ka haawina i loa ia oe
A hoopa mai oe la oluolu iho au— e,
Ke hopu iho oe mawaena o ka puukoa⁷
He nui nepunepu maikai ka-nahele o Moelana,⁸
Ke alawa iho oe i ka ulu-hala o Kekele⁹
Aole au mea nani ole o laila,
He maopopo ka pua o ka hala ke hopu aku me ke ala,
No-ke hala ole ka wai a ka hinalo i ka laau
Kupu ka maka o ka awapuhi i ka uaia e ka ua,
Mau ke oho o ka palai ke huipa iho,

Ua ulu ia mai e ka ua Mololani,¹⁰
Pau ole ka nani ka maikai o ia wahi,
Lea ka eha i ke kula o Heeia-kea¹¹
Akea oe e ka manao ilaila,
Me he nioi wela la ke aloha e hone nei,
I anei ke Kupukupu kaliko a ka manao,
O oe ka kai luna o Nuuanu
I na ko-ki lehua a ka manu,
Aloha a'u pua pawai i Kulanihakoi,¹²
Kokoe ka pua niniu i ka ua,
Ka-eha ka lau o ka hala o Alaekini i ka ohu
He ohu ia no ka manu pawai o Koolau,
Ina no la i Kahuai-lana-wai,¹³
Kama-kama ia ka manao i paa
I kini i kupa kamaaina no ia no ia wahi.

Respond, Kaumakaokāne, the woman honored in this name chant
So you are the one standing atop Ka'iwa
At the hidden waterfall of the birds
You gaze below at Kalapawai
A peculiar place in my opinion
And there it is, the water of Kawainui
Saying to its close companion, the kalukalu grass of Kapa'a
Be firm, O friend, in your thoughts
There is little for you to gain
But that you touch me and I am refreshed
When you reach between the pu'uko'a sedges
Large and perfectly full is the growth at Moelana
You gaze below at the hala grove of Kekele
And you have nothing that is not beautiful there
It is understandable that the hala will blossom when you catch it up with fragrance
The hīnano water persists without letup on the branch
The ginger buds unfold in being rained on by the rain
The palai fronds sprout when stroked
When encouraged by the Mololani rain
Endless is the beauty, the perfection of this place
Delightful are passion's aches on the plains of He'eia Kea
Your mind is open to everything there
Love is teasing you like a nī'oi wela
Right here is the surging forth, the burning of desire
So it is you at the heights of Nu'uauu
On the highest lehua-perches of the birds
Beloved is my water-sipping blossom at Kūlanahāko'i
Casting shy glances is the blossom spinning in the rain
The hala leaf of 'Alaekini strikes in the mist
It is the mist of the water-sipping bird of Ko'olau

If only this were at Kahuailanawai
Thought is bound until made fast
So that it is a descendant, a native of this place.

Notes:

1. Given the passionate nature of several sections of the chant it is also possible that Kaiehu (who is clearly not Thomas Cummins) thought it prudent to refrain from expressing his feelings until well after Kaumaka's passing.
2. *Ka Makaainana*, Oct. 19, 1896; cited by Edith McKinzie in *Hawaiian Genealogies*, Vol. 1:76. John Cummins might have been adhering to a family precedent; that of keeping the name alive in every second generation. The origin of the second part of Mrs. Cummins' name – "Papaleaiaina" is explained by MaryJane Montano as being one of Ka'ahumanu's pet names for Kamehameha I; "during the youth of Kaumaka, that royal woman [Kaahumanu] ... called Kaumakaokane by the name Papaleaiaina" (*Kuokoa*, 31 Malaki, 1927:1). Topolinski explains the meaning of the name as "helmet that ate the land," an epithet for the conqueror king (liner notes, *Na Mele Kupuna*).
3. wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3AJohn_Adams_Cummins. I give credence to this explanation because Mahoe is a descendant of Keauiaole's son Charles Kameeiamoku-a-Keauiaole Mahoe.
4. We have translated this as a common noun: "a ka manu," but we cannot ignore the possibility that Kamanu is the name of a person or the now-forgotten source of what was Pūnāwai Stream at the Waimānalo end of Ka'ōhao.
5. Kalapawai (variously translated as "the water ridge" or "the flashing water") is the name of the northern section of Kailua Beach Park bounded by Ka'elepulu Stream and Kalapawai Store. Kalapawai is the long-time residence of the Mahoe family (of which Chinky is a member); we don't know if this is the same family as that of Kaumakaokane II's brother Charles Kameeiamoku-a-Keauiaole Mahoe, but the coincidence of names deserves further inquiry.
6. Old maps of Kailua identify Kapa'a as a land section that borders Kawainui on the northwest in much the same area occupied today by Kapa'a Quarry.
7. Pukui identifies pu'uko'a as a native sedge and figurative of "one of low rank" (*Dictionary*, 359).
8. Moelana is identified in Fornander's "Legend of Halemano" as a forested area at Kekele, Ko'olaupoko (*Collection of Hawaiian Folklore*, Vol. 5:254). George Rose and Christiaan Klieger offer the following corroborative description: "Immediately below the Nu'uaniu pali was the region known as Kekele, which contained an important pandanus (hala) grove. This famed grove in the forest of Moelana at Kāne'ohē, is the source of a poetical saying that makes reference to the rain of Moelana below the Nu'uaniu pali, "Ka ua nihi pali o Moelana, The rain that sneaks along the cliffs at Moelana" (Pukui 1983:172)" (Rose and Klieger, "Myths, Legends, and Traditions of Central Ko'olau Poko," 22).
9. Kekele: "The undulating plains in Kaneohe at the foot of the Nuuanu Pali. It was a few years ago entirely covered with hala trees and the fragrance from the blossoms or ripe nuts of these trees scented the whole plains. It is always referred to in old songs and traditions as the sweet land of fragrance and

perfumes” (“Dictionary of Hawaiian Localities,” *Saturday Press*, Oct. 6, 1883; cited by Sterling and Summers in *Sites of O‘ahu*, 221).

10. Although Mololani is associated with land formations, seas, winds, and rains from Nu‘uanu to He‘eia to Mōkapu, it most likely used in this section of the mele as a reference to the rain that moves from the base of the pali at Moelana to the ocean at He‘eia.

11. The land division of He‘eia (now swallowed up in what we call Kāne‘ohe) is traditionally divided into He‘eia Kea on the north and He‘eia Uli on the south. *Hoku o Hawaii* gives the following explanation: “[You will find Heeia Kea] directly below Maelieli. That is the first sandy stretch you come to after you have reached the rise of Kealohi. Heeia-kea is the first sandy stretch you come to after leaving Heeia-uli. Heeia-uli is the first Heeia the visitor comes to after he leaves Kaneohe. That is the Heeia where the Catholic Church stands and where the old mill of Heeia sugar plantation stood” (“Oahu Place Names,” 5 Ianuali, 1926).

12. Kūlanihāko‘i is the name of a “mythical pond in the sky land, Ke-alohi-lani” (Pukui, *Place Names*, 123). Andrews’ *Dictionary* calls it “a supposed place in the heavens from which the waters of rain came” (311). It is often associated with tears of sorrow, as in the legend of Lā‘ieikawai: “kau aku la o Kahalaomapuana iluna o ke alanui ulili i hoomakaukauia nona, a huli mai la me ka naau kaumaha, i hoopihāia kona mau maka i na kulu wai o Kulanihakoi...” (Haleole, 193-4).

13. Kahuailanawai is a pool in upper Nu‘uanu; Pukui translates the name as “site of tranquil water” (*Place Names*, 66), Moses Manu describes it as the dance platform of Keaomelemele (*Kuokoa*, 7 Pepeluai, 1895), and Emma Metcalf Nakuina identifies it as the pool below the site at which the last stand of the battle of Nu‘uanu took place (“Battle of Nuuanu,” *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, June 29, 1909).