

Ua Pihaku‘i Loko o ka ‘Oli‘oli

An Essay by Kīhei de Silva

Haku mele: Keakaokū.

Source: J. W. K. Kaulilinoe, “Ka Moolelo o Kamaakamahiai,” *Nupepa Kuokoa*, January 21, 1871 (the last of 21 installments of the story).

Our text: Kaulilinoe as cited above. Orthography and translation: Kīhei de Silva.

While living in Wailua, Kaua‘i, the aging hero Kamaakamahi‘ai learns that his great-grandson Olopana II (who is now the Kailua-based ruling chief of O‘ahu) must defend his home against the usurping chiefs of Oahu’s Kona district.¹ Keakaokū (grandson of Kamaakamahi‘ai and father of Olopana II) has come to enlist Kamaakamahi‘ai’s aid, but Kama is too weak to return to Kailua himself (“ua palupalu kona kino ua ano elemakule”), so Kama prays for his ‘aumakua to go there for him and assist the young ali‘i in combat. Back in Kailua on the morning of battle, Keakaokū observes the “ouli o ka lani” – signs that indicate the presence of these ‘aumakua and their support of Olopana II. Keaka is filled with joy and picks up his pu‘a niu (he is mute and can only communicate, in chant, through this coconut whistle) in order to offer the following mele of encouragement.

I ke kakahiaka nui o ua la kaula nei, ala ae la o Keakaoku a ike ae la i ka ouli o ka lani, he ano e koa ai o kana keiki ke hele i ke kaula ia la, a no kona piha loa i ka olioli no ka ike i loaia iaia, a lalau ae la ia i kana pua a ani peahi aku la a kani ae la ua pua nei penei:

Ua piha kui loko o ka olioli
I ka ikena aku nei he la koa
He la ikaika no kuu kama alii
No kuu haku o keia mau la

...

Inspired by this mele, Olopana II and his warriors leave ‘Ālele,² march to Kapa‘a,³ climb up Wakawaka,⁴ and descend to the plain of Pu‘umakani.⁵ There they engage with the rebels of Kona who “scatter like rubbish” in the face of the Kailua onslaught. When the victorious warriors return, Keakaokū hears them talking at length about the bravery of his son, so Keaka takes up his whistle and adds this paukū of congratulation.

Hoi akula lakou me ka wa ana o lakou i ke koa a me ka ikaika o ka moopuna a Kamaakamahiai, pela no lakou i hauwalaau hele ai a puka ana i kauhale, a lohe mai la o Keakaoku i ka hoi ana’ku o kana keiki, pupuhi mai la ia i ka pua penei:

Nani wale no hoi ke koa la o Olopana
Ka la hoi a ka ikaika i hai mai ai
He koa ua haina mai e ke kupuna

Ua ike ka poe o ka po ia oe
O oe o lakou puni ko aina

...

We use these words today, centuries removed from the deeds of Kamaakamahi‘ai and his descendants, to inspire our own children in their defense of Kailua from the onslaught, not of Kona’s chiefs, but of changes that leave many of us homeless and sleeping by the roadside. One need only look at present-day Wai‘auia,⁶ the once royal residence of Olopana II, to see these abandoned Hawaiians and their trash-bag possessions. One need only look at our mamo, our young leaders, to discover the “ouli o ka lani” that speak of ancestor-approval, restored lands, and a lāhui that is again at peace.

Ua Pihaku‘i Loko o ka ‘Oli‘oli

Ua pihaku‘i loko o ka ‘oli‘oli
I ka ‘ikena aku nei he lā koa
He lā ikaika no ku‘u kamāli‘i
No ku‘u haku o kēia mau lā
E pua‘ō ana ko kino lā e ka lani
E lilo ana ka ihe i wai‘au‘au
I pu‘upale ho‘i no ku‘u kama lei
I lei aloha ka ihe me ka pololū
I hoa ka‘ana ho‘i no ka lā koa
No ka lā ikaika lā e ku‘u ali‘i
Eia ka lā, lā puni ka ‘āina—ē.
Nani wale nō ho‘i ke koa lā o Olopana
Ka lā ho‘i a ka ikaika i ha‘i mai ai
He koa ua ha‘ina mai e ke kupuna
Ua ‘ike ka po‘e o ka pō iā ‘oe
‘O ‘oe ‘o lākou puni ko ‘āina
Le‘a nō ka ‘apa i kou makua lā e ku‘u keiki
He pā nō no ka ‘āina i ka lā kahi
Le‘a ka hiamoe a ka ‘elemakule
Ku‘u ka lāhui lā ē ku‘u haku ē.

I am filled to the brim with joy
Upon seeing that this is a day of courage
A day of strength for my royal child
For one who, in this time, has become my lord
You will be attacked, O royal one
But the spears will be like bathwater
Like a shield for my beloved child
The short and long spears will be a lei aloha
A dear companion on this day of courage
This day of valor, O my ali‘i

Here is the day, the day in which the land will be reclaimed.
Splendid indeed is the courage of Olopana
The day in which strength has spoken
A warrior about whom the kūpuna have spoken
The ancestors of the distant past have seen you
You are they, your land is reclaimed
Joyful is this respite with your parent, O my child
The land has been regained in a single day
Joyful will be the sleep of the old man
The lāhui is again at peace, O my lord.

Notes:

1. Additional background for “Ka Mo‘olelo o Kamaakamahiai” can be found in my discussion of “‘Auhea Wale ‘Oe e Kahalakea” in this collection of essays.
2. ‘Ālele: an old name for the lowland plain that constitutes the ma kai lands of Kailua (below Kawainui, Pu‘uoehu, and Ka‘elepulu) from Kapoho point to ‘Alāla point. It is sometimes equated with what is now called Coconut Grove, but it also includes Kailua Town, Ku‘ulei Tract, and the long expanse of Kailua Beach.
3. Kapa‘a: the land ma uka of Kawainui in roughly the same location as the current Kapa‘a Quarry, Industrial Park, and Waste Transfer Station.
4. Wa‘ewa‘e: a peak on the ridgeline above Kapa‘a; the name of the land-division on the Kāne‘ohe side of this pu‘u.
5. Pu‘umakani: the name of a heiau built by Olopana on the Pali-facing hillside above Kapa‘a. The place name is used in Kaulilinoe’s mo‘olelo in reference to a larger field of battle, perhaps near the current location of the Hawaiian Memorial Park.
6. Wai‘auia: currently known as the “Old ITT Site” at the entrance to Kailua Town.

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