

## **He'e Wahine I Ka Lani: Goddess in the Surf**

**by Ian 'Akahi Masterson**

In Hawai'i, historian David Malo (1951) calls surfing a national pastime and a popular betting sport, indicating that all ages and both sexes enjoyed riding waves on various crafts. John Papa I'i (1959) describes the places that King Kamehameha enjoyed surfing, and how he would surf with his favorite wife Ka'ahumanu. Hawaiian Mythology portrays many legendary figures who enjoyed surfing with their intimate partners, like Palani and 'Iewale of Kahana, as well as Pili A'ama and Kapū'ewai of Waimea in Ko'olau, O'ahu. Even the youngest of the Pele clan, Hi'iaka, surfed off Ha'ena, Kaua'i, with the high chief Lohi'au, after she and her brother Kanemiloha'i revived him.

There are also many women surfers who hold their own in the surf, displaying great prowess and attracting the highest ranks of kapu chiefs with their beauty and mana—chiefesses like Keaomelemele of Kealohilani, Keleanuinohoana'api'api of Maui, Hinahanaiakamālama of Hilo, and Māmala of Kou Harbor in Honolulu. While Keaomelemele is in training, Kelea, Hina, and Māmala all surf with their suitors at some point in their stories. This correlation hints at the literary evidence presented about surfing women within Polynesian oral traditions. In a society that is believed by some historians to be restrictive towards the rights and freedom of women, what was the position of women with regards to surfing as a daily and a ritual activity in Hawai'i? How does women's position in surfing as well as the role of surfing within Hawaiian mythology reflect greater cultural patterns within Remote Oceania?

This paper is an exploration into the role of legendary surfing women portrayed throughout Hawaiian history in various myths and legends that mention them. Through the stories it becomes obvious that many women surfed, and that women played a vital role in ancient Hawaiian surfing practices. Also, because Polynesian mythology should

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be looked at as poetic visions encoded with environmental and cultural information, we must also consider the role of legendary women surfers as metaphors within a greater set of literary references as well. As such, these roles reflect the dualism present in Hawaiian worldviews. When the thematic nature of the surfing set of metaphors is understood holistically as encouraging the growth of a nation, then the position and importance of women is seen with relation to surfing in ancient Hawai'i—the goddess in the surf, is an akua from under the sea.

**Keaomelemele**

Moses Manu's telling of Keaomelemele (2002), the grandchild of Mo'oinanea, abounds with surfers like Punahoa, 'Ōhele, and Keaomelemele herself, who surfs famous breaks and then bathes in the famous fresh water pools of the islands. Keaomelemele enjoyed surfing nightly after completing intensive days of training in chant and hula at Waolani on Konahuanui (O'ahu). It appears that Keaomelemele's surf sessions followed by the bathing in these fresh water pools restored her energy. Manu describes the time spent as rests between hula sessions, but it is almost like surfing is meant as a form of cross training, because as she becomes more adept at dancing, she ceases her travels altogether. Manu names these pools and the famous waves she surfed:

After dancing had ended and the pupuweuweu (closing) chant was uttered to free the kapu of the hula school, she flew to Niihau to surf there. Then she flew to bathe in the pool of the paoo fish on Lehua and returned to the place where she was being trained to dance hula. There she rested. On the second night, after the dancing was over, she flew to ride the surf at Kalehuawehe at Wailua on Kauai, flew to bathe in the pool of Kapoulu. So it was with the surf of Keanini at the ship landing in Pueokahi, Hana, Maui, and then she bathed in the waters of Kualihau. After the surf of Puuhele she dived in the water of Kumaka.

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So it was with Hawai'i. She rode the surf of Huia in Hilo, bathing in the water of Waianuenue (Rainbow Falls). Thus she did until graduation time drew near. When she became more adept at dancing, she ceased travelling.<sup>1</sup>

**Hi'iakaikapoliopole**

Hi'iaka, the youngest child in the Pele clan, also uses surfing as a healing endeavor. In her epic journey across the Hawaiian Islands, Hi'iaka's adventures lead her to surfing experiences many times over. At this time period, dated later than the arrival of the main gods Kāne and Kanaloa, surfing is already an integrated cultural activity in Hawai'i, judging by the surfers that she met.

Surfing was one of the traditions of which Hi'iaka took note while on her travels and thus it is worth consideration here. In it, we are shown that Hi'iaka states clearly that she is the *kahuna*. When Hi'iaka revived the Kaua'i chief Lohi'au with her healing powers, she asked him what he desires, and he requests to go surfing. It appears that Hi'iaka is able to procure the waves needed to please Lohi'au, because she reassures him that he will surf in the morning.

An intense storm arising overnight while her attendants go off to prepare her pā'ū skirt for surfing. In describing Hi'iaka's appearance that morning, the author reveals the type of pā'ū that was made—"There was no match for the beauty of this lightning-skirted maiden of Halema'uma'u."<sup>2</sup>

Once at the beach, Lohi'au is amazed at this woman, but chides her in their lack of surfboards. She reassures him that her pā'ū will be his board while she bodysurfs. Then she grabs him and pulls him offshore, thus "skimming the surface of the ocean." The many sea creatures join them as they go to the surfing spot, which she describes as having waves that span the sea, as would a long period groundswell.

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Hi'iaka called for the surf to rise in a similar manner to that mentioned in the story of Pāka'a and Kūapāka'a, and, as in their case, a large swell rose up. While Lohi'au rides their wave, he is amazed at his own ability. It has been shown though Hi'iaka's excitement about the coming day of surfing that Lononuihoikawai is the *akua*, the deity who is close by, "fluttering upon the surface of the water...ready" to surf with them. Allusions to the feathered gods Lonoika'ouali'i and Lonoikamakahiki surface in her description of the birds joining them in the surf. The chant that follows is one Hi'iaka offers up for protection from the dangerous surf, and her addressing it to Lono shows us who offers such delivery. The sudden squall that immediately follows the chant, as if to answer her, further identifies Lono, here called Lononuihoikawai, as the god who is being called upon. This kind of heavy shower is considered a *kinolau* of this god, and it also clears the spectators so that the surfers may go uninterrupted up to the company of their friends:

As they rose upon the wave, the dorsals of the giant fishes of the sea surged up and down on that same billow that they climbed. Hi'iaka stood upon the surface of the water with her skirt of pahapaha seaweed and mōkila grass fluttering behind her. And Lohi'au tried out every possible surfing stance, each of which he could perform with ease... Nothing could compare to the beauty of this surfing... The surfers went on far out to sea, and then turned back toward the shore. They surfed back in until they saw the village of Hā'ena, whereupon Hi'iaka offered this chant:

### **Chant One Hundred And Twenty Six**

<i>E ala!</i>	Arise!
<i>E ala! E ka ua!</i>	Arise! O rain!
<i>E ka lā</i>	O sun
<i>E ka 'ohu e kai!</i>	O mist that creeps upon the sea!
<i>Kai nu'u, Kai e'e</i>	Cresting sea, mounting sea
<i>Kai pipili a Iku lā!</i>	Clinging sea of Iku!
<i>Ē ua puni</i>	Ah, encircled
<i>'Ohu'ahu'a kai</i>	Whitewater of the sea

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<i>'O ka 'ale 'ī, o ka 'ale moe</i>	The great billows, the low-lying billows
<i>'O ka 'ale hāko 'iko 'i</i>	The agitated billows
<i>I Kahiki</i>	Reaching Kahiki
<i>A hiki a ola</i>	Enabled to survive
<i>No nei make lā iā 'oe, e Lono</i>	This danger, through you, O Lono
<i>'Āmama. Ua noa.</i>	It is done. It is free of kapu.

When this chant of Hi'iaka's was complete, rain started pouring down, the ocean was covered by mist and so too were the uplands.<sup>3</sup>

Johnson uses Hi'iaka's chant as an example of the Hawaiian poetic theme rendering dualistic pairs as part of a whole, one implicit to the other. Fornander relates this same chant to the flood of Kahinali'i. His version is much longer, with Hi'iaka's bit of the chant placed in the middle of the longer form. However, Fornander relates that this is only a portion of a much larger chant about the flood. This chant is also found in Handy, Handy, and Pūku'i's *Native Planters* (1972), with an entire section of Kū forms preceding the section that Fornander displays. These Kū cloudforms match those found in the Keaomelemele story as the guardians of Ke'alohilani. Fornander's ensuing discussion meanders about the evidence to which this chant points. The chant presents a convincing argument that Lono is the Hawaiian patron of surfing, being the god who protects one from the raging storm surf created by his bodily weather forms:

I have only been able to obtain one Hawaiian chant, or rather portion of a chant, bearing on the subject of the Flood. Its idiom, language, and allusions indicate it to be of great antiquity. It is, properly speaking, only the introduction to the ancient chant of the Flood, and seems to represent the dismay and consternation of the descendants of "Laka," the eldest son of the first man, at the coming of the Flood, with an appeal to "Lono" to save them.<sup>4</sup>

### Nāmakaokaha'i

The *Ikū-a-mu* appear to be associated with the time period of the Mu and Menehune peoples brought to Kauai. Their leader is said to have been the chiefess named

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Nāmakaokaha‘i, who is identified as the oldest sister or cousin of Pele. Fornander relates the story of ‘Aukelenuiaikū, the youngest of twelve brothers who lived in Kuaihelani. He was a handsome boy, and he was the favorite of their father Ikū. This made the other brothers and his sister jealous, thus devising ways to get rid of him. In one of their attempts, the oldest brother tricked ‘Aukele and threw him into the pit of Mo‘oinanea, the man-eating lizard woman who was the first of the *mo‘o* clan to arrive in Hawai‘i. Luckily, the kind brother who was closest in age to ‘Aukele called out not to eat the boy since he was her own grandchild.

She heard the brother, so ‘Aukele was not only recognized and saved, but granted special favors that included magic possessions and instructions on how to obtain a certain chiefess in a far off land for his wife. This woman was Nāmakaokaha‘i, a goddess who lived in the land of Kalāke‘enuiakāne. Nāmakaokaha‘i’s body forms include a steep cliff, a vast ocean filled with breaking waves, “*he nalu ma na wahia pau loa,*” and fire that can consume the land and everything on it.<sup>3</sup> Unbeknownst to ‘Aukele and Nāmakaokaha‘i, they were cousins, so Mo‘oinanea was continuing the matchmaking that began with Kū and Hina in the Keaomelemele story. Indeed, she is causing her grandchildren to arch back into their own lineage, thus preserving the hereditary rights and rank of her family through yet another *ni‘aupi‘o* marriage. *Ni‘aupi‘o* is a relationship described as:

The highest ranks of Hawaiian chiefs achieved by full-brother/full-sister, uncle/niece, or aunt/nephew marriages, from *ni‘au pi‘o* ‘bent coconut midrib’, symbolizing a relationship bending back upon itself. The *pi‘o* rank is represented naturally by the curving rainbow *pi‘o anuenue* or by the arched crescent leitmotif of feather garments and other chiefly insignia.”<sup>5</sup>

Mo‘oinanea gave Aukele one other possession for him to care for, one that would protect him when danger was near: the [physical embodiment of a] ‘god’ named

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Lonoika‘ouali‘i, for whom she made a *pahu*, a “box,” to carry him. In the La‘amaomao stories, *pahu* is translated as “calabash,” here, Fornander treats the same word as a “box.” So, it should be noted here that ‘Aukele has a similar means of possessing and transporting his god Lonoika‘ouali‘i as Pāka‘a and Kūapāka‘a had for the bones of La‘amaomao—in a calabash/box with a lid.

The wind gourd of La‘amaomao is still in existence, residing in the basement of ‘Iolani Palace. Although some doubt its power and function, it is a very significant artifact that is due the highest respect—many secrets have yet to be revealed by this gourd of great winds. Throughout the story, Lonoika‘ouali‘i guides ‘Aukelenuiaikū to success by warning him of impending death and advising him how to behave in such a manner that would save his life. Later in the story it is revealed that this god is brother to Nāmakaokaha‘i.

Mo‘oinanea is not the only ancestress associated with surfing. Beckwith (1970) attributes all mo‘o to the ancestress Kalanimainu‘u (also known as Kalamainuu), with Kihawahine being the most famous of the deified *mo‘o* ancestresses. Another body of the lizard, or a part of the body, is the surfboard, which in the story of Kalamainu‘u, was her tongue. This thematic device is used in quite a few stories related to *mo‘owāhine*. In the case of Mā‘eli‘eli, the *mo‘o* that surfs at Ku‘au in He‘eia, she is said to have a “surfboard-shaped” tongue as well. Here, Kalamainu‘u lets him use her surfboard, without him realizing that it is her tongue:

The men said, “Your wife is an *akua*; we cannot hide our talking together. She is Kalamainu‘u, a *mo‘o* of ‘forty thousand’ (*kini*) *mo‘o*, a *mo‘o* of ‘four hundred thousand’ (*lehu*) *mo‘o*. Those are the bodies of your wife. Because we pity you, we are telling you this. The surfboard you are carrying is your wife’s tongue.”<sup>6</sup>

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The name chant of the Hawai‘i Island chief Nāihe reveals that the primordial gods Kāne and Lono enjoyed surfing around the Hawaiian Islands as well. The chant indicates that after surfing Maui, Hawai‘i, and his own land Mauwele, Kāne seeks out Kuakua, a woman of the island of Papa, whom he competes with in the long, low-sweeping surf. The analogy behind the chief surfing “to that shore of enthralling beauty” is quite enticing and hints at the role of surfing and surfing metaphors in this case.

However, I might argue with the translator in the next line that “He‘e wahine ka lani” does not mean “the chief was surfing as graceful as a woman,” but rather that “the chiefly woman surfed gracefully towards the ohi‘a trees along the shore,” a translation that seems to complete the suggested analogy, especially when considering that an ohi‘a tree is a chiefly analogy—primarily male, with the lehua flower being the female metaphorical counterpart, as is “ka lani”, that references both men and women of high rank through the analogy of lofty kapu heights (and perhaps a relationship to star names):

(From Part III:)

<i>Na Kane i hee nalu O‘ahu</i>	Kane surfed on the waves of O‘ahu
<i>He puni Maui no Piilani,</i>	And all around Maui, (island) of Piilani
<i>Ua hee a papa kea i papa enaena</i>	He surfed through the white foam, the raging waves
<i>Ua lilo lanakila ke poo o ka papa</i>	The top of his surfboard in triumph rose on the crest
<i>Ua nahamaha Kauiki</i>	(As waves) crashed against Kauiki.
<i>Ka moku o ka nalu e paa ai</i>	The oncoming waves are blocked by that land.
<i>Ai Hawai‘i ia Maui,</i>	From Maui he went to Hawai‘i
<i>Ai Mauwele i kona moku,</i>	On to Mauwele, his land,
<i>Ai kuakua, ka wahine,</i>	To Kuakua, the woman
<i>I ka mokupuni o Papa</i>	Of the island of Papa
<i>Hoopapa kaihee i ka nalu,</i>	(There they) competed in the surf,
<i>O i nalu i hoohali</i>	The long, low-sweeping surf.
<i>Hee ka lani i ka hiwakalana</i>	The chief surfed to that shore of enthralling beauty,
<i>Ili kamakea i kona nalu</i>	His skin white with wave (foam).
<i>Aulono i ke kai hohonu</i>	Back he swam to the deep sea.
<i>Hee wahine ka lani</i>	Graceful as a woman surfed the chief
<i>Kauka ohia la</i>	Toward the ohia [trees] along the shore
<i>Ia ka hu‘a o ka nalu</i>	Through the froth of the wave.
<i>O Lono alii o Kaua‘i...</i>	Lono is the chief of Kaua‘i... <sup>7</sup>



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**Huauri**

In Tahiti, Teuira Henry indicated that “Fa‘a he‘e, surf-riding, was much indulged in, mostly by young men and women,” and that “surfriding is still practiced to some extent.”<sup>8</sup> Polynesian ethnographer William Ellis describes the boards in Tahiti as “shark boards, due to the similarity of shape to the anterior sections of those creatures.”<sup>9</sup> Even earlier than that, the Boatswain’s mate on the ‘Bounty’, James Morrison, wrote in the first description of Tahitian surfing that “at this diversion all sexes are excellent” and that “the children also take their sport in the smaller surfs.”<sup>10</sup>

There is even mention of a patron deity that presides over surfing in Tahiti prior to Western contact. Ellis tells us about “...*horue* or *faahee*, or surf-swimming, of which *Huaouri* was the presiding god.”<sup>8</sup> Please note that this deity, at least in the genealogies of the people, is not a god, but a goddess, thus supporting Ben Finney and James Houston’s remark that “the gentler sex carried off the highest honors.”<sup>11</sup> Why is it that in Tahiti the patron deity of surfing is a woman? What evidence is there to support this idea that Polynesian women were given the highest honors in the surf?

Henry (1847-1915) was an early ethnographer who published her grandfather John M. Orsman’s manuscripts of recorded legends from Tahiti. In discussing the districts and clans of Tahitinui, she says that the stories are “enlivened with poetry, narrations, and general information in the original native form of teaching, from the lips of King Pomare II and Tamera...and Moe‘ata, of the royal family of Tahiti, who was chief of Hitia‘a for many years.” She then gives a chant about the district of “*Mahaena*” which she describes as being in the east on “Tahiti-nui mare‘are‘a” (Great-Tahiti of the golden haze). *Mahaena* was also poetically called “*Ahu‘are* (bailer-of-waves).” In

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sharing this chant and a description of this place, she provides one of many examples of Tahitian surfing and surfing places:

...Out at Maha'ena is the sea for surf-riding.

Pu-ta'i-hani (Lovers'-trumpet-blast) and Toa-tane (Man-rock) are the rocks to start from. Hina-rau-re'a (Gray-of-tumeric-leaf) was the most famous surf rider of that place; she was the wife of Turi the demigod.

To her were applied the name Tou'ura-oi-'ore (sun-burned-swerving-not), because she rode straight.

From Maha'ena to Mahina (Point Venus) is a succession of sunken rocks and bars disseminated over an extensive area of the ocean. They form an irregular submarine reef, over which roll terrific breakers in stormy weather and through which only island boatmen know the dangerous passages.<sup>12</sup>

Anthropologist Martha Beckwith provides some insight on how Huauri may have become associated with surfing in Tahiti. In her listing of Tahitian genealogies under the 'Aikanaka-Hema cycle, Beckwith and Henry place the name *Hina-tahutahu* (Gray-the-magician) or *Huauri (-ouri)* (dark-fruit) as wife of Hema, mother of the famous voyager Tafa'i. Huauri is described as a goddess from the Netherlands (the underworld), one entrance to which is situated at a bathing pool near *Mahina* (Point Venus) known as *Vai-te-marama* (Note that both names indicate a relationship to the moon as well as to Hema's mother).

There in the Vai-po'o-po'o river Huauri would go daily to bathe, and that is where Hinahāniakamālama instructed Hema to find her. He had cared for his mother when his older brother Puna continued on to go surfing. Because of his caring for women, she found it befitting that Hema should attain this goddess for his wife. As Beckwith summarizes from Teuria Henry:

Hina weds No'a-huruhuru (hairy), who has saved her from her cannibal mother Rona (or Haumea), and has two sons, Pu'a-ari'i-tahi and Hema. The mother

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favors Hema because he does not refuse to louse her hair and to swallow a red (and a white) louse which he finds in so doing. She accordingly promises him a goddess for a wife. He is to find Hua-uri (or Hina-tahutahu) at her bathing pool called Vai-te-marama (at the Vaipoopoo river at Hanapepe) and catch her by the hair and carry her past four (or twenty) houses without letting her feet touch the ground; then she will lose her power and follow him.<sup>13</sup>

After several attempts Hema begot the goddess, and eventually she bore him two sons. *Arihi-nui-apua* (great enchanted net cord) and *Tafa'i* (Kaha'i) are widely known throughout the Polynesia as having travelled to the far reaches of Kahiki, avenging their father by rescuing him from a band of demons. Although another Tahitian legend names Huauri as the wife of a chief named Rehia and mother of a son named Pai, Huauri is seen in the Kaha'i cycle as his mother in many Polynesian localities.

Can we identify a Hawaiian surf deity with the Tahitian surf deity by finding the same genealogical position? Is there a direct link? Tying the lineages across the cultures is difficult, and one surfing deity does not clearly emerge. The challenge in the case of Huauri is her relative absence in Hawaiian lore. The names vary for wives given across the islands that carry this genealogical cycle of myths dealing with Aikanaka and Hema. That said, Huauri is memorialized in the mountain peak above Luluku in Kāne'ohē, *Pu'u-ka-hua-uli*, so it should be noted that she is considered a wahine of Ko'olaupoko.

Whichever the case may be, this cycle of myths shows a close relationship between cultures at this point in the chronological history of oral literature in Remote Oceania. From this point on, the genealogies and stories lose many of the similarities that are found in these earlier times as they branch off into different family lines and settle on different islands. It remains clear amongst the groups, however, that Hema gained a goddess, a woman from under the sea, for his wife. In the Hawaiian version, she becomes

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pregnant with his son and he is sent to her homeland for the child's birthright. Kamakau describes the purpose of his journey as seeking the birth gifts that are the child's right to a high kapu status through Hema's mother, Hinahānaiakamalama.

### Hina-hānai-a-ka-mālama

More specifically, Hema gained the right to a goddess for a wife because he chose to stay back from the surf and care for his mother, incidentally picking a red and a white louse out of his mother's hair, and thus showing his great care for women. Puna did not help his mother, and instead continued on and went surfing like the brothers had planned. Although he is the elder who thus holds rank over his brother (inherited *mana*), Hema acquires *mana* through his character and choice of actions—helping his mother. This mother of Puna and Hema, wife to 'Aikanaka in Hawai'i, Aotearoa, Rarotonga, Tahiti, and the Tuoamotu Islands, is known herself as an excellent surfer. As mentioned in the story of 'Aiwohikupua, he "is attracted by the lovely Hina-i-ka-malama as she rides the famous surf at Puhele, and he turns [his canoe] in at Haneo."'<sup>14</sup> Beckwith describes Hinahānaiakamalama, the famous character of Hawaiian lore who is also known as Hinamaikalani and Lonomuku (or Lonomoku):

Hina-hanaia-i-ka-malama (The woman who worked in the moon), said by Kilinahi Kaleo to be Pele's name as a woman on earth, identifies the Hawaiian goddess with the Tahitian who beats out tapa in the moon; Hina-papa'i-kua she is called in Hawaiian nomenclature. The home of Pele in this incarnation is at Kauiki on Maui where, as wife of Aikanaka on the Ulu line, she becomes weary of tapu restrictions and escapes to the moon. In a second even more mythical legend, she is lured up by a chief of Hawai'i from a land underseas and from her calabash of food the moon and stars reach the skies.<sup>15</sup>

Johnson elaborates on the identity of this great goddess:

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*Hina*, a primary name in Polynesian maternal ancestry, is mother of all corals, eels, sea urchins, coarse basaltic rock (*'elekū*) and lava rock (*'ā*). *Hina-hana-aia-ka-mālama* 'Hina-cared-for-by-the-moon' is of multiple identity. She is *Hina-ke-kā* 'Hina-the-bailing calabash-(of-Wakea) and *Hina-ōpū-hala-ko'a*, mother of all reef life. *Hina-hānai-a-ka-malama* in real life is listed in the Ulu genealogy as wife of 'Aikanaka (=kaitangata) and mother of *Puna* and *Hema* from whom the major lines of Hawaiian chiefs diverge on the 'Aikanaka lineage. The *Puna/Hema* branches constitute the major branches of Hawai'i/Maui (*Hema*) and O'ahu/Kaua'i (*Puna*) chiefs. Recognizing this split between the *Puna/Hema* lines of the 'Aikanaka family facilitates understanding of the major genealogical relationships between Hawaiian chiefs.<sup>16</sup>

Because Hema cares for his mother, she sends him back to tie back to the mother's lineage in her homeland, which lies down below the horizon (under the sea) on an island. It is this birthright that Hina gives him. Fornander gives the details of this journey in chant. Hina's homeland is revealed as being "in *Kahiki*, there at *Ulupa 'upa 'u*," identifying with the same places as those mentioned in the Canoe Song of Rū (Kū) and Hina:

*Holo Hema i Kahiki, ki'i ke 'apo-'ula*

Hema went to fetch the red fillet (circlet or ring)

*Loa'a Hema, lilo i ka 'Ai'ai,  
Hā'ule i Kahiki, i Kapakapaakaua,  
Waiho ai i Ulu-paupau*

Hema was caught by the Aaia  
He fell dead in Tahiti, in Kapakapaakaua  
He rests in Ulu-paupau.

*'O ke anuenue ke ala o Kaha'i  
Pi'i Kaha'i, Koi Kaha'i  
He Kaha'i i ke Ko'i 'ula a Kane  
Hihia in a maka o 'Alihi  
Ae Kaha'i i ke anaha  
He anaha ke kanaka, ka wa'a  
I Luna o Hānaiakamalama  
'O ke ala ia i'imi ai i ka makua o Kaha'i  
'O hele a i ka moana wehiwehi  
A halulu i Hale-kumu-kalani  
Ui mai kini o ke akua  
Ninau 'o Kāne 'o Kanaloa  
Heaha kau huaka'i nui  
  
E Kaha'i, i hiki mai ai?*

The rainbow is the path of Kaha'i  
Kaha'i arose, Kaha'i bestirred himself  
Kaha'i passed on the floating cloud of Kāne  
Perplexed were the eyes of 'Alihi  
Kaha'i passed on on the glancing light  
The glancing light on men and canoes  
Above was Hanaiakamalama (moon)  
That is the road to seek the father of Kaha'i  
Go on over the deep blue ocean  
And shake the foundations of heaven  
Inquiring are the retainers of the God  
Kāne and Kanaloa are asking  
For what purpose is your large travelling party,  
O Kaha'i that has come hither?

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<i>I'imi mai au i ka Hema</i>	I am seeking for Hema
<i>Aia iā Kahiki, aia i Ulu-paupau</i>	There in Kahiki, there in Ulupaupau
<i>Aia i ka 'A'aia, hāhā mau 'ia a Kāne</i>	There at the Aaia constantly breathed on by Kāne
<i>Loa'a aku i kūkulu o Kahiki.</i>	Reaching to the farthest ends of Kahiki. <sup>17</sup>

Effectively, by taking a wife from the pool of the moon (*Vai-te-marama*), it implies an association with Hina who works in the moon. This union accomplished a marriage between cousins from a common stock. This had the effect of giving Hema's children *ni'aupi'o* ranks, thus creating different branches of equal hereditary status with Puna's children.

**Haumea**

Beckwith's comparative listing of several genealogies indicate that both the Tuamotu and Tahiti cycles carry the lineage above Hinahānaiakamalama to Nona (Rona), whom she associates with Haumea. Nona is described by Henry:

Not long after Tahiti was moved away from Ra'iatea, there lived in the district of *Mahina* (clear-gray) in *Tahiti-To'erau* (North-Tahiti), a fine elegantly formed woman of high rank. She had long carnivorous teeth, and she had acquired the terrible propensity for cannibalism, which obtained for her the sobriquet of *Vahine-'ai-ta'ata* (Man-eating-woman), her husband, who was high chief of the house named *Tahiti-To'erau*, forsook her, and she lived alone in her home shaded with coconut trees on her own hereditary land near the sea. There she gave birth to a beautiful girl, whom she named Hina (Gray) and whom she brought up tenderly, as befitted her rank, concealing from the child the human prey which she procured for herself."<sup>18</sup>

Although he is not mentioned by name in the above passage, Henry identifies Ro'o-nui as Nona's husband in this Tahitian cycle of myths. In a footnote he describes Ro'o as "the first [god] that came out of the confined sky of Atea into the light of day,"

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and directs us to a chant called “Ro‘o the Messenger,” where he describes Ro‘o further, associating him with Lono:

*O Ro‘o mua,  
Ro‘o arere nui teie na Tane,  
i rahua e Ta‘aroa,  
i fanau hia e Faurourou,  
te ata pa‘ari mareare‘a.*

This is Ro‘o the first,  
Ro‘o the great messenger of Tane,  
conjured by Ta‘aroa  
and born of Faurourou,  
the frozen, gilded cloud.

The name Ro‘o, with its variations , Lono and Rongo, is known throughout Polynesia as that of a great god, but there is some confusion made between this Ro‘o and the Tahitian Ro‘o the second, who is not mentioned by the other islanders above cited, and the attributes of the two are blended together.

In New Zealand he is called Rongo-ma-Tane, and said to be the son of Rangi and Papa (Heaven and Stratum-rock)...In Hawaiian mythology Ro‘o’s full name is Lono-nui-noho-i-ka-wai (Great-Lono-dwelling-in-water), which may have reference to the Tahitian statement that he was born in the cloud.

In Mangareva Rongo (Ro‘o) was worshipped as a great god represented by the rainbow, which harmonizes with the Tahitian “gilded cloud of Ro‘o.” The parentage of Ro‘o is somewhat confused in different groups; the Samoans state that he was the son of Ta‘aroa, being nearest the Tahitian statement that he was conjured by Ta‘aroa.<sup>19</sup>

In both Tahiti and the Tuamotu Islands, Puna and Hema are the children of Hinahānaiakamalama and No‘a-huru-huru. In Hawai‘i, Aotearoa, and Rarotonga, the husband is named ‘Aikanaka or Kaitangata, but as seen in one of Noa’s sobriquets as related to us in the Tuamotus, *Noa-ma[-]kai-tagata*, these names could easily be associated with one person. Furthermore, that Nona was a known cannibal living in the same area as No‘a, it is likely that the two were related, and so their issue is one that arises from within one lineage—that of Haumea. Hina was born from chiefs within Haumea’s line and raised in a way that befitted her high rank. This idea correlates with Hina being Pele’s name on Earth, with Pele being born from Haumea as well. Beckwith summarizes her thoughts on Haumea:

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Thus it is in her character as destroyer or guardian of wild growth and patroness of childbirth that Haumea becomes, like La'ila'i, the producer or, like Pele, the destroyer of living things. Goddess of the "sacred earth," she is venerated as the spiritual essence of that ageless womb out of which life is produced in changing forms and which finally, in the body of a woman, bears to Papa, through union with Wakea, the human race, or, more specifically, the Hawaiian people in direct descent from the ancestral gods.<sup>20</sup>

So, Hina's children Puna and Hema are the great grandchildren of Ta'aroa and Faurourou. They are grandchildren to the god Lono (Ro'o) whose great storm clouds generate waves, and his wife Haumea (Nona), and they are the children of Hina. Known as Hina puku'i, she is the Earth's foundation upon which the waves stand up and break. More specifically, it is their issue that symbolically ties Haumea to the ocean as coral, as Johnson explains in a discussion on the Kumulipo. She also indicates a relationship to the Nanaulu/Māweke lineage, a line containing Tahitian origins of the highest ranks.

Puna-ali'i and the Kaua'i/O'ahu lineages that spring from Puna trace their heritage through the Nanaulu-Māweke lineage. Puna chose to stay within the northern lineages, to surf the dark waters of Hawai'i *Kuauli*. Poetically expressed, Puna may have wanted to choose a wife from his own stock (the father's line) rather than retie into the wife's line that migrated up later from the homeland. Johnson makes the analogy of "the *kōpunapuna* guardian plant, alluding to the 'jointed sugar cane' *kō*, figuratively meaning 'to fulfill' (*kō*) through a new sprout on the stem (i.e. Ka-'I-i-mamao) of the Puna lineage."<sup>21</sup> She then elaborates, suggesting that La'amaomao is associated with the Puna lineage, at least in Sāmoa.



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**La'amaomao**

Henry identifies different gods with different winds in Tahiti, but names winds that are similar in direction and name to Hawaiian winds. She describes the winds as “potent agents of the gods, murmuring mysteries and warnings to man.” In one account called “The Birth of Winds,” she gives Rata‘iri as the father, and Temuri as the mother of the winds, saying that “when the sea is plentifully capped outside and lightly capped inside the reef, it is then that *To'eraumara'imoana*, deep and vast, is blowing.<sup>22</sup>

Gutmanis (1983) later published that in order to procure waves, Hawaiians would call to the wind goddess La'amaomao, saying to get out the big wind gourd, a call that echoes Kūapāka'a's chant. The calabash mentioned is a reference to the wind gourd of La'amaomao. Pāka'a and Kūapāka'a used the gourd to control the winds. They were able to do so because it held the bones of their ancestor, La'amaomao, who held that ability.

Johnson finds the parallel to La'amaomao in the Rarotongan and Maori stories of *Rakamaomao*. She also expands on her discussions of the calabash by associating it with navigation, as is found in the story of *Kana*, the rope *kupua* who was raised by the goddess Uli. This son of Hina was born with a rope body and cast aside, but Uli found him and cared for him in such a calabash. Kana and Niheu, his younger brother, battle a Moloka'i chief who abducted their mother because of her high rank.

Ho'oulumāhie and Nogelmeyer illuminate Hi'iaka's calls to Lono, for it is through this god that she and her friends survive the dangers in the surf. Both Lono and La'amaomao appear to create surf and grant safe passage to surfers who call on them, namely when they are in that extreme environment. That these deities assume this role as wind gods who have the power to raise the surf shows the recognition Hawaiians had for

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these real relationships in nature. It seems as if one deity was set aside in place of a new deity, one found in another family branch. This may have been the point of crossing between two waves of travelers that had branched off of one line.

Can you begin to see the genealogical allusions to the wave? Just before a wave breaks, it reaches up to its highest point, and then breaks and folds, running along the diagonal—*ka nalu ha'i lala*. The surfer flying atop the crest of a diagonally breaking wave has metaphorically acquired the mana of a high ranking chief, either through genealogical ties or by usurping power, or both. Like a wave, a high-ranking hereditary peak forms where two crests (peoples) meet. The male line clings to connections that stemmed from the high-ranking female in this case. Although 'Aikanaka is from Hina's line, he doesn't seem to hold this position, Hina does. Their children outrank them.

Hina was the mother; the younger brother Hema usurped the position of the older brother Puna-*ali'i* by his marrying back into the mother's line. He successfully broke from the main line because of the goddess whom he married. Hema created a new branch for his children, one that would rival Puna's children in hereditary rank. His son Kaha'i surfs at the peak of this new wave—*Kiekie Kaha'i, ku'emanu e!* If poetically the surfer stands atop the highest genealogical crest, then the couple with the highest position would be the one closest to the breaking point in the line, the *ha'i*. The offspring of this new line of high chiefs was named Kaha'i because of this genealogical allusion.

That is why Huauri/Ulumahaoa is not Hawai'i's surfing deity. The honor goes to the last couple within the original lineage, namely the bud that branched from the stalk. We saw how Lono (Ro'o, Rongo) and Haumea (Nona, Papa) are the parents of Hinahānaiakamālama, whose seniority transfers to Puna. However, she sent Hema back

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to her homeland to procure a wife from Lono and Haumea's line, therefore having equal hereditary rank as Hina. This union would create a similar rank if Hina bore a child from Hema. A new line of high-ranking hereditary chiefs is born by Hema's efforts, and the son Kaha'i attains the same rank as Puna's children. These chiefs from the younger line will rival their elder lineage. New deities who spring from their immediate parentage will compete, join, or usurp those worshipped by the elder line.

La'a remained the deity that controlled the winds for the elder line, but for the younger line, the tie to hereditary *mana* had to come from the stalk at the closest point to the break. In Hema's branch, Hina becomes the surfing deity in Hawai'i, the one who rides atop the highest crest of her parents line, that of Lono and Haumea. Consider the poetic theme of love making that surfing implies: Hina is the woman in Hawai'i with which to ride this wave of high bloodline, just as Huauri is the one for Kaha'i to surf with upon reaching Tahiti. Puna does not seem as rude to his mother for not helping her when this light is shed. He just chose to surf with the women of senior rank in his father's line rather than break family protocol. When Puna and Hema were children it is said that Hina jumped into the moon. We might speculate that she went back to her homeland at Vaitemarama, the pool of the moon, where she had another child—perhaps Hinatahutahu.

The dynamics of Hawaiian chiefly relationships are revealed here through a study on surfing. Lono and Haumea generate the storm surf that both Hina and Huauri ride upon. As in the story of Keaomelemele, another high-ranking surfing wahine, one phenomenon allows for the next in a case of poetic genetics among natural and human forces. Hema can claim the same ties as his brother Puna because the two children emerge from the same source, Lono and Haumea. This dynamic relationship plays out in

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almost every piece of Hawaiian literature that I have read. It is reflected in the characters, plants, animals, language, metaphors, and deities with whom the people associate and discuss in their stories. Attempting to follow this thematic current is like trying to surf in rough seas because it is so poetically enveloped, but it is present never the less.

La'a (-*maomao*) is the wind deity who came from the homeland south of the equator (-*afar*). This deity may have been the original god of weather and surf for these people. Hina caused a break in the family line and procured a new branch from her own ranks. Lono ties Hina to the senior line that springs from the womb of Haumea, and Kanaloa above her. That means that Lono is the connecting point in recognizing relationship when people of each branch meet, a key factor in Hi'iaka's ability to move about the islands. Because of this position, Lono is called upon to survive the surf (waves of people—a flood) as well, so both he and La'amaomao are surfing deities in Hawai'i.

### Nu'akea

However, that is only half the story. Along with the male god Lono, Gutmanis points to the goddess Nu'akea as patron of nursing mothers, a “part” of Haumea, who is a source god of the Hawaiian people. Emerson and Beckwith describe Kea as the patron of nursing mothers, known as Keakealani or Nu'akea as well. In the genealogies of the chiefs she came to Hawai'i with Lonoika'ouali'i, but stayed on Moloka'i where she married the high chief Keoloewa:

At the time that Lono came to Hawai'i, there also came the goddess Nu'akea, sometimes called Kea-kea or Kea-kea-lani. She was said to be a “part” of Haumea, one of the *kumu 'aumakua* or source gods. In Hawai'i she became the patron of nursing mothers and is prayed to when an increase or decrease in the flow of milk is desired.<sup>23</sup>

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Johnson indicates that Nu'akea is the granddaughter of Māweke and daughter of Keaunui, and thus the sister of La'akona, ancestor of the high chiefs of Ewa.<sup>14</sup> In the story of Kana, her brother is Moi, the prophet who warns the Molokai chief Kaupepe'e of defeat for having kidnapped Kana's mother, Hina. Likewise, Kōlea and 'Ulili are the bird messengers. Beckwith comments that Nu'akea "lived on earth as a prophetess and became the wife of Keolo-ewa, ruling chief of Molokai and son of Kamauaua":

The relation of the god Lono to the Kamau-nui family of Maui, from whom Kamapua'a the hog man is descended and with whom the Kamauaua family of Molokai seem by their name connected.... It would seem likely that Lono was the god worshipped by this family.<sup>24</sup>

Beckwith later remarks in a discussion on the fiery relationship between Pele and Kamapua'a that "The Kamaunu and Pele families are represented in myth as hostile, although in some way related."<sup>25</sup>

Lonoika'ouali'i later became known as the god whose head is hidden in the dark storm clouds—the kind that causes the swelling of the sea. Nāmakaokaha'i's brother is so named in the story of 'Aukelenuiaikū. In that story he is the god that 'Aukele carries in a box/calabash. Furthermore, La'amaikahiki brought an image of this feather god with him when he voyaged up from Tahiti—could it be the same one? Fornander states that the image was laid to rest with Mo'ikeha in Wailuanuinoano on Kaua'i because it was his father's god.<sup>26</sup>

Way down the genealogical path of the Māweke-Keaunui branch stands Keakealani, she is a *kapu* chiefess for whom the high-walled complex of Kamoā *heiau* was built. Fornander's genealogies indicate that this woman is indeed a direct lineal descendent of Nu'akea and her Moloka'i husband, Keoloewa-a-Kamauaua. It was at

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Keakealani’s complex at Kamoā (one of the religious complexes related to surfing mentioned earlier) that Kamehameha I learned how to surf. Beckwith expands on this concept in describing Lono and his counterpart Nu‘akea:

Lono in Hawai‘i is associated with cloud signs and the phenomena of storms... The coming of Lono is heralded by cloud signs in the heavens and finally [they arrive]:

Lono and Keakea-lani,  
Living together, fructifying the earth,  
Observing the tapu of women,  
Clouds bow down over the sea,  
The earthquake sounds  
Within the earth,  
Tumbling down there  
Below Malama.<sup>27</sup>

With regards to the ocean, it appears that Lono and Nu‘akea are alluded to through their *kinolau* (embodied natural forms). What should be recognized is that from this standpoint we have journeyed full circle to an understanding that Hawaiians may have held concerning the factors that generate surf. Lono resides in the storm clouds—those clouds that carry Kāne’s waters of life, and his sister wife Nu‘akea who rides upon the sea of potential swell. These deities create waves through their embodied natural phenomena interacting with one another, i.e. the kinetic energy of the wind acting upon the potential energy within the sea. In a similar manner, La‘amaomao, goddess of the wind for Pāka‘a and Kūapāka‘a, occupies the same role in that the potential energy within the calabash (wherein resides the god) must be acted upon—called upon and directed, in order to procure the desired waves to ride.

Consider that the Earth is often seen as a giant calabash whose cover is the dome of Rumia, of Kuakini, of the sky father Lono/Wakea who is the “source of winds and rains.” Woman as embodied by Haumea/Papa/Hina/Nu‘akea holds the sea of potential

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swells within that calabash. These swells (*hua*) form in the deep dark waters (*kai uli*) through the action of the storm winds which accompany the large weather systems. So, as a deity being honored, the patron asks Nu'akea/Haumea to cause the fruitfulness of a woman through the swelling of the breasts, as likened to the fruitfulness of the sea through the swelling of the waves. This action is carried out by a younger relative named Huaauri in Tahiti.

La'amaomao seems to be the procreative force through her calabash of great winds that create waves. Likewise, Lono is the head of the storm clouds that create big seas through similar forces, and is also associated with great winds, lightning, and thunder that go along with those storms. It should be duly noted however, that in both cases of Huaauri and La'amaomao (as the grandmother of Paka'a), the position of surfing deity is held, not by a god, but by a goddess, and in the case of Hema, a woman from under the sea. Lono "respects the tapu of women" and his wife Nu'akea, a part of Haumea, is carried upon the winds of Lonoika'oualii to Moloka'i. Hers is the tapu found swimming in the sea of Māmala, where the lehua is removed by Pīkoi, and the great kapu Maui chiefess Keleanuinoana'api'api surfs with her O'ahu chief Kalamākua. It is the tapu that was taken by Maui from the mudhens and begot by Kaha'i, who broke the elder line of chiefs and began his own wave of people.

The breaking of the genealogical line into branches becomes obvious when Hawaiian surf literature is looked at closely. Surfing metaphors follow those breaking points because they have to do with those characters who reach the loftiest genealogical heights. Puna and Hema branches thus honor the one who reaches the highest peak on their own branch, a shoot from the stem/main stalk of people. Huaauri was this atua in

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Tahiti, probably of Kaiuli, the grandfather chief, thus she would be a cousin of rank along the male line. Johnson says that Kaiuli is another name for Wākea. *He'enalu* is the metaphor of this highest ranks of bluebloodline chiefs.

These conclusions are tentative at best, but beyond a doubt, Lono and La'amaomao are the two deities that hold sway as procreators and deliverers of surf in Hawai'i. Hina holds the genealogical potential for reaching those metaphorical heights here, especially after Haumea jumped into the 'ulu tree, metaphorically disappearing into the Ulu lineage dominated by Hina characters. La'amaomao the grandmother of Pāka'a may have carried a similar genealogical potential when through the generations the line of Nu'akea and Lono intermingled with Keoloewa on Molokai. A question arises here whether the prophet Moi, the brother of Nu'akea, is the same as Lonoika'ouali'i, who is called the brother-husband of Nu'akea, or another brother. Regardless, it plays to the association of the Kamauaua family of Molokai with Lono. Perhaps that is why Pāka'a and Kūapāka'a could claim the highest bloodlines, even over the chiefs of Hawai'i at that time. That line would pull rank straight back to Kahiki from a line that came later, but related to the first.

It seems that this basic opposition between family groups feeds much of the mythological and real tension amongst the chiefs, priests, and commoners of that era, and in times prior to their occupation of the Hawaiian islands. That tension only mounted as politics escalated in these islands, eventually leading up to the devastation of O'ahu chiefs that occurred in Kamehameha's time.



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