Pahua Heiau

Maunalua, O‘ahu

By Holly K. Coleman

Pahua Heiau sits at the foot of Kamiloiki Ridge on a 1.15 acre land parcel, between Kamiloiki and Kamilonui Valleys on O‘ahu. In ancient times, this location offered strategic views of the plains of Maunalua, Kalama and Wäwämalu. The presence of the heiau indicates the sacred nature of this place for Native Hawaiians.

Pahua is one of dozens of recorded archaeological sites and one of four confirmed heiau (place of worship) sites in Maunalua, now known as Hawai‘i Kai. Pahua is one of the most significant sacred sites remaining in Maunalua, and remains a vital cultural and historical resource for Native Hawaiians and the broader community.

Pahua Heiau was given to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) in 1988 by the Bishop Estate and was the first landholding acquired by OHA. The goal of this Information Sheet is to explore some of the cultural and historical narratives of Pahua Heiau and the surrounding areas. This Information Sheet will also strengthen OHA’s foundation of knowledge for this wahi pana (storied, noted place).
Maunalua’s landscape is that of a leeward coastal plain, and it is characterized as dry and arid in the journals of foreigners recorded in the late 1700s. However, many historical accounts suggest that there was a ready availability of water and food in the area. Maunalua was known for marshy areas where there were coconut groves, water holes, and springs (Stump, 1981). Native Hawaiians also grew *kalo* (*Colocasia esculenta*) in the inner valleys of Maunalua, where there were springs with freshwater food resources, such as ‘*ōpae* (shrimp) and fish (Goss, 1962). The ocean at Maunalua was also well-known for abundance and was one of the best fishing grounds on the island of O‘ahu.

### Selected Place Names in Mauanalua

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haha’ione</th>
<th>Hālona</th>
<th>Hanauma</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Ihi‘ihiluaakea</td>
<td>Ka Iwi</td>
<td>Kalama</td>
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<td>Kamilonui/iki</td>
<td>Kawaihoa</td>
<td>Kuapā</td>
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<td>Kealakīpapa</td>
<td>Kohelepelepe</td>
<td>Kuamo‘okāne</td>
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<td>Nono‘ula</td>
<td>‘Ōku‘u</td>
<td>Wāwāmalu</td>
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### Name Meaning and Location of Maunalua

The name Maunalua (two mountains) is attributed to Ka Lae o Koko, also known as Kuamo‘okāne (today known as Koko Head), and Kohelepelepe (today known as Koko Crater). Historical records suggest that Maunalua was alternately considered an *ahupua‘a* (land division) and an ‘*ili* (small land parcel) of Waimānalo or Honolulu (Maly & Wong, 1998). In the late 1700s, Maunalua was considered to be an ‘*ili* of the *ahupua‘a* of Waimānalo in the *moku* (district) of Ko‘olauluapoko. In 1859, Maunalua was incorporated as an ‘*ili* of Honolulu (Sterling & Summers, 1978). Although these boundaries changed over time, the Maunalua area was generally considered to include the *mauka* (inland) valleys of Kuli‘ou‘ou, Haha‘ione, Kamilonui, Kamiloiki, and Kalama, as well as the coastal areas of Koko, Hanauma, Wāwāmalu, and Kaiwi, which ran to Makapu‘u.
Life and Activity in Maunalua

Historical records indicate that the occupation of certain villages in Maunalua was not always sustained or permanent, and that Maunalua likely had a shifting population. For example, in 1826, the American missionary Levi Chamberlain (1828) described a fishing village named Keawaawa of approximately 100 houses in Maunalua, which was abandoned in later years.

The ocean at Maunalua was well-known as a famous fishing ground and many moʻolelo (historical narratives) describe the abundance of fish. For example, Makapuʻu was famous for “ka uhu kaʻi,” travelling parrotfish (Pukui, 1983). Into the early twentieth century, mullet were known to stop seasonally in Maunalua Bay on their way to Kahu-ku from Puʻuloa to spawn (Krauss, 1966).

Moʻolelo also suggest that parts of Maunalua and surrounding areas, such as Makapuʻu and Kaʻawi, were used as sites to train navigators. Hanauma was known as a recreation area for aliʻi (Sterling & Summers, 1978).

ʻUala in Maunalua

The inland coastal regions of Maunalua were known to be an intensive ʻuala (sweet potato) agricultural complex that supported the populations of Maunalua and other areas of the island (Goss, 1962; McAlister, 1933). The plain below Kamiloiki and Kealakīpapa was known as “Ke Kula o Kaumualii” and was famous for growing sweet potatoes; the area known as Wāwāmalu was also famous for its abundant sweet potatoes. Trade and whaling ships stopped at Hahaʻione and Wāwāmalu to stock up on ʻuala before leaving the islands (Handy et al., 1991).
Ke Ahupua o Maunalua
Maunalua was the site of a remarkably large loko i'a (fishpond) known as Keahupua o Maunalua (the shrine of the baby mullet of Maunalua) which was also called Kuapä or Maunalua Pond in later years (Sterling & Summers, 1978). In 1851, Keahupua o Maunalua was said to have covered 523 acres, and it stretched nearly two miles inland. It was believed to have been the largest fishpond ever constructed in Hawai‘i and possibly the Pacific (Thrum, 1906). Scholars believe that Keahupua o Maunalua, which was considered a loko kuapä (a type of pond named for the stone wall that was used in its construction), was created by blocking off part of a naturally existing arm of the bay. The brackish waters of the pond supported many varieties of fish and sea life, but Keahupua o Maunalua was especially known for the ‘ama‘ama (mullet) and awa (milkfish).

Mo‘olelo of the Fishpond
Many important mo‘olelo surround Keahupua o Maunalua. The fishpond was said to have been built by the chiefess Mahoe, with the help of the menehune (a race of people known for their mysterious works) (McAllister, 1933).

A number of mo‘o (water spirits) were associated with Keahupua o Maunalua. Mo‘o were usually described as ‘aumakua (family gods, deified ancestors) with reptilian features who ensured abundant fish and community health (Poeoe, n.d.; Kamakau, 1976). The mo‘o Laukupu was known to be the guardian and caretaker of Keahupua o Maunalua (Kamakau, 1976; McAllister, 1933). A mo‘o known as Luahine was said to have traveled from the fishpond to Pali Luahine in Mānoa (Sterling & Summers, 1978).

Keahupua o Maunalua was also strongly associated with Kā‘elepulu in Kailua, O‘ahu, which was known for being a favored fishpond and source of ‘o‘opu (a type of goby fish) of the ali‘i ‘aimoku (chief of a district or island) Peleioholani (Kanaiku‘ihonoināmoku, 1865). Schools of ‘ama‘ama were said to have vanished from Keahupua o Maunalua while massive schools of awa would appear; the opposite was true for Kā‘elepulu; many felt that there was a subterranean lava tube or tunnel connecting the two ponds (McAllister, 1933). The associations between Keahupua o Maunalua and Kā‘elepulu were likely significant to Native Hawaiians, who may have understood these wahi pana to be linked in other ways.
Mo‘olelo about Maunalua and Surrounding Areas

Maunalua was one of the legendary places visited by the akua (gods) Kāne and Kanaloa, who travelled around the islands creating springs and other sources of water. A place in Maunalua was named Kawaihoa (the water companion) as a testament to the water-bringing activities of these akua. It was also in Maunalua that Kāne‘apua threw himself down in anguish when his elder brothers Kāne and Kanaloa left without him, after he took too long fetching water for ‘awa. His body became Kua‘mo‘ookāne‘apua or Kua‘mo‘okāne (the backbone of Kāne), the cinder cone ridge dividing Hanauma from the area now known as Portlock on Maunalua Bay (Goss, 1962; Moku‘maia, 1921).

Maunalua plays a prominent role in other mo‘olelo. The shark ‘aumakua ‘Ouha was known to live in the waters of Koko (Westervelt, 1915). In a mele (chant) said to have been chanted by Kuapāka’a (the son of Pāka’a, who was the famous attendant of the ali‘i Keawenuiaumī), all the winds of O‘ahu were named, starting and ending in Maunalua (Nakuina, 1990).

Pele and Hi‘iaka in Maunalua

Maunalua is mentioned in mo‘olelo connected with Pele and her other sisters. When Pele was being pursued by the half-man, half-pig kupua (demigod) Kamapua‘a, Kapohelele (also known as Kapoma‘ilele) detached her ma‘i (sexual organ) from her body and flung it towards Koko. It left an imprint on a mountain at Maunalua, which was then called Kohelepelepe (vagina labia minor) and Pu‘ulepelepe (labia minor hill).

Maunalua and surrounding areas were also visited by the akua wahine (goddess) Hi‘iakaikapiopele and her companion Wahine‘ōma‘o in their epic travels to fetch Pele’s lover, Lohi‘au. While approaching Makapu‘u from Mokoka‘i, the men who were paddling the canoe bearing Hi‘iaka and her retinue were frightened after seeing a woman with many eyes, who was known as Makapu‘u; they fled from the canoe upon landing (Maly & Wong, 1998). On another leg of their journey, Hi‘iaka and Wahine‘ōma‘o were welcomed by the benevolent akua wahine ‘Ihi‘ihilauākea and Kanono‘ula at Kuamo‘okāne in Koko (Maly & Wong, 1998).
Maunalua and The Mähele

Maunalua was retained by Kamämalu under Royal Patent Grant 4475 and Land Commission Award 7713 during the Mahele, which was a series of laws which created legal mechanisms for land privatization in the Kingdom beginning in the mid and late 1840s (Maly & Wong, 1998). In 1856, Kamämalu leased all of Maunalua, except for Keahupua o Maunalua, to William Webster (a lawyer and land agent for the Kingdom), who held it until his death in 1864 (Dye, 2005; Takemoto et al., 1975). From 1864 to 1867, Maunalua was leased by Manuel Paiko and in 1867 Maunalua was leased to J. H. Kanepuu for a term of six years (Takemoto et al., 1975). Upon her death in 1866, Kamämalu’s lands were passed to her father, Mataio Kekūanåo‘a. Upon his death in 1868, his lands passed to his daughter, Ruth Ke‘elikōlani. When Ke‘elikōlani died in 1883, her extensive landholdings passed to her cousin, Bernice Pauahi Bishop, and Maunalua became a part of the Bishop Estate.

Population Loss in Maunalua

In an article published in the May 1, 1856 issue of Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika, J. H. Kanepuu documented the loss of population and economic hardships in Niu, Kuli‘ou‘ou, Koko, Ke‘awawa, and other places in Maunalua between 1852 and 1862, from more than 300 people to less than 150 people. He wrote:

Us make ka nui o na kanaka, ua hele kekahih poe. No ka hookaumaha o na konohiki, no ka nele kekahih i kahi ole e kanu ai na wahi pue ai mala o keia kaha, no ka puapa i na holoholona. A he nui no ka poe e aea wale nei o na kanaka o keia huihā i koe, no ka imi ana i wahi ola no lakou ma kahi e aea. (p. 2)

The majority of people have died, some have left. Concerning the burdening of the konohiki (land managers), it is because some do not have a place to plant in the sweet potato mounds of this place, which are overrun by animals. Many of those who remain just wander about aimlessly, seeking a means of livelihood elsewhere.

As suggested by Kanepuu, the rapid depopulation of Maunalua during the nineteenth century would complicate the transmission of ‘ike ‘āina pertaining to specific places, and was a significant factor in the loss of historical and cultural knowledge in Maunalua.
Kaiser and Hawai‘i Kai
Extensive residential and commercial development of Maunalua began in the 1970s. Henry J. Kaiser, an industrialist who had worked to build the Hoover and Grand Coulee Dams in the U.S., arrived in Hawai‘i in 1954 and began several development projects on O‘ahu; Kaiser envisioned a post–world war suburb that could house 75,000 people, a place in the islands where people from the U.S. could establish residence prior to statehood (Ali & Patrinos, 1995). With the permission of the landowners, Bishop Estate, Kaiser was able to initiate extensive residential development which would dramatically alter Maunalua in many ways. For example, large parts of Keahupua o Maunalua were dredged, farmers and other leaseholders in the area were forcibly removed, and Maunalua was renamed Hawai‘i Kai (the Kai was meant to be a subtle reference to Kaiser himself) (Ali & Patrinos, 1995).

Lunalilo Home
Upon his death in 1874 King William Charles Lunalilo’s will established a trust to benefit poor or infirm Native Hawaiians, particularly kūpuna (elders). The first Lunalilo Home was built in Kewalo in 1883. Costly repairs and maintenance to the Kewalo structures led trustees to seek a new location for the Home. In 1927, Lunalilo Home was moved to Maunalua on the slopes of Koko Head (Lunalilo Home, 2014).

Changing Land Use and Access
Transformations within Hawaiian society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would result in the increased loss of Native Hawaiian rights and access to natural resources in Maunalua. Lands were increasingly used to ranch cattle after being leased or sold. Fishing rights to Keahupua o Maunalua were also leased, and leaseholders often prohibited the free use of resources in the pond. When a cholera epidemic hit O‘ahu in 1895 and again in 1900, all the fish from Keahupua o Maunalua were put under quarantine; fish and other seafood from the pond were prohibited for sale and consumption (Hawaiian Gazette, 1895; Hawaiian Star, 1900).

Over time, rice paddies, kukui (Aleurites moluccana) farms, coconut plantations, pigeon runs, apiaries, poultry farms, cattle ranching and other agro-commercial endeavors were initiated in Maunalua (MacCaughy, 1918). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, increasing numbers of Chinese and Portuguese immigrants moved to the area. In the 1960s, the areas immediately surrounding Pahua Heiau were occupied by pig farms and rural homesteads (Davis, 1985b).
Sacred Drums
Häwea and ‘Opuku were two of the most famous and sacred pahu, (drums) in Hawaiian history, and were prominent in many important religious ceremonies on O‘ahu; the use of Häwea and ‘Opuku has been recorded at Kūkaniloko, a birthing place of the ali‘i (McKinzie, 1986). Both drums were said to have strong ties to the Maunalua area. According to Kamakau (1867), a man named Ha‘ikamālama from the Maunalua area heard a drum as the chief La‘amaikahiki and his retinue landed their canoes at Kawahaokamānō in Waihaukalua. Ha‘ikamālama learned to make pahu, which subsequently spread throughout Hawai‘i (Kamakau, 1867). It has been speculated that Häwea Heiau, which is located to the west of Pahua, once housed the sacred drum Häwea (McKinzie, 1986). Although it is not known whether there was an association between Häwea Heiau and Pahua, there is a possibility that Pahua was a heiau that once housed the sacred drum ‘Opuku.

The Significance of Heiau
Heiau represent some of the most complex religious and political structures in traditional Native Hawaiian society, and were considered to be wahi pana (E. Kanahele, 1991). The intended function of a heiau informed its location, construction, the complexity of religious–political ceremonies performed, as well as the sacred nature of the site (Kamakau, 1976). The function and type of heiau dictated the observation of different sets of ceremonies and kapu (regulations and restrictions) (Malo, 1951). Heiau represented different levels of social complexity and political power because of the inherent demands on natural resources and labor (G. Kanahele, 1986). The use of heiau was not always continuous, depending on its type and function. For example, use of an agricultural heiau may have mirrored planting seasons, while heiau dedicated to politics or war may have shifted in or out of ceremonial use coinciding with the ascension of an ali‘i and recognition of a new akua (Johnson, 1983, p. 232). Heiau that had been abandoned for long periods of time could also be reconditioned and put into use (Buck, 2003).

Pahua Heiau Possible Uses
There is not much recorded information about Pahua Heiau. Archaeologists estimate that Pahua Heiau was constructed in either 1485—1665 CE or 1760—1795 CE (Davis, 1985c). Archaeologist J. Gilbert McAllister (1933) noted, “The heiau is 68 by 40 feet in extent and is primarily a built-up rock terrace with several low division walls,” (p. 65). Pahua is thought to have been an agricultural heiau. If Pahua was an agricultural heiau, it is likely that the kapu surrounding it were not exceedingly strict.
Possible Meanings for the Name Pahua

Pahua was the only name recorded for the heiau as given by a Native Hawaiian informant to McAllister in the early 1930s. In the August 8, 1834 issue of Ka Lama Hawai'i, David Malo used the phrase “noho anea kula wela la o Pahua,” (tarrying in the vibrating heat of the hot plains of Pahua) in a kanikau (mourning chant) composed for Queen Ka‘ahumanu in reference to an area in Maunalua.

The exact meaning of the name Pahua is difficult to determine but may reveal information about its function and importance in Hawaiian society. The name pahua could have referred to a characteristic of the water in the area; the word pahu can convey a pushing or thrusting force or motion, while the word pahü can refer a bursting forth or an explosion (Pukui & Elbert, 1986). In the course of the restoration of Pahua in the 1980s, archaeologists found that the rear portion of one of the heiau platforms had once been saturated by ground water seeping from the cliff (Davis, 1985b). The word pahua is also associated with a type of hula (dance) and its dancers (Pukui & Elbert, 1986). Pahu’ā could refer to a fiery drum, invoking the famous drums ‘Opuku and Hawea. Pāhu’a can refer to an area that is free of vegetation. Pahua could have been named for particular people and akua. Pahua was the name of one of eight famous warriors of the ‘Ewa and Waialua districts of O’ahu in the late 1700s (Westervelt, 1906). Kāne–i–ka–pahu’a and Kāne–kū–pahu’a were also the names of an important akua with an owl manifestation who stood at the edge of the forest (Handy, 1941 in Emory, 1942). The placement of Pahua near the easternmost end of the island of O’ahu may also indicate an affiliation between the heiau and Kāne, since the east, the rising sun, and sunlight were all traditionally associated with Kāne (Handy & Pukui, 1972).

Hawea Heiau

Hawea Heiau is in Maunalua and is at the foot of Kaluanui Ridge. Formerly, the edges of Keahupua o Maunalua extended to the heiau and it is said to have housed the drum Hawea. The site is part of a large archaeological complex and includes coconut groves, petroglyphs, a spring, terraces, and other archaeological features. Like Pahua, Hawea was affected by the rapid urbanization of Maunalua and has been threatened by luxury development in recent years. The nonprofit Livable Hawai‘i Kai Hui and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) which purchased the site for preservation. In March 2014, Hawea Heiau complex and Keawawa wetlands were declared a community owned and managed Hawaiian cultural heritage preserve (City and County of Honolulu, 2014).
Restoration of Pahua Heiau

Significant deterioration of Pahua occurred in the decades following the early part of the 1970s, much of it the result of aggressive urban residential development in Maunalua. Stones from the site were used to make walls in residential landscaping and agricultural developments in the area. Erosion of the hillside buried parts of the site, and several trees disturbed the structural integrity of the heiau. Davis (1985b) notes that by 1980, “the structure had already been virtually reduced to an amorphous heap of rock,” (p. 3).

Modern restoration of Pahua Heiau has been the result of concerted community efforts. The first impetus for restoration came from the Hawai‘i Kai Lion’s Club, which cleared the site of vegetation in 1980. Four years later, on September 17, 1984, the Hawai‘i Kai Outdoor Circle identified Pahua for its 1984–1985 volunteer community service project.

Restoration efforts engaged volunteers of diverse backgrounds, and included community members, tradespeople, and professionals. Students from Kamehameha Schools and the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, the Boy and Girl Scouts, volunteers from the Lions Club and National Job Corps, the Hawai‘i National Guard, as well as the community service work force from the O‘ahu Community Correctional Facility helped with the restoration (Davis, 1985b). The restoration process was overseen by Earl Neller, an archaeologist with the State of Hawai‘i Department of Historic Preservation, and Bertell Davis, an archaeologist with the Bishop Museum; Davis served as principal investigator in the project.

Pahua and OHA

Originally held by the Bishop Estate, fee simple title of the land parcel of Pahua Heiau was transferred to OHA in 1988, on the condition that the whole of the property be used for historical purposes only. OHA seeks to steward Pahua in a way that fulfills OHA’s kuleana (reciprocal responsibility) to Native Hawaiians, honors Pahua as a wahi pana, and actively involves the community in care of the site.
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