The Legacy of Hālawa Valley

1 Solotario, Pilipo (b. 1939), personal conversations with Robert Mondoy; August 2010 & November 2011

Pilipo related to me in August 2010 a humorous tale about Kauhuhu and its lïpoa from his childhood days in Hālawa.

The fishermen of the valley sometimes would set out to get a turtle to eat. They were not successful most times, but curiously, when they arrived home the women would have in their possession a freshly caught turtle! “How did you get this turtle?”, they inquired, but got a secretive, conspiratorial silence in return; the women kept their technique a secret from the men! Curious, the child Pilipo one day decided to furtively observe the women. He followed them to Kauhuhu, hiding in the naupaka shrubbery above the bouldered beach. Apparently, these most-observant women waited for a low tide, and when the honu came in to feed on the lïpoa, sometimes a wave would knock them over and upside-down. The enterprising wahine thus almost effortlessly caught their honu. So that was the great secret the women kept from the men! Aa, Pilipo slipped and tripped out from the naupaka shrubbery that hid him! His mama saw and approached him, and glaring at him in all seriousness enjoined him to vow stern secrecy about what he witnessed. The secret must be kept at all costs! All his life thereafter, Pilipo kept this vow. As an adult, having already traveled the world and returning to visit his elderly mama, many years after so many of her peers had already passed on, he asked, “Mama, do you remember the story of the honu and the women’s secret turtle-fishing place at Kauhuhu? And do you remember how you made me promise to keep that secret?” In response Mama smiled broadly, nodded, and chuckled at the memory; she remembered! So says Pilipo today, “And so I kept my secret, and so I have now told you the moÿolelo about the honu at Kauhuhu and the women’s secret.”

2 Williams, John, Honolulu Star-Bulletin, May 18, 1935, Third Section, col 3. According to Pilipo Solotario (personal conversation of November 2011 with Robert Mondoy); Kamehameha V.

3 Ibid. Pilipo pointed out the remaining walls of a stone house, in the same general area as Glenn Davis’ Hālawa home.


5 He Mele Aloha has for verse 1, line 1: “He ‘āina kaulana ‘o Hālawa”, however, all the recordings I’ve reviewed, even the 1930’s version by the Moloka‘i Jubilee Singers, use “He ‘āina maika‘i ‘o Hālawa”. On Moloka‘i we’ve normally sung “He ‘āina maika‘i ‘o Hālawa”. I suspect that the He Mele Aloha line is a from another source unknown to me. “Alo lua” can also be spelled “alolua”; both are suitable (P. Nogelmeier).

6 Among Hālawa residents, it is anecdotal that Charles E. King possessed property in the valley (property maps from that time period bear this out) and that he may have actually visited or lived in Hālawa valley for a while.
15 Nogelmeier, Puakea, (b. 1954), personal conversation. Nā hono a Pi‘ilani, nā hono o Piilani; both are suitable. Also: i ke pili, i ka pili; both are suitable.

16 Camara, Marsha, (1943-2013) Molokai Song Album, Vol. 1, sui generis, 1981. Walter Kawa’a, Sr. (a Hālawa resident, (1915-1996) still knew the tune to the verses, sharing it not only with his children at home but also with Marsha Camara during her endeavors to preserve and collect Moloka‘i songs in 1981. Preferred was a choice of two sets of verses. Marsha Camara hand-prepared several volumes of this collection for various teachers (including my mom Emily Mondoy and step-mom Joyce Waipa) and schools on the island, and prepared a audio cassette for each set. There is a copy in the Moloka‘i library. Although labeled “Vol. 1,” this was the only volume she made. There are minor differences among the books and cassette tapes, given their manual preparation - I personally discovered no serious discrepancies among them. She has given our Moloka‘i community a rather unique and extraordinary gift.

17 Solomon’s middle name “Kauluahi” showed up on research done in the late 1980’s for the Year of the Hawaiian Songbook research project; A Bishop Museum archival photograph lists “Ka‘alouahi” as a family name from Hālawa. The refrain of “Ka Man‘oa Nō Ia” is referred to in Ka Nupepa Kuokoa, Volume 59, Issue 33, 19 August 1921, p. 8, in a letter from Wailau resident Mrs. K Beringer, as composed by “Kema” (no data found beyond the name). Solomon Fuller probably cast this text to music as a refrain, and added a number of verses of his own, those luckily preserved by Walter Kawa’a, Sr. and Marsha Camara.

18 Summers, Catherine, Molokai: A Site Survey, pgs. 148-150.