

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE HAWAIIAN CANOE.

1. The Hawaiian *wa'a*, or canoe, was made of the wood of the *koa* tree. From the earliest times the wood of the bread-fruit, *kukui*, *ohia-ha*, and *wiliwili* was used in canoe-making, but the extent to which these woods were used for this purpose was very limited. The principal wood used in canoe-making was always the *koa*. (*Acacia heterophylla*.)

2. The building of a canoe was an affair of religion. When a man found a fine *koa* tree he went to the *kahuna kalai wa'a* and said, "I have found a *koa* tree, a fine large tree." On receiving this information the *kahuna* went at night to the *mua*,¹ to sleep before his shrine, in order to obtain a revelation from his deity in a dream as to whether the tree was sound or rotten.

3. And if in his sleep that night he had a vision of some one standing naked before him, a man without a *malo*, or a woman without a *pau*, and covering their shame with the hand, on awakening the *kahuna* knew that the *koa* in question was rotten (*puha*), and he would not go up into the woods to cut that tree.

4. He sought another tree, and having found one, he slept again in the *mua* before the altar, and if this time he saw a handsome, well dressed man or woman, standing before him, when he awoke he felt sure that the tree would make a good canoe.

5. Preparations were made accordingly to go into the mountains and hew the *koa* into a canoe. They took with them, as offerings, a pig, cocoanuts, red fish (*kumu*), and *awa*.

Having come to the place they camped down for the night, sacrificing these things to the gods with incantations (*hoomana*) and prayers, and there they slept.

6. In the morning they baked the hog in an oven made close to the root of the *koa*, and after eating the same they examined the tree. One of the party climbed up into the tree to measure the part suitable for the hollow of the canoe, where should be the bottom, what the total length of the craft.

7. Then the *kahuna* took the ax of stone and called upon the gods:

"O *Ku-pulupulu*,² *Ku-ala-na-wao*,³ *Ku-moku-halii*,⁴ *Ku-ka-ieie*,⁵ *Ku-palalake*,⁶ *Ku-ka-ohia-laka*."⁷—These were the male deities. Then he called upon the female deities:

"O *Lea*⁸ and *Ka-pua-o-alaka'i*,⁹ listen now to the ax. This is the ax that is to fell the tree for the canoe.".....

8. The *koa* tree was then cut down, and they set about it in the following manner: Two scarfs were made about three feet apart, one above and one below, and when they had been deepened, the chips were split off in a direction lengthwise of the tree.

9. Cutting in this way, if there was but one *kahuna*, it would take many days to fell the tree; but if there were many *kahunas*, they might fell it the same day. When the tree began to crack to its fall, they lowered their voices and allowed no one to make a disturbance.

10. When the tree had fallen, the head *kahuna* mounted upon the trunk, ax in hand, facing the stump, his back being turned toward the top of the tree.

11. Then in a loud tone he called out, "Smite with the ax and hollow the canoe! Give me the *malo*!"¹⁰ Thereupon the *kahuna's* wife handed him his ceremonial *malo*, which was white; and, having girded himself, he turned about and faced the head of the tree.

12. Then having walked a few steps on the trunk of the tree, he stood and called out in a loud voice, "Strike with the ax and hollow it! Grant us a canoe!"¹¹ Then he struck a blow with the ax on the tree, and repeated the same words again; and so he kept on doing until he had reached the point where the head of the tree was to be cut off.

13. At the place where the head of the tree was to be severed from the trunk he wreathed the tree with *ie-ie*. Then having erred from the trunk he wreathed the tree with *ie-ie*, (*Freycinetia Scandens*). Then having repeated a prayer appropriate to cutting off the top of the tree, and having again commanded silence and secured it, he proceeded to cut off the top of the tree. This done, the *kahuna* declared the ceremony performed, the tabu removed; thereupon the people raised a shout at the successful performance of the ceremony, and the removal of all tabu and restraint in view of its completion.

14. Now began the work of hewing out the canoe, the first thing being to taper the tree at each end, that the canoe might be sharp at stem and stern. Then the sides and bottom (*kua-moo*) were hewn down and the top was flattened (*hola*). The inner parts of the canoe were then planned and located by measurement.

15. The *kahuna* alone planned out and made the measurements for the inner parts of the canoe. But when this work was accomplished the restrictions were removed and all the craftsmen took hold of the work (*noa ka oihana o ka waa*).

16. Then the inside of the canoe was outlined and the *pepeiao*, brackets, on which to rest the seats, were blocked out, and the craft was still further hewn into shape. A *maku'u*,¹² or neck, was wrought at the stern of the canoe, to which the lines for hauling the canoe were to be attached.

17. When the time had come for hauling the canoe down to the ocean again came the *kahuna* to perform the ceremony called *pu i ka wa'a*, which consisted in attaching the hauling lines to the canoe-log. They were fastened to the *maku'u*. Before doing this the *kahuna* invoked the gods in the following prayer:

"O *Ku-pulupulu*, *Ku-ala-na-wao*, and *Ku-moku-halii*! look you after this canoe. Guard it from stem to stern until it is placed in the *halau*." After this manner did they pray.

18. The people now put themselves in position to haul the canoe. The only person who went to the rear of the canoe was the *kahuna*, his station being about ten fathoms behind it. The whole multitude of the people went ahead, behind the *kahuna* no one was permitted to go; that place was tabu, strictly reserved for the god of the *kahuna kalai wa'a*.

Great care had to be taken in hauling the canoe. Where the country was precipitous and the canoe would tend to rush down violently, some of the men must hold it back lest it be broken; and when it got lodged some of them must clear it. This care had to be kept up until the canoe had reached the *halau*, or canoe-house.

21. In the *halau* the fashioning of the canoe was resumed. First the upper part was shaped and the gunwales were shaved down; then the sides of the canoe from the gunwales down were put into shape. After this the mouth (*waha*) of the canoe was

turned downwards and the *iwi kaele*, or bottom, being exposed, was hewn into shape. This done, the canoe was again placed mouth up and was hollowed out still further (*kupele maloko*). The outside was then finished and rubbed smooth (*anai ia*). The outside of the canoe was next painted black (*paele ia*).¹³ Then the inside of the canoe was finished off by means of the *koi-owili*, or reversible adze (commonly known as the *kupa-ai ke'e*).

22. After that were fitted on the carved pieces (*na laau*) made of *ahakea* or some other wood. The rails, which were fitted on to the gunwales and which were called *mo'o* (lizards) were the first to be fitted and sewed fast with sinnet or *aha*.

The carved pieces, called *manu*, at bow and stern, were the next to be fitted and sewed on, and this work completed the putting together of the body of the canoe (*ke kapili ana o ka waa*). It was for the owner to say whether he would have a single or double canoe.

23. If it was a single canoe or *kaukahi*, (cross-pieces), or *iako* and a float, called *ama*, were made and attached to the canoe to form the outrigger.

The ceremony of *lolo-waa*, consecrating the canoe, was the next thing to be performed in which the deity was again approached with prayer. This was done after the canoe had returned from an excursion out to sea.

24. The canoe was then carried into the *halau*, where were lying the pig, the red fish, and the cocoanuts that constituted the offering spread out before the *kahuna*. The *kahuna kalai-waa* then faced towards the bows of the canoe, where stood its owner, and said, "Attend now to the consecration of the canoe (*lolo ana o ka waa*), and observe whether it be well or ill done." Then he prayed:

25. 1 O Ku-wa¹⁴ o ka lani, o Ku-wa o ka honua,
 2 O Ku-wa o ka mauna, o Ku-wa o ka moana,
 3 O Ku-wa o ka po, o Ku-wa o ke ao,
 4 O Malualani ke Ku-wa, o Malua-hopu ke Ku-wa,
 5 Aia no ia ko'i la ke Ku-wa.
 6 Ka wa'a nei o ka luahine makua.
 7 Ka luahine! Owai?
 8 O ka luahine o Papa, wahine a Wakea.

- 9 *Nana i kuwa,¹⁵ nana i hainu,*
 10 *Nana i hele, nana i a'e,*
 11 *Nana i hoonoanoa.*
 12 *Noa ke kuwa¹⁶ o ka wa'a o Wakea.*
 26. 13 *O ka wa'a nei o ka luahine makua.*
 14 *Ka luahine! Owai?*
 15 *Ka luahine o Lea, wahine a Moku-halii.*
 16 *Nana i kuwa, nana i hainu,*
 17 *Nana i hele, nana i a'e,*
 18 *Nana i hoonoanoa.*
 19 *Noa ke kuwa o ka wa'a o Mokuhalii.*
 20 *Hinu helelei aku,*
 21 *Hinu helelei mai.*
 22 *He miki oe Kane,*
 23 *He miki oe Kanaloa.*
 24 *O Kanaloa hea oe?*
 25 *O Kanaloa inu awa,*
 26 *Mai Kahiki ka awa,*
 27 *Mai Upolu ka awa,*
 28 *Mai Wawau ka awa.*
 29 *E hano awa hua,*
 30 *E hano awa pauaka.*
 31 *Halapa i ke akua i laau wai la.*
 32 *Amama, ua noa.*
 33 *Lele wale aku la.*
 25. 1 Uplifter of the heavens, uplifter of the earth,
 2 Uplifter of the mountains, uplifter of the ocean,
 3 Who hast appointed the night, appointed the day,
 4 Malualani is the Kuwa and Maluahopu,
 5 That ax also is a kuwa.
 6 This is the ax of our venerable ancestral dame.
 7 Venerable dame! What dame?
 8 Dame Papa, the wife of Wakea.
 9 She set apart and consecrated, she turned the tree
 about,
 10 She impelled it, she guided it,
 11 She lifted the tabu from it.
 12 Gone is the tabu from the canoe of Wakea.
 13 The canoe this of our ancestral dame.

- 14 Ancestral dame! What dame?
- 15 Dame Lea, wife of Moku-halii;
- 16 She initiated, she pointed the canoe;
- 17 She started it, she guided it;
- 18 She lifted the tabu from it,
- 19 Lifted was the tabu from the canoe of Wakea.
- 20 Fat dripping here;
- 21 Fat dripping there.
- 22 Active art thou Kane;
- 23 Active art thou Kanaloa.
- 24 What Kanaloa art thou?
- 25 Kanaloa the awa-drinker.
- 26 Awa from Tahiti,
- 27 Awa from Upolu,
- 28 Awa from Wawau.
- 29 Bottle up the frothy awa,
- 30 Bottle up the well strained awa.
- 31 Praise be to the God in the highest heaven (laau)!
- 32 The tabu is lifted, removed.
- 33 It flies away.

28. When the kahuna had finished his prayer he asked of the owner of the canoe, "How is this service, this service of ours?" Because if any one had made a disturbance or noise, or intruded upon the place, the ceremony had been marred and the owner of the canoe accordingly would then have to report the ceremony to be imperfect. And the priest would then warn the owner of the canoe, saying, "Don't you go in this canoe lest you meet with a fatal accident."

29. If, however, no one had made a disturbance or intruded himself while they had been performing the *lolo*¹⁷ ceremony, the owner of the canoe would report "our spell is good" and the kahuna would then say, "You will go in this canoe with safety, because the spell is good" (*maikai ka lolo ana*).

30. If the canoe was to be rigged as part of a double canoe the ceremony and incantations to be performed by the kahuna were different. In the double canoe the *iakos* used in ancient times were straight sticks. This continued to be the case until the time of *Keawe*¹⁸, when one Kanuha invented the curved *iako* and erected the upright posts of the *pola*.

31. When it came to making the lashings for the outrigger of the canoe, this was a function of the utmost solemnity. If the lashing was of the sort called *kumu-hele*, or *kumu-pou* it was even then tabu; but if it was of the kind called *kaholo*, or *Luukia* (full name *pa-u o Luukia*), these kinds, being reserved for the canoes of royalty, were regarded as being in the highest degree sacred, and to climb upon the canoe, or to intrude at the time when one of these lashings was being done, was to bring down on one the punishment of death.

32. When the lashings of the canoe were completed a covering of mat was made for the canoe (for the purpose of keeping out the water) which mat was called a *pa-u*²⁴.

The mast (*pou* or *kia*) was set up in the starboard canoe, designated as *ekea*, the other one being called *ama*. The mast was stayed with lines attached to its top. The sail of the canoe, which was called *la*, was made from the leaves of the pandanus, which were plaited together, as in mat-making.

33. The canoe was furnished with paddles, seats, and a bailer. There were many varieties of the *waa*. There was a small canoe called *kioloa*.¹⁹ A canoe of a size to carry but one person was called a *koo-kahi*, if to carry two a *koo-lua*, if three a *koo-kolu*, and so on to the the *koo-walu* for eight.

34. The single canoe was termed a *kau-kahi*, the double canoe a *kau-lua*. In the time of Kamehameha I a triple canoe named *Kaena-kane*, was constructed, such a craft being termed a *pu-kolu*. If one of the canoes in a double canoe happened to be longer than its fellow, the composite craft was called a *ku-e-e*.

35. In case the carved bow-piece, *manu-ihu*, was made very broad the canoe was called a *lele-iwi*.²⁰ (See fig. 2.) A canoe that was short and wide was called a *pou*. Canoes were designated and classified after some peculiarity. If the bow was very large the canoe would be termed *ihu-nui*;²² one kind was called *kupeulu*.

36. In the reign of Kamehameha I were constructed the canoes called *peleleu*.²³ They were excellent craft and carried a great deal of freight. The after part of these crafts were similar in construction to an ordinary vessel (i. e. was decked over). It was principally by means of such craft as these that Kamehameha succeeded in transporting his forces to Oahu when he went

to take possession of that part of his dominion when he was making his conquests.

37. In these modern times new kinds of sea-going craft have multiplied, large, fine vessels they are, which we call *moku* (an island, a piece cut off).

38. A ship was like a section of the earth quietly moving through the water. On account of their great size, when the first ships arrived here, people flocked from remote districts to view them. Great were the benefits derived from these novel craft, the like of which had never been seen before.

39. Some of these vessels, or *moku*, were three-masted, some two-masted, some schooner-rigged, and some had but one mast.

40. The row boat, or *waa-pa* (*waa-pa'a*), is one of this new kind of craft. But even some of these new vessels, including row-boats, sometimes perish at sea.

41. It is not, however, so common an occurrence for this to happen to them as it used to be for canoes to founder in every part of this ocean.

42. Many blessings have come to this race through these new sea-going craft. It was by them the word of God was conveyed to these shores, which is a blessing greater than any sought for by the ancients.

43. What a pity that the ancients did not know of this new blessing, of the word of God and the great salvation through Jesus the blessed Redeemer.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XXXIV.

(1) Sect. 2. *Hele oia i mua ma ka po e hoomoe ma kona heiau.* This passage confirms the statement made in the notes to Chap. XXXIII, p. 123, that the family *heiau*, or shrine, was probably in some part of the *mua*. The references made by Mr. Malo in this book to the *mua* as a place to which the *kahuna*, or any one desiring to consult his *aumakua*, or to receive warning or council from heaven in a dream, would go to spend the night, these references, I say, are so numerous that there seems to be no doubt that the *mua* and the *heiau* were integrally one. At the same time I am assured that the family *heiau* was often an open-air, unroofed enclosure. No doubt the practice in this matter was as various as in some others, in regard to which uniformity has been claimed. It must not be forgotten that two swallows do not make a summer.

(2) Sect. 7. *Ku-pulupulu*, Ku, the rough one or the chip-maker, one of the gods of the waa.

(3) Sect. 7. *Ku-ala-na-wao*, *Ku-ae-la-na-wao*, there stand the forests, a woodland deity, one of the gods of the waa.

(4) Sect. 7. *Ku-moku-hali'i*, Ku that bedecks the island.

(5) Sect. 7. *Ku-ka-ieie*,—*Ieie* was a parasitic evergreen much used in decorating.

(6) Sect. 7. *Ku-palala-ke*, or *Kupa-ai-kee*, the reversible ax, used by the Hawaiians in hollowing the canoe.

(7) Sect. 7. *Ku-ka-ohia-laka*,—The *ohia* tree was used in making idols. **Laka* was the mythical hero who made the famous canoe in which he went in search of his father's bones. He was one of the gods of the *wa'a*.

*This derivation is incorrect. See note 5, Chapter XXIII. *Laka*=the Tahitian name for the *lehua* tree.

(8) Sect. 7. *Lea*, wife of (*Ku*) *Moku-hali'i*, was a patroness of the canoe. She was supposed to appear in the form of the wood-pecker, *clepaio*, whose movements when she walked upon the newly felled tree were attentively observed, and were ominous of good, or ill, luck. *Lea* seems to have been the same as *Laia*.

(9) Sect. 7. *Ka-pua-o-alakai*: The more correct orthography is probably *Ka-pu-o-alakai*, the knot of guidance, i. e., the knot by which the hauling line was attached to the *maku'u*, q. v. sect. 16.

(10) Sect. 11. "*E ku a ea! Homai he malo!*" A Molokai authority informs me that on that island the variant to this prayer was:

E ku a ea! Eia ka waa, he iho-ole pau-lua.
E ala, e ku, e hume i kou malo!

Stand up in your strength! Here is the canoe, a solid log without pith. Arise, stand up, gird on your malo!

His wife then gave him his sacerdotal *malo*, with the words:

Eia kou malo la, he malo keokeo.
Here is your *malo*, your white *malo*.

(11) Sect. 12. According to the same Molokai practice the words uttered by the *kahuna* when he struck up the tree were:

Homai he wa'a, e ku a i'a!
*He wa e ulu.***
Ulu i ka aoao a nui.

Grant a canoe that shall be swift as a fish!
To sail in stormy seas,
When the storm tosses on all sides!

***Ulu*: literally to grow, derivatively to kick up a storm.

(12) Sect. 16. *Maku'u*: This was also called the *moamoa*, or *mo-moa*, and on the island of Molokai it was called *pau-akaaka*. The *momoa*

was at the stern of the canoe. In every genuine Hawaiian canoe of the old fashion the *maku'u* is still clearly visible.

(13). Sect. 21. This Hawaiian paint had almost the quality of a lacquer. Its ingredients were the juice of a certain euphorbia, the juice of the inner bark of the root of the *kukui* tree, the juice of the bud of the banana tree, together with charcoal made from the leaf of the pandanus. A dressing of oil from the nut of the *kukui* was finally added to give a finish. I can vouch for it as an excellent covering for wood.

(14) Sect. 25. The meaning of the word *kuwa*, or *ku-wa*, here translated by *uplifter*, is involved in some doubt and obscurity. In opposition to the orthography of Mr. Malo, which, as often remarked, is anything but orthodox, and cannot be depended upon, I have ventured to unite the two parts and make of them one word.

In chapter XXXIII, section 14, the prayer uttered by the *kahuna* at the finishing and consecration of the house, symbolized by the trimming of the thatch over the doorway, was called *pule kuwa*. See note to Chap. XXXIII.) As explained, the term *kuwa* is applied to that prayer because while performing the act and reciting the prayer the *kahuna* stood—*ku*—in the space—*wa*—of the doorway.

The opening words of the prayer, according to David Malo, are,

O *ku wa o ka lani, o ku wa o ka honua*.

After diligent study and inquiry I am convinced that the correct orthography is *kuwa* or perhaps *ku-wa*, if one pleases, and that its meaning has reference to the lifting up of the heavens, the putting of a space between the heavens and the earth. This is a matter that is very prominent in the mythology of southern Polynesia.

NOTE.—The word *wa* in many of its uses is evidently intended to express the idea of interval, and *ku-wa* probably means in some instances to set in order, to place at orderly intervals. Another meaning is an echo. A derivative, secondary meaning is to set apart, consecrate.—N. B. E.

(15) Sect. 25. *Nana i kuwa*. . . *kuwa* is here used as a verb. Among the various hypotheses that have been considered in the attempt to define the meaning of this multi-meaning word was that of hollowing out the canoe, thus putting a *wa* between one side and another of the canoe (*wa'a*). It seems, however, as if the most reasonable and obvious meaning—when once it is pointed out—is that of consecrating and setting apart the *wa'a*, making it ready for its use.

(16) Sect. 25. *Noa ke kuwa o ka wa'a a Wakea*. The meaning of the word *kuwa* in this connection is slightly different in this passage from the one previously assigned to it. Here it evidently refers to the function of consecration now being performed by the priest. I have endeavored to express that meaning in my translation.

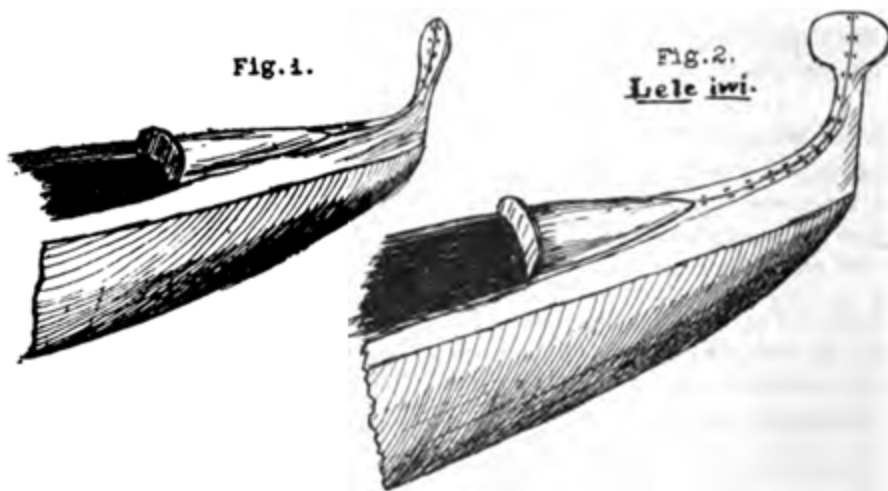
(17) Sect. 29. *Lolo* ceremony: The expression in the text is *maikai ka lolo ana*. When a priest, or canoe-maker, or *hula*-dancer, or practitioner of any profession or art has acquired the greatest preliminary

skill, before beginning the practice of his new art, or profession, he is by means of certain incantations and peculiar rites put to a test, and if he comes out successfully it is said *ua ai lolo*, that is, he has eaten brains, acquired great skill. The *lolo* ceremony is not merely a bestowing of good luck on the craft, it is rather an inquiry of heaven as to the fate or luck in store for the canoe.

(18) Sect. 30. Keawe II, whose son Kanuha built the hale o Keawe, was of the last quarter of the 17th century. See "Brief History of the Hawaiian People" by W. D. Alexander, p. 46.)

(19) Sect. 33. The *kio-loa* was a long, narrow canoe, principally used for racing.

(20) Sect. 35. The classic model of the *manu*, the carved piece which adorned the bow and the stern of every worthy Hawaiian *waa*, a form which has been handed down to modern times, was as shown in Fig. 1; the model of the *lele-iwi* is as shown in Fig. 2. The *lele-iwi* canoe was principally for display, *hanonano*.



(21) Sect. 31. *Pa-u o Luukia*: This was a highly decorative lashing by which the *iako* was bound to the canoe. *Luukia* was a famous beauty, who, though wife to another man, so fascinated *Moikeha*, a king of Hawaii, that he sailed with her to Tahiti. One of her would-be lovers, hoping to win her favor by alienating her against *Moikeha*, cunningly slandered that prince to *Luukia*. He so far succeeded that he aroused in her an aversion to the young man. As a consequence she sought to defend herself against the further approaches of her royal lover by wearing about her loins some sort of woven corset or *pa-u*. Hence the term *pa-u o Luukia*, corset or skirt of *Luukia*, applied by the old salts, canoe-men, of the sixteenth century to the most aesthetic and decorative style of canoe-lashing employed.

(22) Sect. 35. In this kind of a canoe the bow, contrary to usual

practice, was made at the butt end of the log. It was usually put at the small end.

(23) Sect. 36. The *peleleu* were a fleet of very large war-canoes which Kamehameha I had made from koa trees felled in the forests back of Hilo, Hawaii. Their construction was begun about the year 1796. In spite of the fact that the Hawaiian historian, Malo, speaks of the *peleleu* with a certain pride and enthusiasm, they are to be regarded rather as monstrosities, not belonging fully to the Hawaiian on whose soil they were made, nor to the white men who, no doubt, lent a hand and had a voice in their making and planning.

(24) Sect. 32. *Pa-u*: Some times the *pa-u* covered the opening of the canoe from stem to stern, each paddle-man putting his head and body through a hole in the same. This would be in stormy weather. In ordinary times only the waist of the craft, where the baggage and freight were stowed, was covered in this way. The following was the manner of fastening the mat: A number of holes, called *holo*, were made in the upper edge of the canoe. By means of small cords passed through these holes a line, called *alihi pa-u*, was lashed in place. Through the loops of this *alihi* was run a line that criss-crossed from one side to the other and held the *pa-u* or mat in place. This last line was called a *haunu*.
