

Landing Canoes at Kayhena (Kehena)

(Excerpt Adapted from William Ellis, Journey around the island of Hawai'i)

‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i

Ma hope o ko mākou hele ‘ana he mile a me ka hapa ma ke kahakai, ua hiki mākou i Kayhena, he kauhale nui i noho nui ‘ia e nā kānaka, a ua ‘ike ‘ia ma ka nui o kā lākou mau wa‘a a me nā ‘upena, he po‘e lawai‘a lākou.

He ‘ano kupaianaha ko lākou hana no ka ho‘ouka ‘ana a me ka ho‘ohemo ‘ana i kā lākou mau wa‘a. ‘O ke kahakai i mua o kēia kauhale, he pali kū pololei a i ‘ole e kūlou ana i waho, mai ka ha‘aha‘a he kanahā a hiki i ka kanaono kapua‘i ke ki‘eki‘e, a ‘o kēia wahi ho‘i ka ‘ao‘ao makani o ka mokupuni, no laila e hahau ikaika ana nā nalu i nā pali.

Ma kahi ho‘okahi, aia he pōhaku ha‘aha‘a ma kahi o kanakolu kapua‘i mai ke kahakai aku, a ma laila lākou i kūkulu ai i kekahi ‘ano **alapi‘i**.

‘Elua lā‘au lō‘ihi, ua pili ‘ia kekahi i ke kumu o kekahi, e kū ana mai ia mau pōhaku a hiki i ka piko o ka pali. ‘Elua lā‘au ‘ē a‘e, ua pili pū like ‘ia, a ua kū pololei me nā mea mua, he ‘ehā a ‘elima kapua‘i ka awāwa ma waena.

Ua kau ‘ia nā lā‘au pa‘a ‘ē a‘e, he ‘ewalu a ‘umi kapua‘i ka lō‘ihi, ma luna o lākou ma ke kū pololei, ma kahi o ‘elua a ‘ekolu ‘īniha ka mamao o kekahi mai kekahi, a ua pa‘a ‘ia me ka ‘e‘eah — ‘o ia ho‘i nā a‘a ikaika o kekahi mea ulu e pī‘i ana i nā nahele.

‘O kēia ke kumu o nā kapua‘i o kēia alapi‘i akamai a pono ho‘i.

English Translation

After traveling a mile and a half along the shore, we came to Kayhena, a populous village where the people, judging from the number of their canoes and nets, seemed much engaged in fishing.

Their method of launching and landing their canoes was curious and singular. The bold coast fronting the village was formed of perpendicular or overhanging rocks, from forty to sixty feet high, against which, this being the windward side of the island, the swell beat violently.

In one place, where there were a few low rocks about thirty feet from the shore, they had erected a kind of **ladder** (*alapi‘i*).

Two long poles, one tied to the end of the other, reached from these rocks to the top of the cliffs. Two other poles, tied together in the same manner, were fixed parallel to the first, about four or five feet distant.

Strong sticks, eight or ten feet long, were laid across these at right angles, about two or three inches apart, and fastened with **eeyeah**, the tough fibrous roots of a climbing forest vine.

These formed the steps of this ingenious and useful ladder.

He māmā a he li'ili'i nā wa'a o kēlā wahi, 'a'ole pinepine e lawe aku ma mua o ho'okahi kanaka. I ko mākou hiki 'ana, he nui nā wa'a e pae ana i ke kahakai.

'Elua kāne i iho i lalo, a kū kokoke i ka wai ma ka 'ao'ao hema o ka pōhaku i hūnā 'ia e ke makani. Ua hoe 'ia mai nā wa'a ho'okahi ho'okahi.

Ke nānā ana ka mea i loko o ka wa'a i ka manawa kūpono, ua hoe ikaika 'o ia i kahakai, a laila ka nalu huli e lawe ana i ka wa'a i luna o ka pōhaku, a laila ua hopu koke 'ia ia e nā kāne 'elua e kū ana ma laila e loa'a ai.

I ia manawa iho nō, lele koke aku ka mea ho'okele o ka wa'a i loko o ke kai, a 'au i kahakai, a kōkua iā lāua e hāpai a'e i ka wa'a ma luna o ka alapi'i a hiki i ka piko o ka pali.

Ma laila lākou e waiho ai ma luna o nā noho kālai 'ia me ke 'ano kupaianaha, i hana 'ia mai ka lā'au **wiliwili**, a ho'i hou lākou i ka pōhaku e kali ana i kekahi wa'a hou a'e e hiki mai ana.

I kēia 'ano hana, ua hiki iā lākou ke hāpai a'e he 'elima a 'eono mau wa'a i ka wā a mākou e nānā ana, a lawe wau i kahi kaha ki'i o kā lākou hana akamai.

Ma hope iho, ua hele mākou i ka hale o ke po'o o ka kauhale, he hale nui, a he nui nā 'ohana i noho pū i loko. Ua hō'ili'ili koke 'ia mai kekahi nui o nā kānaka, a ma hope iho o ko lākou hō'ike 'ana e makemake lākou e ho'olohe i kā mākou 'ōlelo, ua 'ōlelo au iā lākou no ko mākou **haipule**.

The canoes of this place were light and small, seldom carrying more than one man each. A number were just landing as we arrived.

Two men went down and stood close to the water's edge, on the leeward or southern side of the rock. The canoes were paddled up one at a time.

The man in each canoe watched for a favorable moment, then paddled swiftly to shore. The rolling billow carried the canoe upon the rock, where it was instantly seized by the two men standing ready.

At that moment, the steersman leaped into the sea, swam to the shore, and helped them carry the canoe up the ladder to the top of the cliff.

There they placed it upon curiously carved stools made of **wiliwili** wood, then returned to the rock to await the next canoe.

In this manner, five or six were brought up while we stood watching; I took a sketch of their useful contrivance.

We then walked to the house of the head man, a large dwelling containing several families. Many people soon gathered around us; and when they expressed their wish to hear what we had to say, I addressed them on the subject of our **religion**.