

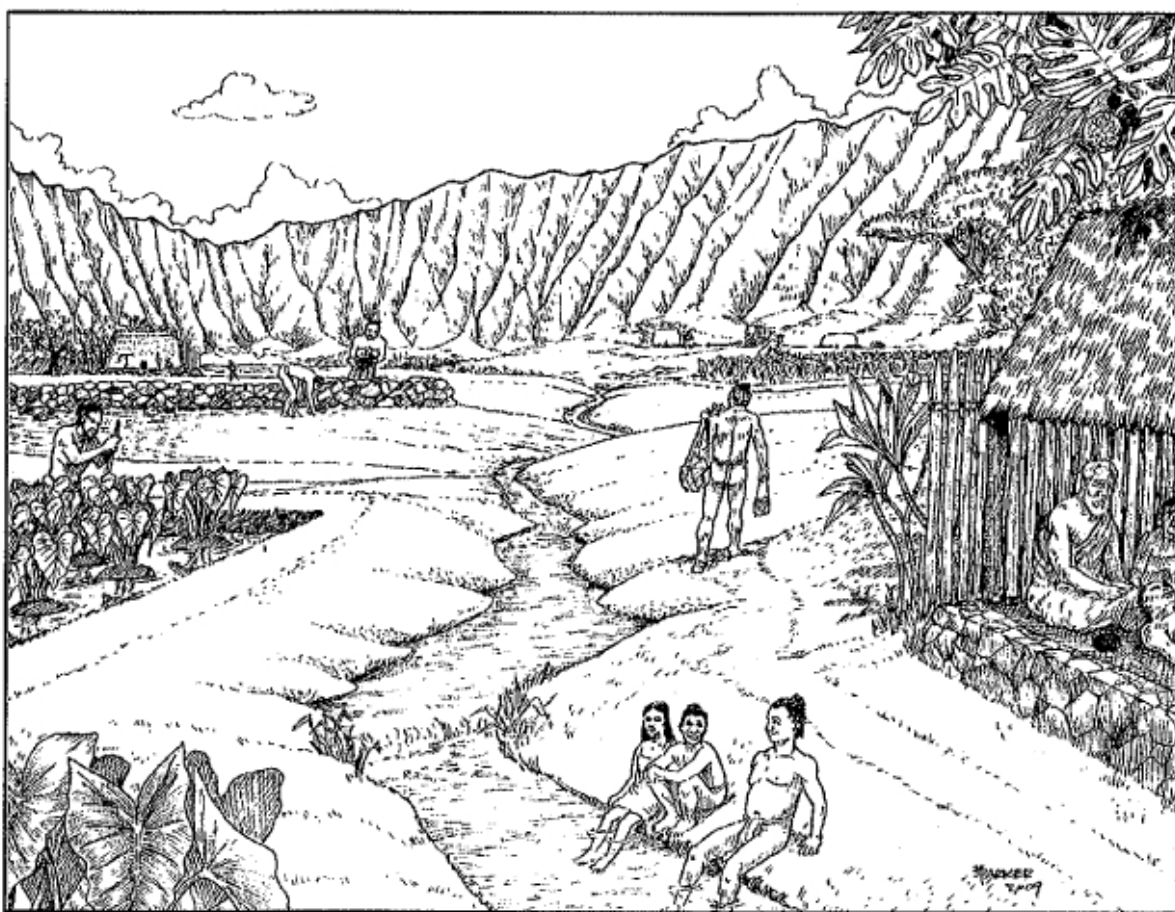


OUR AHUPUA'A

STUDENT READING

Kamō'ili'ili – The Pebble Lizard

Long ago, the people living in Waikīkī farmed *kalo* (taro) in *lo'i* (terraces), which were fed by water from Pālolo and Mānoa streams. The area was famous as the home of O'ahu's *ali'i* (chiefs). The *ali'i* had many *loko i'a* (fishponds) that were full of fat fish. The people helped to tend the chiefs' ponds. They fished in the ocean and lived their daily lives around the beautiful bay of Waikīkī. The bay was also a place to surf and enjoy the colorful sunsets of the Kona district of O'ahu.



In the wetlands of Waikīkī, Kamō'ili'ili, the Giant Pebble Lizard made her home. Everybody who lived in the Waikīkī *ahupua'a* knew about the *mo'o*. Some people revered the *mo'o* as a protector of the *loko i'a* (fishponds). But most people feared this giant *mo'o*. They knew Kamō'ili'ili was unpredictable and that she could be aggressive toward the people of Waikīkī.



As it is told, Pele, the goddess of the volcano, had a sister, Hi'iaka. Hi'iaka was returning to the island of Hawai'i with a companion, Lohi'au. Lohi'au was a very handsome *ali'i* (chief) from the island of Kaua'i. Pele had fallen in love with him and her sister was bringing him back to Hawai'i. While traveling, the two stopped on O'ahu and spent some time in Waikīkī. Here the people told the two travelers of the danger Kamō'ili'ili was causing along the shoreline of Waikīkī.

When they heard the suffering that this *mo'o* was causing, Hi'iaka and Lohi'au vowed to help. They launched their canoe near *Mauna Lē'ahi* (Diamond Head) in pursuit of the lizard. When they reached the home of this *mo'o* a strong wind began to blow. Lohi'au was startled by the forceful wind and unseen hands, which seemed to pin



back his ears. Hi'iaka knew that the lizard was close and she readied herself for a fight. Hi'iaka pulled back her magical skirt and removed two lightning bolts. When the giant lizard Kamō'ili'ili slithered out from behind the hillside, Hi'iaka struck with her lightning bolts. She cut the lizard into pieces, scattering Kamō'ili'ili's body in many directions. She transformed the parts of this giant *mo'o* into stone, which can still be seen today as the low hills of Mō'ili'ili.

Sources:

- Ho'oulumāhie. 2006. *The Epic Tale of Hi'iakaikapoliopele*. Ed. M. Puakea Nogelmeier. Honolulu: Awaiaulu Press
- Seiden, Allan. 2001. *Wakīkī*. Waipahu, HI: Island Heritage Publishing.

Note: Some say that Kamō'ili'ili was a male, and others refer to the lizard as a *mo'o wahine* (female) as we have in this version of the story.