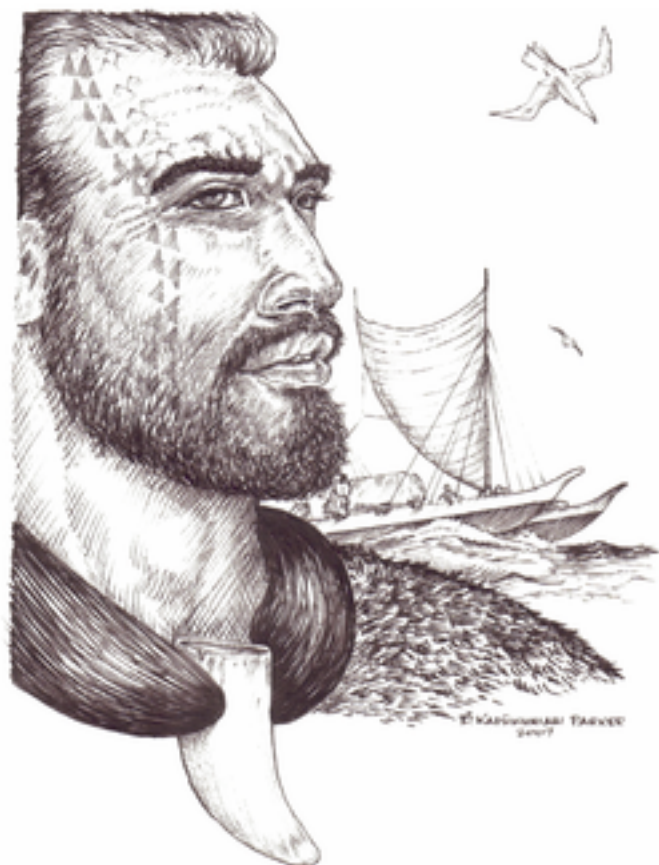




KA PIKO

STUDENT READING 1

MO'IKEHA



'Au i ke kai me he manu ala.

Cross the sea as a bird. To sail across the sea.

(Mary Kawena Pukui, *'Ōlelo No'eau* No. 237)

Have you ever wondered about your place in the world? Where do you fit in? What do your friends think of you? What will you do when you grow up? What kind of mark will you leave on the world around you? Anyone who's really awake, aware, and paying attention must face these kinds of questions. Yet for an *ali'i* (chief) many of these questions are answered the day you're born.

Born after Kumuhonua, the eldest of Muli'ealeali'i's sons and grandson of Maweke of O'ahu, Mo'ikeha (also known as Mo'iteha) and his older brother 'Olopana would not inherit the family's *kula'iwi* (ancestral lands). Instead it was for them to seek land and destiny someplace else. And so it was, they left the fields and forests of their youth, heading south in their canoes. There were a few stops, of course, to replenish supplies of water and food, but the way to their first settlement was as open as the ocean is wide.

When the valley of Waipi'o on the island of Hawai'i came into sight Mo'ikeha thought he'd found a place to raise his *hānai* (foster) son, La'a (meaning sacred). The Hāmākua coastline of the island of Hawai'i seemed the perfect place to settle—finally a place Mo'ikeha's bones might one day rest! Here there was an abundance of fresh water, which meant there would be lots of food. And lots of food meant plenty of *keiki* (children) running around, if only Mo'ikeha could find a wife. He had always dreamed of having a family!

One day, a hurricane hit the shoreline of Waipi'o and decimated it, forcing the brothers to load their canoes again to seek a new land. Maybe there would be life in the south for them. Yet this time the journey would seem much longer and perilous because Mo'ikeha, La'a and 'Olopana were not alone. 'Olopana had taken a wife and begun to raise a family. With five canoes, their entourage set forth.

As was customary in those times, the brothers shared a wife. Her name was Lu'ukia. She was an *ali'i* (chiefess) from Kohala. If they had all known what lay ahead, it might have been different, but who can know such things? Soon the Hāmākua coastline was history to the vagabond brothers of Kumuhonua.

The canoe flotilla made its way northwest toward the island of Kanaloa now named Kaho'olawe. As they approached the island, Mo'ikeha could see **Lae O Hālonā**. He remembers his grandfather telling him that it was the one point on the island where more than 260 different winds passed through.

The group traveled between the islands of Maui and Kaho'olawe, gliding over the channel of **'Alalākeiki**. Mo'ikeha could almost hear the faint wail of a child. No wonder the channel was named 'Alalākeiki! As Mo'ikeha looked off to his right, he saw the mountain of Haleakalā on Maui looming in the distance. The island of Maui is the mother of Kanaloa. The island of **Molokini** is the umbilical cord.

The canoes continued their journey along the north end of Kaho'olawe, past **Hakioawa**. There, Mo'ikeha could see the faint outline of the *kū'ula* altar, which the demigod 'Ai'ai built in honor of



'Ai'ai's father. As they rounded the bend, the current on the channel of **Kealaikahiki** pushed their canoes forward in a southeasterly direction. Mo'ikeha knew that the swift current of the channel would lessen their voyage to Kahiki by two days.

The voyagers observed the peak of **Moa'ulaiki** on Kaho'olawe—the site where ancient navigators were trained to read the stars. It was also a perfect vantage point for navigators to study the ocean currents in the channels of the Hawaiian Islands with the exception of Kaua'i.

The current of Kealaikahiki received their canoes with open arms, hurrying them along its path. As they rounded the western coastline, Mo'ikeha saw the thriving fishing village of **Lae O Kealaikahiki**.

Off its shore, he could see the faint outline of the rock named **Kuhike'eikahiki** jutting out of the ocean, pointing in the direction of Kahiki. Mo'ikeha sighed as the island of Kaho'olawe got smaller and smaller, leaving behind the bay of **Honokanai'a** appropriately named after the dolphins that visited there often.

La'a, having been trained from infancy in the ten levels of the priesthood, felt the tug to stay, but south they went. Their canoes' riggings sighed with sadness as Kanaloa (Kaho'olawe) vanished in the distance.



VOCABULARY FOR THE READING

- customary – according to or depending on custom; usual; habitual
- decimate – to destroy a great number or proportion of
- embodiment – a person, being, or thing embodying a spirit
- entourage – a group of attendants or associates, as of a person of rank or importance
- flotilla – group moving together
- milieu – an environment or a setting
- Mo'ikeha or Mo'iteha – the son of a migrant from Kahiki, and the father of Kila. Mo'ikeha became a ruling chief of Kaua'i
- perilous – involving or full of grave risk or peril; hazardous; dangerous
- *piko* – center, navel
- vagabond – wandering from place to place without any settled home; nomadic

The story of Mo'ikeha (Mo'iteha) is a traditional story. Mo'ikeha's voyage from the island of Hawai'i to Kahiki (a faraway place) by way of Kaho'olawe is a fictional account. The route he takes past Kaho'olawe is used in this story as a way to help you discover the many sites and features unique to the island.