ka‘oihana lawa‘a
hawaiian fishing traditions

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KA LAWAIA LUHEE

keia kekahio na lawaia ano nui o ka manawa kahiko, a i keia manawa na loko alo keia ano lawaia ma Lahaina nei; na ko'u mau kupuna i hoomaka keia ano lawaia ma Lahaina nei, ua haahaalele aku lakou ia Keoneio, Honuaula, Maui, ko lakou one hanau he elima paha makahihi; ma hope iho o ka hiki ana mai o ka olelo a ke Akua i Hawaii nei a noho lakou ma keia aina o Lahaina nei, ma ke ahupuaa o Makila ma moli no o keia oihana lawaia e lawe kalepa a piepiple i na i'a no ke kumu kuai, he i'a mai ka lakou a he ai hoa ka ko Lahaina poe, o ke kalo, a o ke pai ai no hoi.1

Ke Ano O Ka Lawelawe Ana O Ka Lawaia Luhee — I ka hiki ana mai o ko'u mau kupuna i Lahaina nei ua lako lakou i na leho, na pohaku e kapili ai i keia mau leho, aia a like ka pili ana o ka leho me ka pohaku, a laila, loaa ka hee o ka moana. Pela no hoi ka wahine maikai, aia no hoi a ike aku i ia i ke kanaka u'i e pili ana no hoi ka laua mau pupu leho, pela no hoi keia, aole o ka leho mai ke kai mai a hoopili ae me ka pohaku, aole pela, he puhipuhi i ke ahi ka leho, a laila palu iho me ka wai o ke alelo, o ke ahi lanahu, a ahi ano uahi, o ia na ano ahi e hana ai, e hala ka hora hookahi i ka milikaa ana i ka leho i ke ahi, aole no hoi hookahi lawaia nana e hana, he elua, ekolu, eha, elima lawaia e noho pu ai ma kapuahi, aia a lokahi ka manao ma ka puhipuhi ana i ka leho i ke ahi, a laila, i ka holo ana i kai e luhee ai, e hele ana ka waa i ka hee, a pela iho ke ano hana mua e hana mua ai.

He nui a lehulehu ke ano o na inoa o na pohaku e pili ai me ka leho, o ia keia: he o-ahi, he ina, he hawae, he palaa, he ala, a he pulewa a pela aku, pela no hoi me ka leho, ina he o-ahi ka pohaku, a laila he o-ahi no hoi ka leho, a ina no hoi he ina ka pohaku, a laila, he ina no hoi ka leho, a pela me na ano pohaku a pau; ma ke kula no o ka hee i ka wa a ka poe lawaia hee e hoi mai ai, a i ole ia ma na hale makeke kuai i'a no hoi, hookahi no kulana o ka hee, aka i ka poe okilo hee a o hee, he lehulehu na ano o ka hee

1 Ka Nupepa Kuokoa, Buke XL, Helu 14, Aperila 4, 1902.
FISHING FOR OCTOPUS WITH A COWRY SHELL LURE

This was one of the important methods of fishing in the olden times and now it is no longer done here in Lahaina. It was my grandparents who took up this kind of fishing here in Lahaina. They left Keoneʻōʻio, Honuaʻula, Maui, their birthplace, perhaps five years after the word of God had come here to Hawaiʻi and they made their home on this land of Lahaina, in the ahupuaʻa of Mākila. It was because they were fishermen and they traded and peddled fish for a price; they gave fish in exchange for fresh taro or cooked and pounded taro, paʻi ʻai, from the people of Lahaina.

The Manner Of Fishing With A Cowry Shell Lure — When my grandparents came to Lahaina, they were well supplied with cowry shells and stone sinkers to fasten to the shells. The shell and stone must fit well before the octopus of the deep sea could be caught. It is like a beautiful woman that should match well with a man, so it is with this. The cowry shell should not be just as it came from the sea when attached to the stone, but rather should be toasted over the fire and licked with the tongue to moisten it. A charcoal fire or a smoky one should be used and the shell should be turned over the fire for an hour. Not one fisherman but two, three, four or five must sit around the fireplace, and if all are united in thought as they toast the shells there, then when they go to sea, the canoe will go to the octopus. This was how the first step was done.

There were many kinds of stones to be attached to the cowry, as follows: the ʻōahi, ʻina, hāwae, palāʻa, ʻalā, pūlewa and so on. The same was true with the cowry shell, for if the stone was an ʻōahi, the shell should also be an ʻōahi, and if the stone was an ʻina then the shell too, must also be an ʻina. So it was with every type of stone. The appearance of the octopus brought ashore by the fishermen or those sold in the markets are all alike but to those who watch and spear them, they change themselves into many forms while alive. When your writer tells you about the ʻōkilo fishing

1 Nupepa Kuokoa, Apr. 4, 1902.
i ka wa e ola ana—aia a hiki i ka wa o ko oukou mea kakau e hooikeike aku ai i ke ano o ka lawaia okilo hee, a laila, hai aku wau i ka inoa o na hee e pili ana ia oihana lawaia. I ka pili ana o ka leho me ka pohaku, a laila, he wahi laau loihi ma loko o ka leho me ka pohaku i like loa no paha me ka penikala ka loihi, eueu iki hoi ka nui, no eono inihia no paha ka loihi, a he elua inihia aku kahi i koe a ma laila e paa ai ka makau, a ua kapa ia he kakala hee, a he makau hoi, a hoopaa no hoi i ke aho e like me ke aho kaakolu elua kaau (elua kanaha) like me kanawalu anana ka loihi.

Hookahi mea i koe o ka holo i ka lawaia, a he waa ano paiki no hoi ekolu anana ka loa, he ki[k]oo no hoi ke kiekie, me na lako kao (he kui hao loihi kela, e like me ka ohelo o ka pu kaupoohiwi) a o ka welau no hoi o ua ano pu ala, i hoopaa ia me kekahii kumu laau paa, he mea kela e kaua ai me ua hee nei. I ka hooku'u ana i ke aho a ku i lalo, a laila e hapai ae oe i hapalua kapuai, a i ole ia hookahi kapuai mai ka papaku ae o lalo, a laila, o kau hana i koe, e lulu mau ana oe i kou lima me ke aho i na manawa a pau, i mea e onioni ai ka leho me ka pohaku, a i ka manawa e ike mai ai ka hee, e holo mai no ia a puliki ma luna o ka leho, e ike ana no oe i ke kaumaha, a ina no e pa iho ana a aweawe o ka hee i ka honua o lalo, e ike ana no oe ua like me ka mea ua mau, oiai no e lele iho ana kela ma luna o ka leho, e lawe ae oe i hookahi alu o ke aho a maloeloe pono, ia wa oe e koe mai ai i ka mao o ka waa me ka ikaika, a hoomaka no oe e huki, a i ka wa e aneane ai e pili i ka waa, e ku oe i luna a hoau aku oe a kaawale ka hee mai ka waa aku, i ole e pa mai na aweawe i ka waa, a o ka puliki no ia a paa, a laila, me ka pohaku a me ka pahi oe e houhou ai a hiki i kona make ana, a ina aole e pili i ka waa, a laila, me keia welau o ka pu e noke ai oe i ka houhou a nawaliwali, a laila hookomo i loko o ka poho ie kiekie, a o ka kekahii poe no hoi me ka pauku laau e pepehi ai i ka hee, he hana luhi a maopaopa maoli ka lima i keia ano hana, aka, no ka imi ana i ke ola a me ka pono o ka ohana, he pono no e hana.

I ko'u manawa e holo ana me ko'u wahi kupuna kane i ka luluhee, ua pau loa kona mau niho, olelo aku nei au ia ia, "Pehea e pono ai ka kaua hee ke paa mai, oiai aole ou niho, a he uuku loa au, 11 no makahiki?" Pane maila kela, "Me keia kui hao no hoi e make ai, aia a hiki aku kaua i kai, a laila, maopopo ia oe," a pela i'o no, a i kahi manawa ina maloeloe ka lima i ka lulu, a laila, hawele ae ke aho i ka manamana nui o ka wawae, a laila, hoonioni mau no hoi a hiki i ka paa ana o ka hee, a hou aku i ka welau
then the different names given by the fishermen for these changes will be mentioned. In joining the stone sinker and cowry shell together, a piece of stick is inserted about the length of a lead pencil but a trifle wider. It is about six inches long, with about two inches allowed to project and on this projection the hook called kākala he'e, or makau, is fastened with cordage, like a three-strand cord of eighty fathoms long.

All there is left to do then is to go fishing on a narrow canoe three fathoms long and one span in height, supplied with several kao (this is a thin spear like the ramrod in a rifle). One end of the kao is fastened to a strong piece of wood and is used to fight the octopus. When the line is let down to the bottom, it is again raised a half a foot or a whole foot from the sea floor below, then your remaining task is to jerk the line continually. This keeps the stone and shell moving, and as soon as the octopus sees it, it hurries and grasps the top of the shell. You will feel its weight and if the tentacles are trailing on the sea floor it will feel like the lure is stuck, for the octopus has landed on the shell. Pull the line straight then give it a hard, quick jerk toward the side of the canoe. Draw up the line and when the octopus is close to the canoe, hold it out and away to prevent its grasping the edge of the canoe and holding on tightly. If it does, beat it with a stone and stab it with a knife until it is dead. If it does not cling to the canoe then stab it at the top of the head until it weakens. Put it away in a tall woven basket. Some people beat the octopus with a wooden club, hard work that leaves the arms very tired, but as a means of gaining a livelihood for the family, it must be done.

When I went out to fish for octopus with my grandfather, who was toothless, I asked him, “How would you kill the octopus, for you are toothless and I am only a small boy of eleven?” He answered, “I shall kill it with this iron spear. When we are out at sea, then you will understand.” So I did. Sometimes when the arms are tired with the constant jerking, the line is wound around the big toe and the foot jerks it up and down until an octopus is caught. Stab at its head and grasp it with the hand. It should be deftly done and sometimes as many as twenty, more or less, are caught in a day.

The days that are good for going to sea to fish are the three Lā'au days, for the fish take the bait continuously in all kinds of fishing; Akua too, for the fish had voracious appetites. They ate like akua, supernatural beings. On the day named Mōhalu the fish open their mouths wide for
o ka pu a paa aku i ka lima; me ka eleu e hana ai, i kahi manawa piha ka iwakalua hee a oi aku a emi mai o ka la.

O na la o ka mahina e holo mau ai, o na Laau ekolu, o ke ano o keia, hoolaau ka ai ana o ka i’a ma na ano lawaia a pau; a pela no ka hua o Akua, o ke ano o keia, hooakua ka ai ana o ka i’a; a o Mohalu, o ka manao o keia, hoomohalu ka hoi ka ai ana o ka i’a; a o Mahealani, o ke ano o keia, Manaialani ka hoi ka ai ana o ka i’a; Olepau, hoopau ka hoi ka aina o Kahoolawe i ka hele ia e ko oukou mea kakau; me ko’u mau makua, kupuna ia; o na Ku hoi ekolu, kukupau ka hoi ka ai ana o ka i’a; a he mea keia a ko’u kupuna i a’o mai ai ia’u, he makehewa ka holo ana i ka lawaia i na kaulana mahina e ae, loaa no, he uuaku nae, aole e like aela me kela mau kaulana mahina, he nui ka i’a (aole no nae inoa o ka mahina ke kumu o ka i’a aka, he mau la maikai ia o ke au o ka moana), a pela ka olelo mai a ua mau kupuna nei, a ua hooiaio au i kela mea, a ina maikai ka pili o ka leho me ka pohaku, loaa no ke kaau hee o ka la, a he kupono keia ano lawaia na ka poe elemakule, aole na ka poe opiopio.
food; on Māhealani the fish eat one after the other and on 'Ole Pau, the fish consume all, pau, taking, ho'olawe, like Kaho'olawe, which has been fished all around by your writer; that was with my parents and grandparents. On the three Kū nights the fish ate greedily. This my grandfolks taught me, it is useless to go fishing on any other time. Fish are caught, but very few and not like on the days of the lunar month in which there are many fish, (it is not the particular named night of the lunar month that brings the fish, but on those days the sea currents are good), so said my grandfolks and I’ve proven it. If the stone sinkers and cowry shell fit well together, one could catch as much as forty octopus a day. This kind of fishing is good for old people, not for the young.
The lūhe'e, or cowry-shell octopus lure, is made up of a sinker, pictured left top and bottom; the point, called a kākala he'e, and the shank are shown in the center; the toggle, in the right center; and the cowry, top right. There were different types of stones as well as cowries used for octopus lures, each having their own names. Photographer: University of Hawai‘i Committee for the Preservation of Hawaiian Language and Culture, n.d., Bishop Museum.
Pictured is a completed lūhe'e, or cowry-shell lure, from a different angle. The cowry was heated over a smoky fire to remove its glossy sheen. Bishop Museum.
MOKUNA 5

Ka Lawaia Okilo Hee

CHAPTER 5

‘Okilo Fishing For Octopus
KA LAWAI A OKILO HEE

Aole like loa ka lawai a luhee me keia, he nui ka hana o ia, a he maalahi ka hana ana o keia; he wahi pohaku me kahi kakala makau hookahi, he mau pua nohu, nakii iho ma luna o kahi pohaku, a he elima paha iniha ka loih i o kahi laau e like no hoi me ka penikala, kau no hoi ma kahi waa uuku e lawa ai elua kanaka, a holo no hoi a ma waho o kua nalu, he hookahi anana, a laila, hoopaa iho no hoi i kahi waa e naue malie ai, puhi ke kukui, malino ke kai, a nana no hoi ka maka o ka lawai a i lalo, o ka mea mau o ka noho o ka hee i ka waha o ka lua; aia a ike ko'u makua kane i ka hee, ninau maila ia'u, “Ea, ke ike ihola no oe i ka hee?” Hoole akula au, olelo maila kela “He hawae ke ano o kela hee; e nana oe, e kuu ae au i ke kakala,” aia hoi ke kakala i lalo, a poi ae i ka pua o ka nohu, ike akula au, a koe maila ko'u papa i ke aho, ua paa maila ka hee, kau ana i luna o ka waa.

Holo aku ana me ka hoomau no i ke puhi i ke kukui, a ike akula no, olelo maila ia'u, “E nana iho oe i ka hee, he pu puakala kela hee,” nana ihola au, a ike ihola, i aku nei au “He limu kala no paha kela,” olelo mai o ia ia'u “He hee ia, e nana mai paha oe la,” ia kuu ana aku no a pili kokoke, o ka holo maila no ia, kau ana i luna o ka pua nohu, a o ka paa maila no ia, hoau aku ana, ike no kela i ka hee, olelo maila “He lau maia pala kela hee,” a pela aku ana, pane maila, “He pulewa kela hee, haukeuke kela hee,” me ko'u hoomaopopo ole aku ke nana iho, nui ke akamai o keia poe. A ina e hemo ka hee mai ka paa ana i ke kakala, o ka nana pololei akula no ia a komo i ka lua, o ka luu akula no ia me kahi kui hao, i hoi mai ka hana e paa mai ana me ka hee; ina loaa elima hee, o ka huli hoi maila no ia, me ka piha ole o ka hora hookahi, a ua lawa ihola no ka paina kakahiaka; o ka hee liili ka hapa nui o ka hee okilo, a kakaikahi ka loaa o ka hee nui. He pinepine loa ko'u holo ana i keia ano lawai a me ko'u papa, ma ka luluheee hoi me ko'u kupuna kane hoi.
'OKILO FISHING FOR OCTOPUS

his is not like fishing with a cowry shell lure, that is a lot of work, but this is much easier. A small stone, a single hook, and several nohu blossoms are all that's needed. Tie the nohu flowers to the stone and then fasten it to a stick five inches long, the size of a lead pencil. Board a small canoe large enough to hold two men and go out beyond the reef where it is a fathom in depth. Anchor the canoe where it would move to and fro quietly. Chew and spew kukui nuts onto the sea and keep looking down. The octopus are usually at the opening of their burrows. When my father spied an octopus he used to ask me, "Do you see the octopus?" I said that I did not. He told me that the octopus was a hāwaʻe type and said, "Watch me and I'll lower the hook." It was not until the hook touched bottom and the octopus seized the nohu blossoms that I saw it. My father jerked on the line and it was caught fast and drawn into the canoe.

We went elsewhere and kept on spewing kukui nut meat on the water until he saw another one and said, "See that octopus, that is a puakalua octopus." I looked, saw something and replied, "Isn't that some kala sea weed?" He answered, "It is an octopus, watch." As soon as he let down the hook near the octopus, it seized the nohu flowers and was held fast. We moved on and again saw an octopus. "That is a lau mai'a pala (yellowed banana leaf type)," he said. He went on telling me, "That is a pūlewa octopus and that is a hā'ukeʻuke octopus." Because I could not distinguish them when I looked, I saw the extent of these people's skill. If an octopus got away from the hook, it was watched till it went into its burrow. The fisherman dived down with an iron spear and returned with it impaled thereon. If five octopus were caught, he went home. It took less than an hour and there would be enough for the morning meal. Most of the octopus caught by the ʻokilo method are small ones and very seldom big ones are caught. I have often gone to do this kind of fishing with my father and to fish with cowry shell lures with my grandfather.
This is a picture of the rig sometimes used in the 'ōkilo method of fishing for octopus, note that it lacks the distinctive cowry of the lūhe'e described earlier. Bishop Museum.