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In the *Kanaka* creation *mo'olelo* (story) the god of creation, *Kane*, came into the void and flung a giant calabash into the air. It broke apart and the curved part became the sky and the rest fell and became the earth. The seeds that had been inside were scattered and became the stars.

Kane made *Rangi* god of the sky and *Papa* goddess of the earth. When the first man was made of earth, *Kane* gave him life and humans were bonded to the earth ever after. The first son of *Rangi* and *Papa* died and was buried at the corner of their *hale* [house]. There sprouted the first *kalo* [taro] plant. The plant's *mana* [spirit] instructed the second son to plant and nourish *kalo* and it would provide for all children to come.

Kanaka, now further bound to the earth to nourish *kalo*, discovered that the *lu'au huli* [leaf cluster] cut from the corm of the plant would produce a new plant, meaning that the original plant might be the direct line ancestor of every plant in existence. A direct connection to the first human ancestor buried at the *hale* of the first godly ancestor.

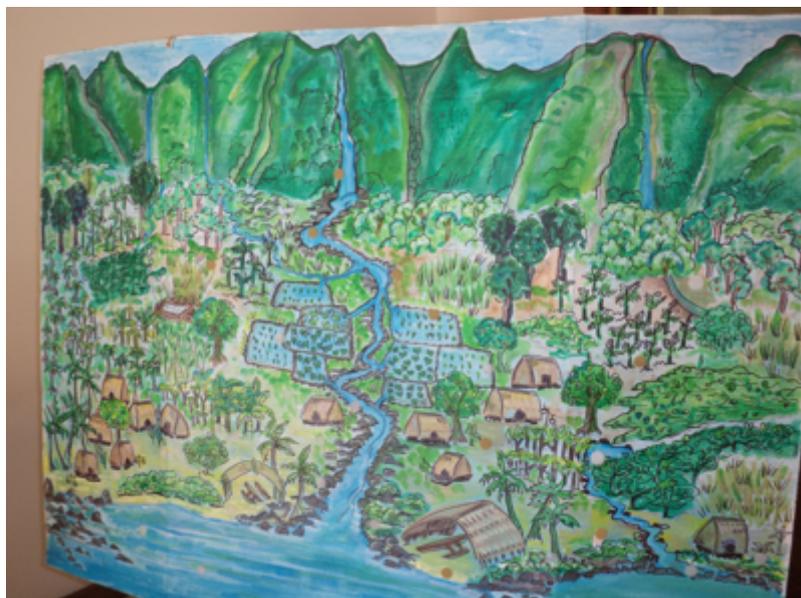
Kalo, from which poi is made, became half of the basic diet (with fish) of the *Kanaka*.

From the sides of the *kalo* corm, small rootlets called *oha* [relatives] grew providing the word 'ohana for family.

As the *kane* [men] became the *kahuna* [expert] botanists required to sustain large harvests, so there also emerged the *kahuna* of the fishery, and thus earth and sea became known as the 'aina from which the population drew subsistence.

Agriculture advanced to the point where a single valley would have multiple *heiau* housing *kahuna* knowledgeable in the minutest climate difference of wind and rain. The important Manoa Valley, breadbasket for the *ali'i* residences of Waikiki on 'Oahu, had 14 such *heiau* to provide guidance about what modern agronomists discovered, were 16 microclimates there.

It was learned that some *kalo* would thrive in flooded fields, swamps and estuaries, some others in regular plots of ground. The result was the cultivating of many distinctive *kalo* plants to thrive in the varied climates and soil. Modern agronomists still disagree on the actual double-digit number of plants. In valleys with flat floors, streams were sidetracked to provide water for a complicated system of individual clusters of *loi* [flooded ponds], which came to be regarded as the *kuleana* [responsibility] of the designated *ohana*.



Aina Painting Image Courtesy of Kamehameha Schools

Sluice gates were opened for a specific period of time, based on size and seasonal need of these *loi*. The system's creation and maintenance was a community responsibility and an *ohana* could be ejected from a valley for failure to contribute sufficient labor. Early European arrivals were surprised that these Stone Age people could have designed, built and operated such a sophisticated system. Along the paths bordering these *loi* and in stands nearby grew plants that were most often needed by the three-generation residents of the cluster of grass houses called *kauhale*. Most common were *keko* [sugar cane], which grew wild, *ti* and *waukea*.

Sugar cane was not used as a confection, but as a medicinal ingredient, while the *ti* or *ki* had a multitude of uses both practical and religious. The *waukea* provided the bark from which *kapa garments*, bed sheets, swaddling clothes and sacred pennants were made. It was apparent that all of the needs of the people could be supplied in a single valley.

Trees for fishing outriggers grew deep in the valley, food and clothing in the mid-valleys and fishing gear and boats at the shore. Thus, each valley became known as an *ahupua'a*.

The *kahuna* of *fishery*, early conservationists, forbade reef fishing in the summer lest there be no reef fish when the winter weather prohibited trips into the deep ocean. Each season there were near-shore schools of fish when the entire community would congregate in a great hukilau where large nets were placed just offshore and dragged in by the villagers at high tide, bringing many flapping fish to the beach. Areas where particular kinds of fish appeared seasonally became known by the fish's name. Ka'a'awa town on Oahu's north shore is such a place, known for the congregation of *a'awa*.

The earth was tilled, sweet potatoes planted, the blessed rains came, and the winter fish migrated in abundance to close-by reefs. Children arrived fat and squealing. These children were hundreds of generations from the first who were born siblings of a *kalo* (taro) plant at the home of the Earth Mother and the Sky Father.

It is as natural to *Kanaka* to *nurture the earth*, as it is to tend a child or an elder or to protect any family member from harm or want. As such, the *haole* [Caucasian] idea of 'owning' the land was impossibly foreign to *Kanaka*. The destiny of Lehua's people would turn on the *malihini* [newcomer] lust for their land and the threat to that interdependent family of *poe* (people), *a'ina*, *kai* [sea], *ua* [rain] and *la* [sun], which they had so long depended upon.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/The-Land-The-A-ina-Lehua-the-Story-of-an-Hawaiian-Girl>

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Media Stream



Aina Painting

Painting of Aina, Kamehameha Schools

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Waimea Canyon, Kaua'i

Photograph taken by Michelle Maria Sourced from Pixabay.com October 14, 2015

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Limahuli Tropical Botanical Garden Kaua'i

The National Tropical Botanical Gardens website speaks highly of the quality of the gardens as well as the historical and cultural value of this place. To learn more about the gardens you can visit their site directly, ntbg.org, or read the below excerpt from their site,

The ancient Hawaiians developed their ahupua`a system of resource management as a means to live sustainably in an island ecosystem. This system recognized the interconnection between the mountains and the ocean, and the roles that fresh water played in linking the two. By operating within this system they were able to sustain a large and healthy population while maintaining the integrity of their natural resources. Limahuli Valley was part of the ahupua`a of Hā`ena. The name "Limahuli," which means "turning hands," aptly describes the agricultural activities of early Hawaiians in the Valley. Lava-rock terraces for growing taro (lo`i kalo) were built here 700-1,000 years ago.

Photograph, Limahuli Tropical Botanical Garden, Kaua'i, Meghan Bundtzen

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Waimea River, Kaua'i

Photograph of Waimea River, by Michelle Maria, Sourced from Pixabay.com on October 14, 2015

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Hanalei Valley Taro Fields, Kaua'i

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