

## PU'U-KE-AHI-A-KAHOE

High in the majestic Ko'olau Mountains on the windward side of O'ahu is a mountain peak that separates the ahupua'a of He'eia and Kāne'ohē. It is named Pu'u-Ke-ahi-a-Kahoe. You can see it today rising behind Windward Community College. This mo'olelo describes how Pu'u-Ke-ahi-a-Kahoe was named.



Many years ago, an 'ohana that included three brothers and one sister lived in the moku of 'Ewa on O'ahu. These siblings constantly fought with their parents. They were disrespectful and their behavior was SO shameful. The four siblings were finally forced to leave 'Ewa because of their bad behavior.

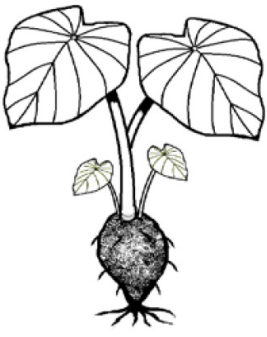
They moved to the moku of Ko'olaupoko on the windward side of O'ahu. Two of the brothers, Kahua-uli and Kahoe, were mahi'ai farming in the fertile uplands of Kāne'ohē and the next ahupua'a of He'eia. The last brother, Pahu, was a lawai'a living near the ocean in He'eia. Lo'e, their sister, made her home on a small island in Kāne'ohē Bay.

Whenever Pahu visited his brother in the uplands, Kahoe always generously shared his tasty poi. It was made from the kalo Kahoe worked hard to grow. Pahu was a skilled fisherman who caught many 'ono fish. Fish was the most important protein in ancient Hawai'i, so the food Pahu caught was valuable. But after Pahu finished a day of fishing on the reef in Kāne'ohē Bay or in the ocean beyond, he saved the best of the catch for himself and took his extra bait fish to share with Kahoe. Bait fish are tiny and used to catch bigger fish in the ocean. Pahu's behavior towards Kahoe was not pono. It was hewa.



One day Lo'e visited her brother Kahoe to get some kalo from him. She immediately asked, "Is the ulua finished cooking in the imu?" Kahoe just stared at his sister. He answered, "I have no ulua in my imu. Pahu only brings me bait fish." And ulua is not a bait fish--it is large and tasty. "But brother," Lo'e said, "Pahu catches many fish every day. There isn't a single time that he comes back empty handed. He is not sharing his catch with you?" How disappointed and angry Kahoe felt! He had no idea that Pahu was being selfish with the fish he caught. Aue! Pahu was being so stingy while Kahoe was so generous. After this incident, Pahu realized that Kahoe knew he had not been treated fairly.

In old Hawai'i, people shared resources from the land and the sea with each other. Hawaiians, especially 'ohana, willingly gave needed resources to others living in the same ahupua'a. They also shared with people from other ahupua'a. Such a system of exchange allowed everyone to have the resources they needed. This was especially important with critical resources such as food.



A few months later, a terrible famine came to the ‘āina. There was an extreme shortage of food and everyone was hungry. Some people would not share the little food they had. Since smoke from an imu meant food was cooking, it attracted many people to come for the food. Often times there was nothing left for the owner. Because smoke rising from an imu is more visible during the day, some people started cooking the limited food they had in the darkness of night. Sadly, many people had stopped practicing the Hawaiian value of sharing resources. Kahoe faced the same food shortages as everyone else. However, he had places to live in two ahupua‘a: one in Kāne‘ohe in front of Ke-a‘a-hala and one in He‘eia near the pali in Ha‘ikū Valley. When it was time to cook, Kahoe travelled to his place in Ha‘ikū. Because of its location, the smoke from his imu was carried almost a mile away before it was visible at the top of the Ko‘olau Mountains. It didn’t matter if he cooked during the day or at night—no one knew when Kahoe was cooking until after he was done.

One day when the sky was darkening as twilight turned to evening, Lo‘e discovered Pahu looking intently at the area where Kahoe lived. In a firm voice, Lo‘e spoke to Pahu: “Your eyes are searching for signs of ke ahi a Kahoe (Kahoe’s fire).” Deep in thought over all that had happened, Pahu had no response.

Since Lo‘e spoke these thoughtful words to Pahu, this peak has been known as Pu‘u-Ke-ahi-a-Kahoe. You can spot it high in the Ko‘olau Mountains, reaching nearly 2,800 feet tall. It is where the ahupua‘a of Kāne‘ohe and He‘eia meet.



Til today, there are places in this ‘āina named after the four siblings.

- An island in Kāne‘ohe Bay that is part of the ahupua‘a of He‘eia is known as Moku o Lo‘e, “Lo‘e’s island”. It is commonly called Coconut Island.
- A hill near the ocean that divides the ahupua‘a of He‘eia and Kāne‘ohe is called Pu‘u Pahu, “Pahu’s hill”.
- An ‘ili ‘āina in Kāne‘ohe and a peak in the Ko‘olau Mountains are both named Kahua-uli, “dark site”.
- A peak in the Ko‘olau Mountains between the ahupua‘a of He‘eia and Kāne‘ohe is named Pu‘u-Ke-ahi-a-Kahoe, “the fire-of-Kahoe-Hill”.

Whenever you are in Ko‘olaupoko, be sure to look for these places named after the four siblings and remember their mo‘olelo about being pono.

An old Hawaiian proverb says, “Ko ko a uka, ko ko a kai (Those of the uplands share their crops, those of the seaside share their catch).” That is what is considered an appropriate way of living. Should misfortune befall those living in the uplands, so too shall it fall shortly thereafter upon those living along the seaside—all will be affected.



*From Sites of Oahu by Elspeth P. Sterling and Catherine C. Summers. Adapted by Papahana Kuaola staff.*