

# Kīpuka: The Edges of Things

Those wahi kūpuna (precontact Hawaiian cultural sites) that have survived a 200-year frenzy of land development exist in fragmented, isolated pieces. In Hawaiian language the term “kīpuka” refers to the island of forest left untouched by a surrounding lava flow as it splits into two rivers which later re-join, heading downhill to the sea. These images record cultural kīpuka, images of one landscape being surrounded, sometimes being submerged or sometimes re-emerging in the midst of another. We must assemble the previous forest in our minds. And once the bigger picture begins to emerge, even a little, we are better able to appreciate an aboriginal culture that expressed through stone structures, carefully placed in reference to the landscape, its place in the cosmos.

Borders interest me, the edges of things. I live on a kind of border, an outlying periphery of American civilization in the middle of the Pacific. On an island it's easy to notice demarcations between physical spaces: land and water, urban and rural, sky and earth. However, what draws me in particular are the visually elusive borders between contested landscapes occupied simultaneously by several cultures: places occupied by divergent views of the cosmos, views that do not comfortably share the

same space, and yet which do share that space.

I was born here in Hawai'i, but it took me decades to notice such spaces, where cultural borders overlap and sometimes collide. These images document overlapping world views, both referencing, both claiming the same landscape in their opposing perceptions of the universe and of our place in it. Once in a great while, it is possible to photograph these contested spaces in such a way that multiple, overlapping worlds crystallize in a visual way. Thus, the places themselves become metaphors for what actually happened here, the sober reality beneath the fantasy hula-hula façade of slick tourist promos that litter the streets of Waikīkī. In recording a wahi kūpuna, one ends up, without even intending to do so, recording the effects of contact with the West over the past 230 years, the footprint of Western culture on a non-Western landscape. The camera always faces in two directions.

— *Jan Becket, 2018*























## *NOTES*

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Kapuanoni Heiau, Keauhou, on the grounds of the Keauhou Outrigger Hotel. It is said to have been built by Kalaniopu'u. The structure was originally much larger, and extended under the present hotel and into the area now occupied by the swimming pool.

The landowner, Kamehameha Schools, is in the process of demolishing the hotel and reconstructing the heiau.

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Kuali'ili'i Heiau, Keauhou, on the grounds of a gated condominium complex.

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Ke'ekū Heiau, Keauhou, dedicated by Lonoikamakahiki.

The hotel in the background has since been demolished and the heiau rebuilt by the landowner, Kamehameha Schools.

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Mākole'a Heiau, Keauhou, dedicated by Lonoikamakahiki.

The structure has been rebuilt by the landowner, Kamehameha Schools.

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Holualoa, the vast downhill holua (sledding) run used by the ali'i. It used to extend to the ocean. The landowner, Kamehameha Schools, arranged for the demolition of the lower section to take place on a Sunday, when local residents were all in church, according to Marion Kelly.

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Paniau, a vast complex of several heiau and a royal residence, occupied by Lonoikamakahiki, grandson of 'Umialiloa. It now lies much truncated on the grounds of the Keauhou Surf and Raquet Club Resort.

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'Ōhi'amukumuku Heiau, Keauhou, replaced by Helani church, now fallen into ruin. The original heiau had been rebuilt and rededicated by Kalaniopu'u.

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A structure on the coast at the Hōkūli'a resort development, just south of Kailua-Kona, on the shore below Captain Cook.

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Iniikawai Heiau at the Keauhou Surf and Raquet Club.

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An upright stone at Moa Point in Kailua-Kona. The extensive complex there was the residence of the Ali'i Wahine Keakealaniwahine.

source: [http://www.kohalacenter.org/pdf/History\\_Kahalu%60u\\_%20Keauhou.pdf](http://www.kohalacenter.org/pdf/History_Kahalu%60u_%20Keauhou.pdf)























