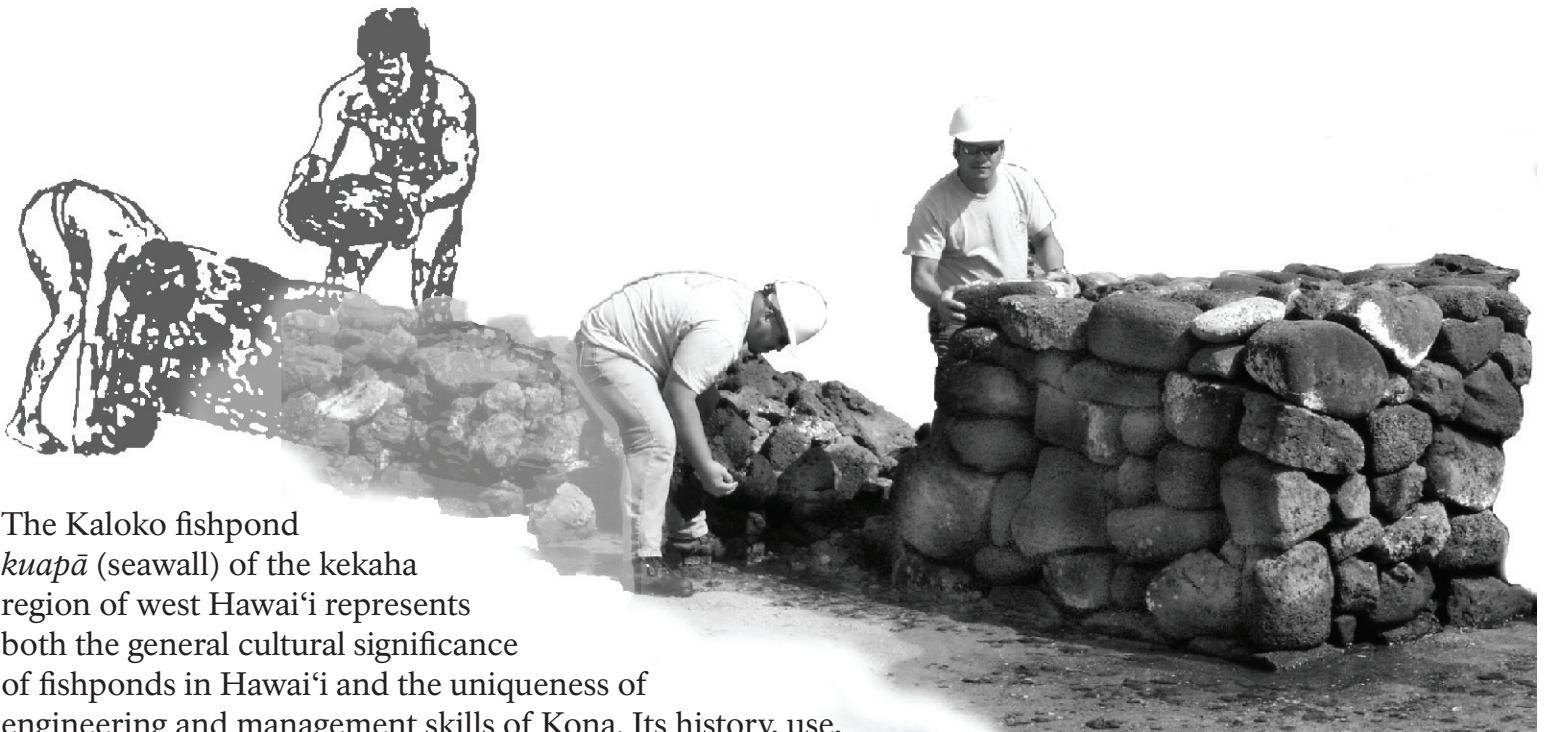




The Spirit of Kaloko-*Building in the shadow of the past*



The Kaloko fishpond *kuapā* (seawall) of the kekaha region of west Hawai'i represents both the general cultural significance of fishponds in Hawai'i and the uniqueness of engineering and management skills of Kona. Its history, use, destruction from neglect, and resurrection is a symbol for land managers, Native Hawaiians, and the people of the United States and the world.

An Ancient Spirit

The voice of the chants that describe Kaloko is cracked and dry with age. It has sounded for a millennium calling into existence the *wahi pana* (sacred places) and people of times past. The first reference to the pond comes in an oral history from chief Kamalalawalu, 300 years ago. How much older the wall is beyond that is hard to tell, but the *pana* have names that stretch into the *pō* (darkness of night and time). Genealogies trace the *kekaha 'a'ole wai* (lands

without water- West Hawai'i) in an unbroken line to Pa'ao the Navigator who arrived here from Tahiti 200 years before Columbus sailed the Atlantic. Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park encompassed the fishpond in 1978. This is a place you can hear the voice of the land and generations of people away from the din of modern technology and commerce.

Just listen.

A Strong Spirit

A combination of mysticism, raw strength, keen intelligence, and people management skills are required to construct a *kuapā* of this scale. The seawall is 30-40 ft. wide and 6 ½ feet high stretching for 250 yards. It is five times greater than the average fishpond wall size in Hawai'i. It is a giant puzzle of interlocking rocks. No cement is used, and the stones are not shaped. Masons describe the work not so much as placing the rock in the right spot, but listening to where the stone wants to be.

Legend holds that the *menehune* or little people built the fishponds in Hawai'i. Other stories tell of lines of men miles long passing *pōhaku* (stones) hand to hand. Whoever made the wall, they did so in the perfect spot and in an ingenious fashion. The *kuapā* is porous. Water flows through and into the wall helping absorb the battering energy of the waves. Watch the water break along the wall. The angle of the *kuapā* deflects the wave. Notice the pattern of

breakers before they reach the wall. The waves build and break on a reef outside. Then they build again. The wall is deliberately placed at the point just before they break a second time, robbing them of their power. Engineers with laser transits and satellite data could not have done better.

The *kuapā* stood for hundreds of years as a testament to the people of Hawai'i and their skills. It was not until people left the area and cement was put in the wall to reduce maintenance costs that the wall was destroyed by storms in the 1950's.

The National Park Service is rebuilding the wall as part of an ongoing project to bring the pond to life. It is through project funds and federal support that the pond will live again.

A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia- No task is too big when done together by all.



Kaloko Kuapā- Sea wall

