

Male and Female Rocks

NINOLE, Ka'u, Hawai'i — Now famous for its C. Brewer golf course, condominiums and homes, when Hawaiians alone ran Ninole it had a living legend; Hilo'e, one of its two fishponds had unusual clientele, and a Ninole beach was famous for its unusual rocks.

At Ninole lived a cannibalistic water lizard, a *mo'o* named Kai-kapu. Her pretty granddaughter lured unwary visitors in ancient times to her grandmother's cave.

Kai-kapu ate them raw.

If Kai-kapu is still around today, she has changed her diet. Perhaps she sends her pretty granddaughter out nights to collect her raw food along the fairways. If so, her new diet may explain all the lost golf balls.

At least, there are no reports of missing golfers.

Unusual and exclusive clientele for Hilo'e fishpond at Ninole were the *kauwa*, the caste of untouchable Hawaiians who lived apart and were drawn upon for human sacrifices.

Ninole's untouchables lived inland and upslope. They were permitted to fish from Hilo'e and to obtain fresh and brackish water for drinking and poi making from one of the nearby springs.

PRIVILEGES SUCH as this were granted to the Ninole *kauwa* to prevent them from ritually polluting fishing and water areas used by other Hawaiians.

Other Hawaiians had the use of the larger Ninole fishpond and its nearby springs.

Hawaiians also had the use of Ninole's rocks.

Koloa beach, between Ninole and Punalu'u, was the home of

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By Russ Apple

multiplying rocks. It was also a place to gather stones for use in sling shots and to gather stones used in the Hawaiian checker-like game of *konane*.

Black *konane* "men" were pieces of basalt; white "men" were of bleached coral. Both had

*When stones mated,
the offspring were
powerful indeed.*

been rounded and polished by the action of the waves on Koloa beach.

Naturally rounded and polished beach stones were also collected for use in slings. Some of the beach rocks were also dense and hard enough to be finished into small adzes.

But the best known use of Koloa's rocks involved the priests — priests who could tell a male beach rock from a female beach rock.

Not only must a priest be able to determine sex in rocks, but be

able to tell which stones should be deified.

GODS MADE FROM Koloa beach rocks presided at games all over the Island.

Male and female rocks, selected as potentially able to cause their owners to win at games and betting contests, were taken by the selecting priests to the nearby temple *Ka'ie'ie* for the ceremonies which transformed them into gods.

Just how owners qualified for possession of the gods is not known, but the owners got the new gods-of-the-games and tried them out.

If the owners were successful, the fame of the gods (and of Ninole and the priests) was established. But if there were a series of failures in games and bets, the Ninole rocks were either broken or just thrown away in contempt.

Now sex rears its head.

Ninole priests presented each new owner with two rocks, one male, one female. Owners kept them wrapped between games and bets in the folds of *kapa* — bark cloth.

Successful stones mated. After due time a small stone would be found in the folds of cloth with the large stones. When this stone grew to be the size of its parents, it was taken to the temple for deification.

Second generation game gods were believed to be more powerful than first generation.

Hawaiians called the multiplying stones of Ninole *'i'i'i hanau*.

Blame coastal subsidences in 1868 and 1975 for destroying Koloa beach at Ninole. It and its rocks are now underwater.