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Brown shares stories of mo‘o

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—February 15, 2012—Marie Alohalani Brown offers an overview of the basic beliefs that structure Kanaka Maoli understanding of the *mo‘o* or reptilian water deities as depicted in the *mo‘olelo* (stories) of our *kūpuna* (elders) in an upcoming *Puana Ka ‘Ike* lecture in Kona and an *Eia Hawai‘i* presentation in Hilo.

Her free presentations are scheduled from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 23, at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, Campus Center Room 301, and from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Friday, February 24, in Ballroom III at the Keauhou Beach Resort in Kona.

Brown hails from Mākaha, but her ancestral roots are in Ho‘okena. She received her master’s degree in Hawaiian language in 2010 at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM). Her master’s thesis is the largest compilation to date of traditional and current information regarding mo‘o. Hawaiian deities, especially mo‘o, and cultural beliefs surrounding them serve as inspiration for her creative works. She is currently a doctoral student in the English department at UHM and is conducting archival research on John Papa ‘Ī‘Ī for her dissertation.

Predominately female, mo‘o deities embody the *ho‘ōla* (life-giving) and *ho‘omake* (death-dealing properties) of the water element with which they are associated, Brown said. “And like water, they slip through your fingers when you try to grasp them. Replicating the elusive nature of mo‘o, fragments of knowledge about these reptilian water deities lurk here and there, sometimes in unexpected places, but more often, they are hidden deep within our epic mo‘olelo, many of which are not easily accessible today for one reason or another.”

For more information on these presentations, contact Joy Cunefare at (808) 534-8528 or e-mail info@kohalacenter.org. For lecture schedules and webcasts of previous lectures, visit <http://kohalacenter.org/puanakaike/about.html> and www.keauhouresort.com/learn-puanakaike.html.

The Puana Ka ‘Ike and Eia Hawai‘i lecture series are presented in partnership with Keauhou-Kahalu‘u Education Group of Kamehameha Schools, The Kohala Center, the Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Student Center at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, and Keauhou Beach Resort.