

Tamale (Tonga Mohenoa):

Tamale (Tonga Mohenoa), currently holds the hereditary title Tamale, which he inherited from his late grandfather Tamale (Pita Lolomana'ia).

Tamale is the high chief of the village of Niutōua in Tongatapu, Tonga. Tamale is also one of the oldest chiefly titles, which is directly, formally affiliated to the sacred Tu'i Tonga, the most ancient dynasty in Tonga. Amongst the many offices under the Tu'i Tonga rule were the falefā and sina'e. The falefā consisted of principal attendants of the Tu'i Tonga and the sina'e consisted of his direct descendants, especially the Tu'i Tonga's younger brothers who by virtue of seniority did not ascend to the Tu'i Tonga title. There are three types of sina'e, namely, Sina'e 'Eiki (Sacred Sina'e), Sina'e 'Eiki Kimu'a (Former Sacred Sina'e) and Sina'e 'Eiki Kimui (Latter Sacred Sina'e), with Tamale belonging to the Sina'e 'Eiki Kimu'a. As the principal Sina'e 'Eiki Kimu'a, Tamale was the chief custodian of the sacred water well Fakalongo-ki-Kafa, where water was fetched with great ceremonial style and care for the taumafa kava (royal kava ceremony) of the Tu'i Tonga, as evident in such references as vai 'a Tamale (water of Tamale).

Tamale also assumed other hereditary roles, specifically the material arts tufunga langafale (house-building) and tufunga lalava (kafa sennit-lashing), both connected with the construction of the sacred houses of the Tu'i Tonga. The refined body of critical knowledge and skills connected with the hereditary title Tamale and its long-standing associated roles, which include tufunga langafale and tufunga lalava, was formally passed down through sustained education and training to the Tamale descendants, including Tamale (Tonga Mohenoa). There are many fale in Tonga that Tamale (Tonga Mohenoa) and members of his family, under the tutelage of Tamale (Pita Lolomana'ia), have been responsible for such as the royal residence of King Tupou VI, the Tonga National Cultural Centre, Moulton Memorial Church at Tupou College, Sia'atoutai Theological College Hall and a conference room at the International Dateline Hotel.

The influence and work of the Tamale line can also be seen here in New Zealand. For example the work of the late Tamale (Pita Lolomana'ia) can be seen in South Auckland at the Ōtara Tongan Methodist Church, Tokaima'ananga. The influence of the late Tamale (Pita Lolomana'ia) can also be seen in the prolific works by New Zealand based artist of Tongan heritage Sopolemalama Filipe Tohi, who for many years studied under him, are sourced from tufunga lalava, including its application using new media, styles and materials. Works by Sopolemalama can be seen at The University of Auckland's Fale Pasifika, along Karangahape Road (K Rd) and outside of the Onehunga library, the bus shelters near Ōtara Town Centre, dispersed all over New Plymouth and even at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

As a descendent of one of the oldest chiefly titles directly linked to Tonga's ancient Tu'i Tonga dynasty Tamale (Tonga Mohenoa), who studied at Tupou College and Sia'atoutai Theological College and currently works for Tonga Customs, comes with a wealth of invaluable knowledge and skills. He will provide an insight into his knowledge and expertise about the Tongan master art of tufunga lalava.

Tufunga lalava is considered the Tongan master material art, in that it produces all the kupesi (geometric designs), featured in local and introduced material and fine arts such as tufunga tatatau (tattooing), tufunga ngaohikulo (pottery-making), tufunga tatupenu (fabric-designing), nimamea'a koka'anga (barkcloth-making), nimamea'a tuikakala (flower-designing) and nimamea'a tuimatala'i'akau (embroidery).

Although tufunga lalava, in its original sense, is a dying material art, the application of it using new media, styles and materials ensures its vitality and continuity over time and space. The membership of the ha'a tufunga lalava originally as a professional class is declining, leaving Tamale (Tonga Mokenoa), as probably the only remaining tufunga lalava master in the whole of Tonga.