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Hokule'a crew sets sail for Samoa

The voyaging canoe Hokule'a and its crew of 18 sailed from Tonga for Samoa yesterday after waiting 11 days for good winds. The vessel could make the 300-mile passage in three days.

Will Kyselka at the Bishop Museum Planetarium said the winds are pushing Hokule'a straight toward Samoa which lies north and slightly east of Tonga.

"Like the old Polynesians, navigator Nainoa Thompson has learned to wait," said Kyselka. "He waited 13 days in New Zealand and 14

days in Rarotonga for the right winds.

"Each time it paid off in fast passages. But it takes courage to wait when everyone is eager to go."

This time the lieutenant governor of American Samoa, a member of the crew, got tired of waiting and flew home before the canoe sailed from Vava'u, the northernmost island group in Tonga.

Hokule'a will put into Pago Pago where the canoe will remain for a month before continuing to Rarotonga on the ancient Polynesian migration route.

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