

**LEARNING FROM OUR KŪPUNA****MO'OLELO****A Tale of Kilohana Hill**

Papa, earth mother, and Wākea, sky father, are the gods responsible for the creation of the Hawaiian people. This is a story of Papa and Wākea and their life in the forests of Kalihi. Papa and Wākea, after creating the Hawaiian people, lived on Kilohana. Kilohana is the highest point in Kalihi Valley.

On a bright sunny day, Haumea (Papa's name when she is married to Wākea) wanted crab from the windward side of O'ahu. Haumea went to the waters of Mōkapu and He'eia to catch crab and gather seaweed. Wākea asked Haumea to also bring him some fish. While Haumea was on the Windward side of O'ahu, Wākea traveled down to Kalihi Valley in search of wild bananas to eat with his fish, crab, and seaweed.

Wākea was used to finding wild bananas at a certain place in Kalihi Valley. However, that place was *kapu* and the people of Hawai'i were not allowed to take food from that area. The chief's men had found trees that were thrown down and the fruit were taken. They had suspected a thief but were never able to catch him, so they hid behind the bushes and waited for the thief to come again. When Wākea arrived and started cutting wild bananas from the tree, the chief's men caught him and tied him up. They left Wākea by himself, tied to a tree, while they went to report to the chief.

Meanwhile, Haumea had caught many black crabs and collected plenty of seaweed for their meal. Suddenly, a bad feeling rushed through Haumea and she missed her husband Wākea. Haumea hurried home to Kilohana and Wākea was nowhere to be found. She looked down upon Kalihi Valley and saw the chief's men taking Wākea to the chief. She dropped her basket of crabs and *limu* (seaweed) and rushed down to Wākea. The crabs



crawled out into the brush. The seaweed crept up the trees of Kilohana and became entangled in the branches.

The chief's men were getting Wākea ready for his punishment and tied him to an 'ulu tree. However, Haumea arrived in time to save him. She asked the chief's men if she could hug Wakea once more, and the chief's men agreed. As soon as Haumea and Wākea touched, the 'ulu tree split open and the two gods vanished into the tree. The men were shocked in disbelief and ran to tell the chief. He commanded them to cut down the tree with an axe. The first man held the axe and took a big swing at the tree. A chip from the tree flew off and hit him in the head and he was knocked onto the ground. Another man tried to cut down the tree, but the same happened and he was knocked onto the ground.

Finally the chief spoke to a *kahuna* and he told them that the woman was Haumea, the mysterious one from the borders of Kahiki. The chief performed ceremonies to please the gods and everyone returned to their homes.

If you ever travel to Kalihi Valley, look for a path leading to Kilohana. There you will discover a fresh water spring. If you look carefully in the pool, you will see crabs and *limu*, which Papa spilled in her haste. On the edge of the pool is a mat of *pōhuehue* vines – the discarded skirt of Papa.

(Adapted from Beckwith, Place Names—Kalihi Valley, as cited in Summers and Sterling. 1978. Sites of Oahu)