



CLASSICS TO GO

LEGENDS OF GODS
AND GHOSTS
HAWAIIAN MYTHOLOGY
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KE-ALOHI-LANI

INTRODUCTION

The legends of the Hawaiian Islands are as diverse as those of any country in the world. They are also entirely distinct in form and thought from the fairy-tales which excite the interest and wonder of the English and German children. The mythology of Hawaii follows the laws upon which all myths are constructed. The Islanders have developed some beautiful nature-myths. Certain phenomena have been observed and the imagination has fitted the story to the interesting object which has attracted attention.

Now the Rainbow Maiden of Manoa, a valley lying back of Honolulu, is the story of a princess whose continual death and resurrection were invented to harmonize with the formation of a series of exquisite rainbows which are born on the mountain-sides in the upper end of the valley and die when the mist clouds reach the plain into which the valley opens. Then there were the fish of the Hawaiian Islands which vie with the butterflies of South America in their multitudinous combinations of colors. These imaginative people wondered how the fish were painted, so for a story a battle between two chiefs was either invented or taken as a basis. The chiefs fought on the mountain-sides until finally one was driven into the sea and compelled to make the deep waters his continual abiding-place. Here he found a unique and pleasant occupation in calling the various kinds of fish to his submarine home and then painting them in varied hues according to the dictates of his fancy. Thus we have a pure nature-myth developed from the love of the beautiful, one of the highest emotions dwelling in the hearts of the Hawaiians of the long ago.

So, again, Maui, a wonder-working hero like the Hercules of Grecian mythology, heard the birds sing, and noted their beautiful forms as they flitted from tree to tree and mingled their bright plumage with the leaves of the fragrant blossoms.

No other one of those who lived in the long ago could see what Maui saw. They heard the mysterious music, but the songsters were invisible. Many were the fancies concerning these strange creatures whom they could hear but could not see. Maui finally pitied his friends and made the birds visible. Ever since, man has been able to both hear the music and see the beauty of his forest neighbors.

Such nature-myths as these are well worthy of preservation by the side of any European fairy-tale. In purity of thought, vividness of imagination, and delicacy of coloring the Hawaiian myths are to be given a high place in literature among the stories of nature vivified by the imagination.

Another side of Hawaiian folk-lore is just as worthy of comparison. Lovers of "Jack-the-Giant-Killer," and of the other wonder-workers dwelling in the mist-lands of other nations, would enjoy reading the marvelous record of Maui, the skilful demi-god of Hawaii, who went fishing with a magic hook, and pulled up from the depths of the ocean groups of islands. This story is told in a matter-of-fact way, as if it were a fishing-excursion only a little out of the ordinary course. Maui lived in a land where volcanic fires were always burning in the mountains. Nevertheless it was a little inconvenient to walk thirty or forty miles for a live coal after the cold winds of the night had put out the fire which had been carefully protected the day before. Thus, when he saw that some intelligent birds knew the art of making a fire, he captured the leader and forced him to tell the secret of rubbing certain sticks together until fire came.

Maui also made snares, captured the sun and compelled it to journey regularly and slowly across the heavens. Thus the day was regulated to meet the wants of mankind. He lifted the heavens after they had rested so long upon all the plants that their leaves were flat.

There was a ledge of rock in one of the rivers, so Maui uprooted a tree and pushed it through, making an easy passage for both water and man. He invented many helpful articles for the use of mankind, but meanwhile frequently filled the days of his friends with trouble on account of the mischievous pranks which he played on them.

Fairies and gnomes dwelt in the woodland, coming forth at night to build temples, massive walls, to fashion canoes, or whisper warnings. The birds and the fishes were capable and intelligent guardians over the households which had adopted them as protecting deities. Birds of brilliant plumage and sweet song were always faithful attendants on the chiefs, and able to converse with those over whom they kept watch. Sharks and other mighty fish of the deep waters were reliable messengers for those who rendered them sacrifices, often carrying their devotees from island to island and protecting them from many dangers.

Sometimes the gruesome and horrible creeps into Hawaiian folk-lore. A poison tree figures in the legends and finally becomes one of the most feared of all the gods of Hawaii. A cannibal dog, cannibal ghosts, and even a cannibal chief are prominent among the noted characters of the past.

Then the power of praying a person to death with the aid of departed spirits was believed in, and is at the present time.

Almost every valley of the island has its peculiar and interesting myth. Often there is a historical foundation which has been dealt with fancifully and enlarged into miraculous

proportions. There are hidden caves, which can be entered only by diving under the great breakers or into the deep waters of inland pools, around which cluster tales of love and adventure.

There are many mythological characters whose journeys extend to all the islands of the group. The Maui stories are not limited to the large island Hawaii and a part of the adjoining island which bears the name of Maui, but these stories are told in a garbled form on all the islands. So Pele, the fire-goddess, who dwelt in the hottest regions of the most active volcanoes, belongs to all, and also Kamapuaa, who is sometimes her husband, but more frequently her enemy. The conflicts between the two are often suggested by destructive lava flows checked by storms or ocean waves. It cannot be suspected that the ancient Hawaiian had the least idea of deifying fire and water—and yet the continual conflict between man and woman is like the eternal enmity between the two antagonistic elements of nature.

When the borders of mist-land are crossed, a rich store of folk-lore with a historical foundation is discovered. Chiefs and gods mingle together as in the days of the Nibelungen Lied. Voyages are made to many distant islands of the Pacific Ocean, whose names are frequently mentioned in the songs and tales of the wandering heroes. A chief from Samoa establishes a royal family on the largest of the Hawaiian Islands, and a chief from the Hawaiian group becomes a ruler in Tahiti.

Indeed the rovers of the Pacific have tales of seafaring which equal the accounts of the voyages of the Vikings.

The legends of the Hawaiian Islands are valuable in themselves, in that they reveal an understanding of the phenomena of nature and unveil their early history with its

mythological setting. They are also valuable for comparison with the legends of the other Pacific islands, and they are exceedingly interesting when contrasted with the folk-lore of other nations.

I

THE GHOST OF WAHAULA TEMPLE

Hawaiian temples were never works of art. Broken lava was always near the site upon which a temple was to be built. Rough unhewn stones were easily piled into massive walls and laid in terraces for altar and floors. Water-worn pebbles were carried from the nearest beach and strewn over the uneven floor, making a comparatively smooth place over which the naked feet of the temple dwellers passed without the injuries which would otherwise frequently come from the sharp-edged lava. Rude grass huts built on terraces were the abodes of the priests and of the high chiefs who sometimes visited the places of sacrifice. Elevated, flat-topped piles of stones were usually built at one end of the temple for the chief idols and the sacrifices placed before them. Simplicity of detail marked every step of temple erection.

No hewn pillars or arched gateways of even the most primitive designs can be found in any of the temples whether of recent date or belonging to remote antiquity. There was no attempt at ornamentation even in the images of the great gods which they worshipped. Crude, uncouth, and hideous were the images before which they offered sacrifice and prayer.

In themselves the heiaus, or temples, of the Hawaiian Islands have but little attraction. To-day they seem more like massive walled cattle-pens than places which had ever been used for sacred worship.

On the southeast coast of the island of Hawaii near Kalapana is one of the largest, oldest, and best preserved heiaus, or temples, in the Hawaiian Islands. It is no exception to the architectural rule for Hawaiian temples, and is worthy the name of temple only as it is intimately associated with the religious customs of the Hawaiians. Its walls are several feet thick and in places ten to twelve feet high. It is divided into rooms or pens, in one of which still lies the huge sacrificial stone upon which victims—sometimes human—were slain before the bodies were placed as offerings in front of the hideous idols leaning against the stone walls.

This heiau now bears the name Wahaula, or "red-mouth." In ancient times it was known as Ahaula, or "the red assembly," possibly denoting that at times the priests and their attendants wore red mantles in their processions or during some part of their sacred ceremonies.

This temple is said to be the oldest of all the Hawaiian heiaus—except possibly the heiau at Kohala on the northern coast of the same island. These two heiaus date back in tradition to the time of Paoa, the priest from Upolu, Samoa, who was said to have built them. He was the traditional father of the priestly line which ran parallel to the royal genealogy of the Kamehamehas during several centuries until the last high priest, Hewahewa, became a follower of Jesus Christ—the Saviour of the world. This was the last heiau destroyed when the ancient tabus and ceremonial rites were overthrown by the chiefs just before the coming of Christian missionaries. At that time the grass houses of the priests were burned and in these raging flames were thrown the wooden idols back of the altars and the bamboo huts of the soothsayers and the rude images on the walls, with everything combustible which belonged to the ancient

order of worship. Only the walls and rough stone floors were left in the temple.

In the outer temple court was the most noted sacred grave in all the islands. Earth had been carried from the mountain-sides inland. Leaves and decaying trees added to the permanency of the soil. Here in a most unlikely place it was said that all the varieties of trees then found in the islands had been gathered by the priests—the descendants of Paoa. To this day the grave stands by the temple walls, an object of superstitious awe among the natives. Many of the varieties of trees there planted have died, leaving only those which were more hardy and needed less priestly care than they received a hundred years or more ago.

The temple is built near the coast on the rough, sharp, broken rocks of an ancient lava flow. In many places in and around the temple the lava was dug out, making holes three or four feet across and from one to two feet deep. These in the days of the priesthood had been filled with earth brought in baskets from the mountains. Here they raised sweet potatoes and taro and bananas. Now the rains have washed the soil away and to the unknowing there is no sign of previous agriculture. Near these depressions and along the paths leading to Wahaula other holes were sometimes cut out of the hard fine-grained lava. When heavy rains fell, little grooves carried the drops of water to these holes and they became small cisterns. Here the thirsty messengers running from one priestly clan to another, or the traveller or worshippers coming to the sacred place, could almost always find a few drops of water to quench their thirst.

Usually these water-holes were covered with a large flat stone under which the water ran into the cistern. To this day these small water places border the path across the pahoehoe lava field which lies adjacent to the broken a-a

lava upon which the Wahaula heiau is built. Many of them are still covered as in the days of the long ago.

It is not strange that legends have developed through the mists of the centuries around this rude old temple.

Wahaula was a tabu temple of the very highest rank. The native chants said,

"No keia heiau oia ke kapu enaena."

("Concerning this heiau is the burning tabu.")

"Enaena" means "burning with a red hot rage." The heiau was so thoroughly "tabu," or "kapu," that the smoke of its fires falling upon any of the people or even upon any one of the chiefs was sufficient cause for punishment by death, with the body as a sacrifice to the gods of the temple.

These gods were of the very highest rank among the Hawaiian deities. Certain days were tabu to Lono—or Rongo, as he was known in other island groups of the Pacific Ocean. Other days belonged to Ku—who was also worshipped from New Zealand to Tahiti. At other times Kane, known as Tane by many Polynesians, was held supreme. Then again Kanaloa—or Tanaroa, sometimes worshipped in Samoa and other island groups as the greatest of all their gods—had his days especially set apart for sacrifice and chant.

The Mu, or "body-catcher," of this heiau with his assistants seems to have been continually on the watch for human victims, and woe to the unfortunate man who carelessly or ignorantly walked where the winds blew the smoke from the temple fires. No one dared rescue him from the hands of the hunter of men—for then the wrath of all the gods was sure to follow him all the days of his life.

The people of the districts around Wahaula always watched the course of the winds with great anxiety, carefully noting

the direction taken by the smoke. This smoke was the shadow cast by the deity worshipped, and was far more sacred than the shadow of the highest chief or king in all the islands.

It was always sufficient cause for death if a common man allowed his shadow to fall upon any tabu chief, *i.e.*, a chief of especially high rank; but in this "burning tabu," if any man permitted the smoke or shadow of the god who was being worshipped in this temple to come near to him or overshadow him, it was a mark of such great disrespect that the god was supposed to be enaena, or red hot with rage.

Many ages ago a young chief whom we shall know by the name Kahele determined to take an especial journey around the island visiting all the noted and sacred places and becoming acquainted with the alii, or chiefs, of the other districts.

He passed from place to place, taking part with the chiefs who entertained him sometimes in the use of the papa-hee, or surf-board, riding the white-capped surf as it majestically swept shoreward—sometimes spending night after night in the innumerable gambling contests which passed under the name pili waiwai—and sometimes riding the narrow sled, or holua, with which Hawaiian chiefs raced down the steep grassed lanes. Then again, with a deep sense of the solemnity of sacred things, he visited the most noted of the heiaus and made contributions to the offerings before the gods. Thus the days passed, and the slow journey was very pleasant to Kahele.

In time he came to Puna, the district in which was located the temple Wahaula.

But alas! in the midst of the many stories of the past which he had heard, and the many pleasures he had enjoyed while

on his journey, Kahele forgot the peculiar power of the tabu of the smoke of Wahaula. The fierce winds of the south were blowing and changing from point to point. The young man saw the sacred grove in the edge of which the temple walls could be discerned. Thin wreaths of smoke were tossed here and there from the temple fires.

Kahele hastened toward the temple. The Mu was watching his coming and joyfully marking him as a victim. The altars of the gods were desolate, and if but a particle of smoke fell upon the young man no one could keep him from the hands of the executioner.

The perilous moment came. The warm breath of one of the fires touched the young chief's cheek. Soon a blow from the club of the Mu laid him senseless on the rough stones of the outer court of the temple. The smoke of the wrath of the gods had fallen upon him, and it was well that he should lie as a sacrifice upon their altars.

Soon the body with the life still in it was thrown across the sacrificial stone. Sharp knives made from the strong wood of the bamboo let his life-blood flow down the depressions across the face of the stone. Quickly the body was dismembered and offered as a sacrifice.

For some reason the priests, after the flesh had decayed, set apart the bones for some special purpose. The legends imply that the bones were to be treated dishonorably. It may have been that the bones were folded together in the shape known as unhipili, or "grasshopper" bones, *i.e.*, folded and laid away for purposes of incantation. Such bundles of bones were put through a process of prayers and charms until at last it was thought a new spirit was created which dwelt in that bundle and gave the possessor a peculiar power in deeds of witchcraft.

The spirit of Kahele rebelled against this disposition of all that remained of his body. He wanted to be back in his native district, that he might enjoy the pleasures of the Under-world with his own chosen companions. Restlessly the spirit haunted the dark corners of the temple, watching the priests as they handled his bones.

Helplessly the ghost fumed and fretted against its condition. It did all that a disembodied spirit could do to attract the attention of the priests.

At last the spirit fled by night from this place of torment to the home which he had so joyfully left a short time before.

Kahele's father was the high chief of Kau. Surrounded by retainers, he passed his days in quietness and peace waiting for the return of his son.

One night a strange dream came to him. He heard a voice calling from the mysterious confines of the spirit-land. As he listened, a spirit form stood by his side. The ghost was that of his son Kahele.

By means of the dream the ghost revealed to the father that he had been put to death and that his bones were in great danger of dishonorable treatment.

The father awoke benumbed with fear, realizing that his son was calling upon him for immediate help. At once he left his people and journeyed from place to place secretly, not knowing where or when Kahele had died, but fully sure that the spirit of his vision was that of his son. It was not difficult to trace the young man. He had left his footprints openly all along the way. There was nothing of shame or dishonor—and the father's heart filled with pride as he hastened on.

From time to time, however, he heard the spirit voice calling him to save the bones of the body of his dead son. At last he

felt that his journey was nearly done. He had followed the footsteps of Kahele almost entirely around the island, and had come to Puna—the last district before his own land of Kau would welcome his return.

The spirit voice could be heard now in the dream which nightly came to him. Warnings and directions were frequently given.

Then the chief came to the lava fields of Wahaula and lay down to rest. The ghost came to him again in a dream, telling him that great personal danger was near at hand. The chief was a very strong man, excelling in athletic and brave deeds, but in obedience to the spirit voice he rose early in the morning, secured oily nuts from a kukui-tree, beat out the oil, and anointed himself thoroughly.

Walking along carelessly as if to avoid suspicion, he drew near to the lands of the temple Wahaula. Soon a man came out to meet him. This man was an Olohe, a beardless man belonging to a lawless robber clan which infested the district, possibly assisting the man-hunters of the temple in securing victims for the temple altars. This Olohe was very strong and self-confident, and thought he would have but little difficulty in destroying this stranger who journeyed alone through Puna.

Almost all day the battle raged between the two men. Back and forth they forced each other over the lava beds. The chief's well-oiled body was very difficult for the Olohe to grasp. Bruised and bleeding from repeated falls on the rough lava, both of the combatants were becoming very weary. Then the chief made a new attack, forcing the Olohe into a narrow place from which there was no escape, and at last seizing him, breaking his bones, and then killing him.

As the shadows of night rested over the temple and its sacred grave the chief crept closer to the dreaded tabu walls. Concealing himself he waited for the ghost to reveal to him the best plan for action. The ghost came, but was compelled to bid the father wait patiently for a fit time when the secret place in which the bones were hidden could be safely visited.

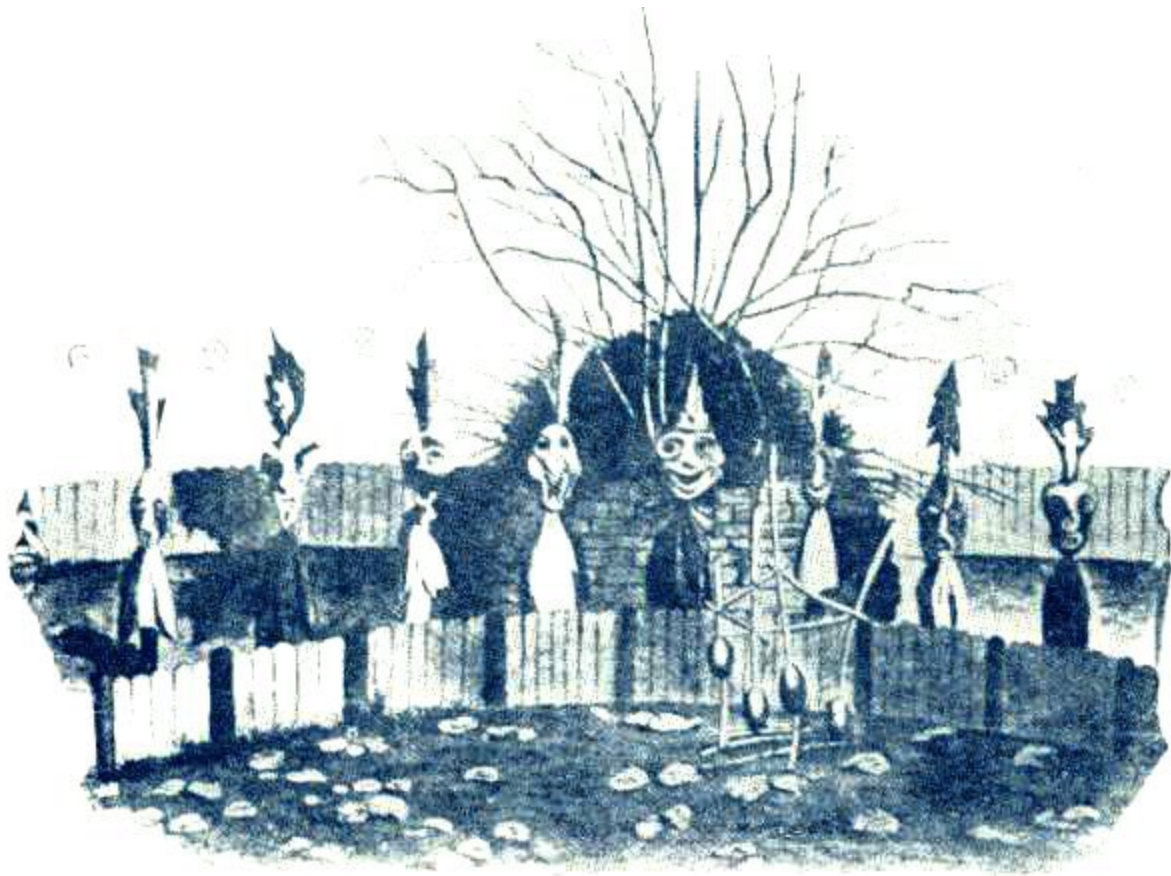
For several days and nights the chief hid himself near the temple. He secretly uttered the prayers and incantations needed to secure the protection of his family gods.

One night the darkness was very great, and the priests and watchmen of the temple felt sure that no one would attempt to enter the sacred precincts. Deep sleep rested upon all the temple-dwellers.

Then the ghost of Kahele hastened to the place where the father was sleeping and aroused him for the dangerous task before him.

As the father arose he saw this ghost outlined in the darkness, beckoning him to follow. Step by step he felt his way cautiously over the rough path and along the temple walls until he saw the ghost standing near a great rock pointing at a part of the wall.

The father seized a stone which seemed to be the one most directly in the line of the ghost's pointing. To his surprise it very easily was removed from the wall. Back of it was a hollow place in which lay a bundle of folded bones. The ghost urged the chief to take these bones and depart quickly.



IMAGES OF GODS AT THE HEIAU

The father obeyed, and followed the spirit guide until safely away from the temple of the burning wrath of the gods. He carried the bones to Kau and placed them in his own secret family burial cave.

The ghost of Wahaula went down to the spirit world in great joy. Death had come. The life of the young chief had been taken for temple service and yet there had at last been nothing dishonorable connected with the destruction of the body and the passing away of the spirit.



MALUAE AND THE UNDER-WORLD

This is a story from Manoa Valley, back of Honolulu. In the upper end of the valley, at the foot of the highest mountains on the island Oahu, lived Maluae. He was a farmer, and had chosen this land because rain fell abundantly on the mountains, and the streams brought down fine soil from the decaying forests and disintegrating rocks, fertilizing his plants.

Here he cultivated bananas and taro and sweet potatoes. His bananas grew rapidly by the sides of the brooks, and yielded large bunches of fruit from their tree-like stems; his taro filled small walled-in pools, growing in the water like water-lilies, until the roots were matured, when the plants were pulled up and the roots boiled and prepared for food; his sweet potatoes—a vegetable known among the ancient New Zealanders as ku-maru, and supposed to have come from Hawaii—were planted on the drier uplands.

Thus he had plenty of food continually growing, and ripening from time to time. Whenever he gathered any of his food products he brought a part to his family temple and placed it on an altar before the gods Kane and Kanaloa, then he took the rest to his home for his family to eat.

He had a boy whom he dearly loved, whose name was Kaa-lii (rolling chief). This boy was a careless, rollicking child.

One day the boy was tired and hungry. He passed by the temple of the gods and saw bananas, ripe and sweet, on the little platform before the gods. He took these bananas and ate them all.

The gods looked down on the altar expecting to find food, but it was all gone and there was nothing for them. They were very angry, and ran out after the boy. They caught him eating the bananas, and killed him. The body they left lying under the trees, and taking out his ghost threw it into the Under-world.

The father toiled hour after hour cultivating his food plants, and when wearied returned to his home. On the way he met the two gods. They told him how his boy had robbed them of their sacrifices and how they had punished him. They said, "We have sent his ghost body to the lowest regions of the Under-world,"

The father was very sorrowful and heavy hearted as he went on his way to his desolate home. He searched for the body of his boy, and at last found it. He saw too that the story of the gods was true, for partly eaten bananas filled the mouth, which was set in death.

He wrapped the body very carefully in kapa cloth made from the bark of trees. He carried it into his rest-house and laid it on the sleeping-mat. After a time he lay down beside the body, refusing all food, and planning to die with his boy. He thought if he could escape from his own body he would be able to go down where the ghost of his boy had been sent. If he could find that ghost he hoped to take it to the other part of the Under-world, where they could be happy together.

He placed no offerings on the altar of the gods. No prayers were chanted. The afternoon and evening passed slowly. The gods waited for their worshipper, but he came not. They looked down on the altar of sacrifice, but there was nothing for them.

The night passed and the following day. The father lay by the side of his son, neither eating nor drinking, and longing

only for death. The house was tightly closed.

Then the gods talked together, and Kane said: "Maluae eats no food, he prepares no awa to drink, and there is no water by him. He is near the door of the Under-world. If he should die, we would be to blame."

Kanaloa said: "He has been a good man, but now we do not hear any prayers. We are losing our worshipper. We in quick anger killed his son. Was this the right reward? He has called us morning and evening in his worship. He has provided fish and fruits and vegetables for our altars. He has always prepared awa from the juice of the yellow awa root for us to drink. We have not paid him well for his care."

Then they decided to go and give life to the father, and permit him to take his ghost body and go down into Po, the dark land, to bring back the ghost of the boy. So they went to Maluae and told him they were sorry for what they had done.

The father was very weak from hunger, and longing for death, and could scarcely listen to them.

When Kane said, "Have you love for your child?" the father whispered: "Yes. My love is without end." "Can you go down into the dark land and get that spirit and put it back in the body which lies here?"

"No," the father said, "no, I can only die and go to live with him and make him happier by taking him to a better place."

Then the gods said, "We will give you the power to go after your boy and we will help you to escape the dangers of the land of ghosts."

Then the father, stirred by hope, rose up and took food and drink. Soon he was strong enough to go on his journey.

The gods gave him a ghost body and also prepared a hollow stick like bamboo, in which they put food, battle-weapons, and a piece of burning lava for fire.

Not far from Honolulu is a beautiful modern estate with fine roads, lakes, running brooks, and interesting valleys extending back into the mountain range. This is called by the very ancient name Moanalua (two lakes). Near the seacoast of this estate was one of the most noted ghost localities of the islands. The ghosts after wandering over the island Oahu would come to this place to find a way into their real home, the Under-world, or, as the Hawaiians usually called it, Po.

Here was a ghostly breadfruit-tree named Lei-walo, possibly meaning "the eight wreaths" or "the eighth wreath"—the last wreath of leaves from the land of the living which would meet the eyes of the dying.

The ghosts would leap or fly or climb into the branches of this tree, trying to find a rotten branch upon which they could sit until it broke and threw them into the dark sea below.

Maluae climbed up the breadfruit-tree. He found a branch upon which some ghosts were sitting waiting for it to fall. His weight was so much greater than theirs that the branch broke at once, and down they all fell into the land of Po.

He needed merely to taste the food in his hollow cane to have new life and strength. This he had done when he climbed the tree; thus he had been able to push past the fabled guardians of the pathway of the ghosts in the Upper-world. As he entered the Under-world he again tasted the food of the gods and he felt himself growing stronger and stronger.