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## The Story of Haloa: a Hawaiian Creation Story

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Whether whispered or shouted, the name Haloa tells a story of connection between all Hawaiians, a story of connection between people and nature. As Hawaiians we are one with Haloa, we are one with *kalo* (taro). May this ever be so.



Wakea - Father Sky, and Papa - Mother Earth, creators of our beloved island chain home, had a beautiful daughter named Ho'ohokulani, whose name means 'the making of stars in the heavens'. Wakea and Ho'ohokulani together conceived a child, and the family waited patiently for the birth.

Can you imagine their sadness when this child was stillborn? This child, a son, was named Haloa. Haloa means long breath, eternal breath. The kupuna, the elders, whispered, 'the child looks like a root.' The family wrapped Haloa in kapa, placed him in a basket of woven lauhala, and buried him in the 'aina.

Ho'ohokulani grieved the loss of her son, wailing and chanting, crying and mourning and watering the grave with her tears. In time, a plant grew from the gravesite. This unknown plant was fragile and tender but also strong and healthy, far reaching and long. *Lau kapalili*: Tremble leaf. *Lau kapalala*: broad leaf. The stems were slender and when the wind blew they swayed and bent as though paying homage, their heart shaped leaves shivering gracefully as in hula. And in the center of each leaf water gathered, like a mother's teardrop.



This plant grew well and when the

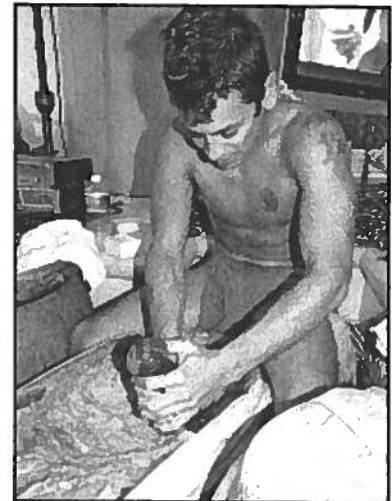
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mother plant matured it produced a corm called an 'oha. This 'oha, when removed from the mother plant, was then planted and another mother plant started it's life cycle. The word 'ohana, family, comes from the word 'oha and describes human families as kalo plants with offspring.

Ho'ohokulani conceived again and this time gave birth to another son also named Haloa after the first son. This second Haloa was lovely, handsome and healthy in every way. Haloa Naka was the first son: he became the first *kalo* and the respected sibling and elder brother of the second Haloa, who became the first Hawaiian. *Kalo (taro)* of course, is a traditional principal food of our Hawaiian people.

A primal, sacred, family connection ties Hawaiians to the universe, to nature, and to the land and the sea. Nature is where it all begins for Hawaiians. In fact, we call ourselves '*keiki o ka 'aina*,' 'children of the land.' The '*aina*' is a heart matter for Hawaiians, much more than just soil or sand. People and nature are siblings born to the same parents at the start of time.

The word '*aina*, land, literally means 'that which feeds' and *maka'ainana*, the term for common people, means 'eyes of the land' Thus, nature feeds us and in return we must watch over nature. The land gives us everything we need: food, clothing, housing, tools, toys, musical instruments, canoes - everything we craft, wear and eat comes from plants, animals, fish and minerals. We are dependent on nature: revere and respect her. *E malama pono i ka 'aina*: take good care of the earth. Life depends on people, nature and Spirit living in harmony: *lokahi*.



Our connection to Haloa is binding. If at anytime there is no *kalo* or *poi* for our tables, the spirit of Haloa will vanish and die. And if this happens, we too will die spiritually. As a spiritual people we believe all things are created by a higher power with *mana*: energy, power and grace. Without Spirit, we are nothing.

Whether whispered or shouted the name Haloa tells a story of connection between all Hawaiians, and a story of connection between people and nature. As Hawaiians, we are one with Haloa, we are one with *kalo*. May this ever be so.

This story is an interweaving of information from Kupuna Wisdom: Kupuna Whispers, from the Surfing for Life website, and from other tellings of this traditional story, and was compiled by Barbara Helynn Heard.

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**Photo note: Daniel Anthony** pictured above pounding kalo into poi owns Mana'ai, a small business on O'ahu which produces poi manually - all hand pounded. He and his family are on a mission to encourage and empower others to return Haloe back into their home. Please visit their website at [www.manaai.com](http://www.manaai.com).



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