

CULTURE & HISTORY

Haleakalā: How Māui Snared the Sun

The Story of *Why Māui Snared the Sun*, Culture and History:

Learn from Kumu Hula `Iwalani Christian about Māui and the cultural context of the story *Why Māui Snared the Sun*.

Here is some information about Kumu `Iwalani, in her own words:

Some things about me: 73 years of age, born and raised in a culturally nurturing environment on Kaua`i Island. I am Kanaka Maoli, well educated, having the Kuleana (responsibility) of Kumu Hula throughout my adult life. I was 12 when Hawai`i became a State, attending Kamehameha Schools on O`ahu, so I have lived and witnessed many cultural and political shifts. That kinda sums it up in a nutshell.

“Respect your elders. Help and be kind to others. Be grateful. Take your responsibilities seriously. Always do the best work you can with a good heart. Live Aloha with Honor and Respect.”

- Kumu Hula `Iwalani Christian

Directions:

Step 1: Honor the Hawaiian Culture

Watch or read a version of the story that honors the Hawaiian culture it is central to. Kumu `Iwalani recommends this wonderful animated version of the story [Why Māui Snared the Sun, produced and made available by `Ōiwi TV](#). If you would like to read this version of the story, please find the text below on pages 3-6.

Step 2: Read, Learn, and Understand Together

Kumu `Iwalani Christian, a Kumu Hula cultural scholar and leader and our esteemed and greatly respected community advisor, has researched and shared her knowledge, thoughts and perspective on this story:

Mai Nā Kumu Hula A Me `Ohana:

(conversations with other Kumu Hula and family members)

We all recall that as children we were told the Hawaiian versions of Māui’s 5 exploits. Some of us were also told of his birth and death. These are the common things we remember: Māui was a young boy (maybe 12) and a teenager (17?) when he completed his feats. It was Māui’s mother’s need to dry her Kapa that Māui encountered Kalā. Some recall a Pālau (club) and some recall a Ko’i (adze) as the tool that Māui used in this Mo’olelo (story) and not his Manaia (hook). We all came away with the same values and lessons: Respect your elders. Help and be kind to others. Be grateful. Take your responsibilities seriously. Always do the best work you can with a good heart. Live Aloha with Honor and Respect.

We do recall the story’s emphasis on the benefits of sunlight and warmth to the Lawai’a (fisherman), Mahi’ai (farmer) and general health, but do not recall defining seasons as Westerners do. We knew of Kau Wela and Ho’oilu by moon phases, weather events and religious observances, which might translate to Summer and Winter. Hawai’i is so close to the equator, that nightfall is always at the same time each day.

Clothing (Kapa) and Food (Fishing and Farming) are the most important benefits to mankind in this story. The benefits and lessons are summarized well at the end of the video.

Step 2: Read, Learn, and Understand Together Cont.

Some General Things Regarding the Legend of *Why Māui Snared the Sun*:

With the popularity of the movie 'Moana' and this project being for children, it's necessary to assist with any confusion which may arise with the children regarding the legendary character, Māui. Throughout Polynesia, Māui is a celebrated super hero whose story is told through several exploits or feats of courage, all of which benefit the people, creatures and environment of the world. He is comparable to modern day Spider Man. Each exploit has many versions, most of which differ only slightly.

In the movie, Māui is shown as a grown man, in our legends, he is a boy near to his teen years, and then a teenager nearing 20. In the movie, Māui and Moana are Polynesian with strong emphasis on the Sāmoan and Tongan cultures. They are not particularly Hawaiian, or Māori, or Tahitian or Marquesian, or Rapa Nui. Heihei is the name of the chicken, but it's also the term for chicken in Tongan. In Hawaiian and Māori, the term is Mōa. Their clothing is Sāmoan with some Tongan influence.

I share this not to discredit the movie, no, Māui belongs to all of Polynesia. He is one of few legendary characters with this status. I share this because the version of Māui and the Sun from Ōiwi TV is Hawaiian. Children may not recognize the cultural differences, but if they ask, one can be equipped with an educated response. Too much of what we learned as children regarding History and Culture many years ago, is not truth. As a cultural educator, decolonizing is a huge part of my Kuleana.

Step 3: Review the Meaning of Some of the Terms in the Story

Note from Kumu 'Iwalani: The pronunciation of these words is spot on in the video

- 'Ano 'Ai – daily greeting.
- Ikaika – Name meaning strong
- Kalā – The Sun Hina – Name meaning grey
- Hawai'i – Name of island
- Kapa – cloth
- Wauke – type of tree
- Mamaki – type of tree
- Kīhei - shawl
- Malo – Loin cloth
- Pā'ū - Skirt
- Māui – Demigod/Island
- Haleakalā – Name of Mountain
- Hilo – Name of Village
- Alenuihaha – Name of ocean channel
- Pono – proper, righteous
- Kukuna – sun ray
- Maika'i - good
- Maika'i Nō – good indeed
- Kuleana - responsibility
- Ono -delicious
- Mai Poina – don't forget

Closing:

Now that you have watched or read this version of the story and taken in the cultural understanding, perspective and wisdom that Kumu 'Iwalani has so generously shared, what lessons can you take from the story into your own family and community?

“The truth about stories is that that’s all we are” - Thomas King

We are our stories. Stories are power; they capture our histories, our triumphs, our tragedies, our hopes, and our futures.

Read the story of *Why Māui Snared the Sun* from 'Ōiwi TV:

'Ano 'Ai 'Ikaika. We were all waiting for you.

Sorry Aunti, I had to help my mom hang the laundry.

What could be so terrible about that.

I don't know why we just don't use the dryer.

The sun does a better job.

Drying clothes with the sun takes a long time, and I have lots of things to do besides laundry.

Like?

Like surf, watch TV, play with my cousins, surf, Oh and come visit you Aunti. That's better than doing chores for my mom.

Ah, well, just so happens the story I'm about to share is about a boy helping his mother, with her chores.

Are you trying to put us to sleep? Doesn't sound like much of a story.

Oh but it's very exciting. This young man accomplished a marvelous thing to help his mother and the whole community. It was a daring feat of strength, more amazing than any of your comic book supa heros.

No way!

You see, A long time ago, the days were very short because the sun, Ka Lā, raced across the sky as he pleased.

Short? Like how short?

Ahhh. There were just a few hours of daylight before the lazy moon crept slowly across the darkness. There was only a little day and a very long night. At that time of the short days and long dark nights, there was a beautiful woman named Hina who lived in a cave on Hawai'i Island, behind Rainbow Falls. Hina was known for the fine Kapa cloth she made from the bark of Wauke and Mamaki trees. Hina's handiwork was prized in the community for making Kihei, Malo for the men and Pā'ū for the women. But because Kalā raced through the sky, refusing to share his light and warmth, Hina did not have enough time in the day to dry her Kapa.

That's like when my mom says my dad's pants won't dry in time for him to wear to work.

Now, the sun's behavior wasn't just a problem for Hina. Fishermen didn't have enough time in the day to feed their families, farmer's crops couldn't grow without sunlight, and fruit wouldn't ripen on the trees. Everyone was suffering. Hina had four sons, and the youngest was named, Māui. He was a clever boy, quick, strong. Hina knew her youngest child was special, but Māui was beginning to suspect he was capable of many wondrous things.

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Why Māui Snared the Sun from 'Ōiwi TV Cont.:

Mamā, your beautiful Kapa is ruined. All your effort is just wasted.

Not wasted, Māui. See, this can be used. And the pattern will be lovely when it dries.

If it dries. There aren't enough hours in the day for you to do your best work. Or for anyone else to do all they are able to do.

What choice do we have Māui. This is how it's always been. No one can slow the path of the sun.

Has anyone ever tried.

No, no one has ever been brave enough.

But Kalā must do his work, so we can do ours. It isn't right.

Sigh. Maybe someday when you're older, you'll be the one.

If I wait until I'm older, I'll watch you struggling all those years. I must go to Haleakalā.

Then how will you persuade the Sun to change what it has always done. You would need to capture Kalā, just to get him to listen to you.

Capture...

Māui, here, take these with you.

A stone adze, and a rope of coconut fibres. What will I need these for?

When the time comes, you'll know. They won't fail you.

That doesn't seem enough for what I might need to do.

You'll find these are special. Like you, they have powers beyond the ordinary.

Haleakalā is far from our home. I must get there without Kalā suspecting anything. I need wings to transport me. Māui the rooster, flew from his mother's home in Hilo, across Hawai'i Island, then over the Alenuiha channel to the island of Māui, going as fast as he could while there was still daylight left.

Kalā laughs: Flap those wings, chicken. You'll never find land in the dark.

Māui struggles, panting, and falls on a sandy beach. Looking up at the mountain, Haleakalā, he says: I have to climb all the way up there? I don't have the energy to make it.

Māui starts up the steep rugged slopes of the mountain Haleakalā. It was a long, cold and difficult journey. He was weary and doubt slowly started creeping in his mind. Many times he thought about turning back, and leaving things the way they were. But the thought of his mother and her hard work, pushed him through the night. He realized there was no turning back, he had to make things Pono. He had to confront the mighty Kalā.

Māui finds Kalā sleeping at the top of the mountain. "Look at Kalā, lying there so smug while the whole world waits for his light. Wake Up Kalā!! Time to go to work. (Māui crows like a rooster). The sun awakens and yawns and stretches.

Kalā: Every creature in the world lives by my rules, except for that rooster. So rude! How dare he tells me when to get up.

Māui tells himself: Now! Do it now!.

Kalā asks: Is that you, chicken? Stop clucking and leave my domain. No one enters the house of the sun.

Māui says NOW! and throws his rope, snagging one of Kalā's rays.

Kalā: What is this? No rope can ever bind Kalā. Kalā tries to burn the rope, but fails.

Māui: My rope won't burn and it won't break. You are trapped Kalā, and I won't let you go until you promise to move slower across the sky.

Kalā laughs. No one tells Kalā what to do. I AM KALĀ.

The sun's anger explodes, throwing balls of fire at Māui, whipping his fiery sunbeams about with great destruction. But Māui is not hurt. Māui grasps the rope and pulls the sun towards him.

Continued on the next page.

Why Māui Snared the Sun from 'Ōiwi TV Cont.:

Kalā says: You can't capture the sun.

Māui replies: That's exactly what I'm doing.

Māui continues to snag the sun with his rope as the sun tries to escape by rising higher in the sky. Māui pulls upon the rope and anchors it securely until the sun falls onto the mountain, causing a large crater. The sun is caught and can't move.

Kalā says: release me. I am Kalā, nothing stops me, no one controls me, I do as I please. (The sun is snared and continues to struggle.)

I am Māui, son of Hina, and I am telling you to stop racing across the sky. (the sun continues to struggle) Try all you want Kalā, but my rope holds fast.

You have me here, and here I'll stay. Without me the world will die. I'll wait here until you hear the cries of your people and the tears of your mother begging to let me go.

Māui is angry, and grabs his adze and begins to cut away the longer sunbeams. Kalā yells NO.

Māui: I didn't want to do this, you won't slow down, I'll make you slow down.

Māui continues cutting away the sunbeams and Kalā cries out Oh, Ahhh, Arrrgh. Māui continues till Kalā calls: Stop this now. What have you done to my brilliant Kukuna. That hurts.

Māui stops.

Now you know how it feels to hurt. You have been causing the world much pain by cheating us out of daylight. People cry wanting to do their work.

Kalā says: If you destroy me, darkness will rule the world.

Māui says: Darkness already rules the world. Not you. Our lives are all night and brief days. If you would move more slowly across the sky, you would mark the passage of time. Remember your name, Kalā, also means day. If you slow your great journey, the people would honor you, and your name would be even greater than it is now.

Hmmph says Kalā.

Māui: Kalā, the world would give you gratitude and Aloha for your warmth and light. But you have to slow your passage across the sky.

Kalā: My name would be even greater than it is now. I'm not just the sun, I'm also the day. Honor and Aloha. Boy, let me go.

You have to promise. PROMISE.

I promise. Māui, son of Hina. I do understand that without me, nothing in the world could survive. And so I will do the work that is mine alone to do.

You're very important Kalā. The whole world relies on you. Maika'i.

Maika'i No.

Māui and Kalā had a long talk about community and responsibility. And the great honor in doing one's work properly. They agreed that during the Summer time, Kalā would travel more slowly across the sky to help the people of the world, but he could make his journey faster during the Winter months, so that he and everyone else could have more sleep.

Is that real, or is that just a legend.

That's real Ikaika, the daylight is shorter in the Winter months.

So Kalā did what he said he was going to do?

Yes, Kalā kept his promise, soon crops were flourishing as they never had before, people had enough daylight hours to do their work, and everyone enjoyed health and abundance. What a great relief after all that suffering.

Continued on the next page.

Why Māui Snared the Sun from ‘Ōiwi TV Cont.:

What about Māui’s mom.

Hina was finally able to dry her Kapa properly which meant that the cloth was more refined and able to hold rich colors and intricate patterns. She made Māui special Kapa clothing, the most beautiful anyone had ever seen in all of Hawai‘i.

And then what? Māui takes on the sun and wins. And then what?, he goes into retirement? How are you supposed to top that.

Māui had many other great adventures, but this was probably his greatest deed. Especially since he was a young man at the time.

Like how old?

A little bit older than you, Ikaika. Maui distinguished himself as a hero and a brave man by...

....catching the sun. By helping his mother with her laundry!!

But you see, everyone has responsibilities. Kalā’s Kuleana was to bring light and warmth to all the living things so the world could grow and thrive. He quickly learned to care about every plant and animal and person in the world. Because of this, he became quite proud of his work and did it the best he could. He did it with honor and Aloha. Well, I suppose it’s time to.....

I know, I know. You’re going to tell me it’s time to go home and hang my laundry, right? Uh, alright Aunti. Too late to hang laundry, Kalā is going down. It’s time for dinner and I smell something Ono cooking on the fire.

Bye Kalā. See you tomorrow. Mai Poina. Don’t forget. And if you don’t show up, watch out. My mom has plenty of laundry I have to hang, and my dad keeps rope in the back of his truck. And, I know where you live.