

The Story of Hamumu

Humumu HI.K.12. BM Mele Database, 1 v. (138p)

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The Story of Hamumu

A whale arrived just outside of the outskirts of Kohala. The place where this whale arrived was close to the base of the cliffs, then, this whale stopped and just floated upon the water. One man arrived and then another to cut the meat from this whale. At the time that the flesh was being cut from the whale, the whale's blood, oil, and even mucus started to flow, but the whale did not move. The flesh of this whale was cut haphazardly. But still, this Big Fish lay peacefully. A man named Hamumu came and brought with him some taro with the thought of it being a sufficient accompaniment with the meat of this Whale. This man then climbed onto the head of this fish, whereupon this movement caused the big fish to move and take him towards the direction of Kahiki.(1)

Upon Hamumu's arrival in Kahiki and landing on the shoreline, this whale made a human-like sound and his ways started to resemble that of a man. His body and his tail started to separate right before the eyes of the man who was raised in Hawai'i, and who had [caused] his blood to flow.

Hamumu had been taken to heiau.(2) Priests of Kahiki lived at this heiau, and there Hamumu also lived. He learned a variety of useful skills, from the building of houses, of heiau, of sanctuaries, and everything else. And upon completion of this training, Hamumu was returned from Kahiki on top of a canoe made from coconut so he would be able to return. This extremely large coconut had been completely divided and separated to resemble a large leaf. The insides had been entirely culled. The parts with growth had been completely filled, fitted with black hau, and sealed with breadfruit [ulu] and candlenut [kukui] sap, which had been heated into resin and glued into any holes of the coconut. Hamumu's canoe sailed and returned from Kahiki and landed in Honoipu(3), the place where he had originally been taken by the whale.

When Hamumu arrived on the coconut canoe, this extraordinary voyage caused a great commotion and a great number of chiefs and commoners came. And, when the Chief saw Hamumu, who was now a kahuna(4); he soon realized it was magnitude. So the chief urged Hamumu to build a house of God. This was the building of the heiau known as "Mookini" in Kohala, which has stood since that time. The altar of Hulahula was [built] for this heiau. For him he was the altar of Hulahula! It is free, freed. It is released. The umbilical cord has been untied, the umbilical cord of the land.

1 Tahiti

2 A temple or sacred space

3 A place in Hawai'i

4 A priest