

## **Adventures of Kamapua‘a** *by Guy and Pam Buffet*

Kamapua‘a was a Hawaiian god. He was born on the island of Kaua‘i, where his parents, Hina and Kahiki‘ula, had been told to expect a very special child. Even with this warning, Kahiki‘ula fainted away when he first saw his newborn son.

"A pig, no matter how special, is no child of mine!" he said when he revived. "Take him from my sight forever."

Covered with a ti-leaf cape, Kamapua‘a was taken across the channel to the island of O‘ahu to live with his mother's mother, Kamaunuaniho.

She greeted the little pig with a loving smile. "Come with me, my grandson. I will take you home and tell you who you are."

His grandmother led Kamapua‘a to a cliff top. She opened her hands to the sky and chanted...

"You are a special child. You are Kamapua‘a! Sometimes a man, sometimes a boar. You have magic powers. You are a kupua. You can be many things. A handsome boy, strong and skillful in hunting, fishing, fighting. So clever you might be tempted to play tricks on people. The biggest and strongest boar in the universe, Or a small pig, Or many pigs at once! You can be the leaf of the hiwa, the white shoot of the kikea plant, or a kukui tree. Should you have to escape through the sea, you can even be a humuhumunukunuku‘āpua‘a!"

"You can live here in Kaliuwa‘a valley as long as you like," said his grandmother, her chant ended. "Come and go as you please. Should you need to use these magic powers, call me and I will help you. One warning! Never indulge your appetite! Remember, a pig can eat his way to helplessness."

"Ah," she said, pleased, "You feel like being a boy now. And you are, just as you can be any of those things I have changed to you."

Next morning, Kamapua‘a climbed a hill that overlooked Chief ‘Olopana's village in Punalu‘u. "So many chickens down there," said the pig-boy with a sly, hungry grin. That night when he crept down to steal some of the village chickens, Kamapua‘a saw a big, firece rooster - Chief ‘Olopana's prize possession. Kamapua‘a didn't know the bird was the favorite of the powerful chief.

The second night, when he crept down again to the sleeping village, Kamapua‘a took the rooster by surprise and ran off with him.

Next morning when Chief ‘Olopana found his prize bird missing, he sent men to search out and catch the thief. As they hunted, the men caught a glimpse of Kamapua‘a in the forest. He had taken the rooster to his grandmother's house. Kamapua‘a darted behind a bush. The men followed. No boy to be seen - only a big black pig.

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When Chief ‘Olopana was told this strange tale, he sent for Lonoaohi, his kahuna. "That boy must be Kamapua‘a," said the priest. "He is a clever kupua. He can change from pig to man to many things."

The next night, more chickens were stolen from the village. ‘Olopana's men followed the trail of feathers and found Kamapua‘a sleeping. They quickly bound his feet and tied him to a pole. As they carried him off, Kamapua‘a cried out, "Grandmother! Make me the biggest boar in the universe!"

Chief ‘Olopana was furious. With all his army, he went to invade Kaliuwa‘a valley, to capture Kamapua‘a, and to get his prize rooster back. He and his men pursued the pig-boy and his grandmother through the dense forest. Branches reached out to trip ‘Olopana and his warriors. High boughs rubbed together making eerie sounds. Mysterious power seemed to lurk in every shadow. ‘Olopana's men were frightened, but the Chief drove them on.

At the head of the valley was a steep cliff. "‘A‘ole pilikia," said Kamaunuanoho. She chanted until Kamapua‘a became so huge she could use his bristles as a ladder to escape.

Kamapua‘a dragged himself up over the cliff. His back gouged a deep rut in the stone. Out gushed Sacred Falls, which can still be seen on windward O‘ahu. The giant pig and his grandmother fled to Wahiawā where they had relatives, and where the rooster was hidden away.

At first, Kamapua‘a's size frightened everyone. His grandmother explained the boar was a cousin from Kaua‘i. Soon the children were all playing with Kamapua‘a, climbing on him and tickling his snout.

In Punalu‘u, the defeated chief grew angrier. He called for a new kahuna, a Kaua‘i priest said to know the secret weaknesses of Kamapua‘a. Chief ‘Olopana had his old kahuna, Lonoaohi, tied to a stake. "When I capture him I will sacrifice you and the pig-boy together!"

Malae, the new kahuna, first had ‘Olopana move his entire village to Wahiawa. In a clearing near Kamapua‘a's relatives, Malae had the chief's men gather an enormous pile of food - fish, chickens, ‘awa, bananas, taro - everything to tempt a giant pig's appetite. The scent of the food soon led Kamapua‘a to the clearing. He ate and ate until there was no more. He was so full he could not move. He was so full he could not make a sound.

‘Olopana's men leapt from their hiding places and bound him. Kamaunuanoho tried to help by making her powerless grandson smaller, but Malae was ready for her tricks. He had the men keep tightening the ropes. Kamapua‘a was placed on the

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sacrificial altar with the old kahuna. They were to die at dawn. All night, the constellation of the Boar gazed down at them. "That is a good sign," said Lonoaohi.

At dawn, Chief ‘Olopana and his men entered the temple. They knelt before the altar where the two captives lay. Kamapua‘a had regained his strength but pretended he was still helpless. Suddenly, with a tremendous roar, he became an eight-eyed, eight-legged monster with long shining tusks! ‘Olopana and his men tried to flee. They could not. Overwhelmed with fear, they were turned to stone.

Freed, Lonoaohi walked gratefully from the temple. Kamapua‘a walked beside him, once again a handsome boy with mischief in his eyes.

A pig? A giant boar? Many pigs? The leaf of the hiwa or the white shoot of the kikea plant or a kukui tree? A humuhumunukunuku‘āpua‘a?

Who knew what he would be next? Who knew what he would do?