

Lesson 7. The Moon and the Stars - The Legend of Hina

Deep beneath the blue Hawaiian sea is a kingdom called Lalohana. In this kingdom under the ocean lived a beautiful young goddess whose long Hawaiian name was Hina'aikamalama, but everyone just called her Hina. She lived there with her brothers who traveled here and there, but her brother, Kipapa, was supposed to stay with her and take care of her. Kipapa had other things he wanted to do besides taking care of his sister, and one day he left her and their home under the sea, and he didn't come back. Hina was lonely, but she had a wonderful 'umeki, or calabash, hidden away that was full of good things to eat such as sweet potatoes and fish. So even though she didn't starve, she grew more and more lonely there in Lalohana all by herself.

Now, Hina knew there was a world above her ocean home. She had heard tales of the people who lived there, and sometimes she saw the bottoms of their canoes and the white swish of bubbles that marked their paddles as they cut through the water over her home. She enjoyed playing games and tricks with these people, so when they lowered their fish hooks to catch a tasty aku, she'd laugh and take the nehu bait to feed the little fishes that lived around her home.

Finally, Konikonia, the chief of the fishermen, sent his men to find the sharks that stole their bait and left them with no fish to feed the village. The men returned and said they found no sharks anywhere around those fishing grounds. So Konikonia sent for his kahuna and asked him what he should do. Hina did not fool the priest, and he told the chief the reason the fishermen could catch no fish.

Chief Konikonia began to wish to meet Hina even more than he wished for his fishermen to catch fish. He thought and thought of some way he might meet the beautiful young goddess, and finally he again called the wise kahuna to his hale to ask for advice. Again the kahuna did not let him down, and Konikonia called his men to help him with his plan to meet Hina.

Here is what he did. He ordered the carving of many, many ki'i, or small men, complete with mother-of-pearl eyes and human hair. He told his men to dive to the entrance of Hina's home at night and to place a ki'i on a string every few feet all the way up to the surface of the sea. From the surface of the sea, the ki'i continued all the way to the beach and on the entrance of Konikonia's court. When all the ki'i were in place, the kahuna told the chief to blow his conch shell to awaken the sleeping young goddess. When Hina heard the sound of the conch, she awoke and noticed the ki'i. She was charmed by the ki'i, and she swam along collecting the small carvings as she went up to the surface of the sea. She could not resist getting them all, and when she held the last ki'i, she was right at the entrance of Konikonia's court. She was so tired from her journey and from the excitement of her adventure that she decided to take a little nap before she returned to her home far under the sea.

When at last she opened her eyes again, she found herself looking at ten brown toes, and she slowly looked up, up and right into the eyes of the chief himself! Konikonia hurried to comfort her, and he asked her to be his honored guest at his court. After some time passed, Hina realized she love the mortal chief, and they were married with much happiness and feasting and dancing throughout the village.

The young bride enjoyed her new life, but one day she found herself feeling a little sad and homesick. Konikonia asked if there were anything he could do to make her lips smile and her eyes sparkle the way he loved to see them. Hina thought and thought, and finally she requested that he send his men to dive into her kingdom to find and bring her special 'umeki to her.

Her wish was granted, and when she opened the lid of her beloved calabash, out floated many pieces of sweet potatoes and fish that became the moon and the stars in the night sky. She told Konikonia that as long as the moon stayed high in the sky, all was well.

Time passed happily for everyone in the village until one evening when Hina noticed the moon resting upon the sea. She knew this meant her brothers were searching for her and would come to return her to Lalohana. She also knew her brothers would come in the form of pao'o fish that travel on the trips of tsunami waves bringing great destruction to those who live on the land.

When Hina explained this sign to her husband, he commanded all his people to find safety in the mountains. Sure enough, the tidal waves hit the village and flooded the land and destroyed crops and homes, but the people of the village were safe, and later returned to rebuild their village.

As for Hina'aikamalama, she escaped the waves and her brothers by leaping high into the heavens. There she shines in the night sky in the form of the moon and the stars, watching out for the people in the Hawaiian islands.

Respond to Reading

Directions

Respond to the questions below. Underline and identify specific lines from the passage that support your claim.

Hina'aikamalama told Chief Konikonia that as long as the moon stayed high in the sky, all was well. Why do you think this is?

As briefly mentioned in **Lesson 5**, changes in moon phases have been known to affect the ocean and waves. Identify some examples of this phenomenon in the mo'olelo.