



Hawaiian Tales of Heroes and Champions (Kolowalu Books (Paperback))

Vivian L. Thompson

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Once in Old Hawaii, in the days when anything was possible, supernatural kupua roamed the islands, challenging kings and chiefs, tricking men, women, and boys. The Hawaiian people would tell and retell tales of kupua exploits, and of the men who challenged them.

Some of the tall tales included in this volume are of shape-shifters like Shark Man of Ewa, who could change from man to shark, from shark to rat, from rat to a bunch of bananas. Others are of kupua with extraordinary powers like Kana, who could stretch himself as tall as a palm tree, as slender as a bamboo, as thin as a morning glory vine, as fine as a spider web. And there are men with rare and special weapons, such as Ka-ai-lani, whose talking spear could pick the winner of a cock fight before the birds were even in the ring.

As in all tales told by word of mouth, change and exaggeration crept in, and perhaps this is how the kupua tale developed - through exaggeration. That they have survived, and continue to entertain, in present-day written form, is an indication of their universal appeal.

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