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Hāloa, The First Hawaiian

There was a time, long, long ago when only the *akua*, the Hawaiian gods, lived upon the land in Hawai‘i. Wākea (Sky father) took Ho‘o-hō-kū-ka-la-ni (creator of the stars in the sky) to be his companion. She soon became pregnant with their first *keiki* (child). They were overjoyed and looked forward to the day their first child would be born.

The day finally arrived and Ho‘ohōkūkalani gave birth to a stillborn son. It was heartbreaking.

But Wākea and Ho‘ohōkūkalani loved their little son so much they named him

Hā-loa-na-ka-lau-ka-pa-li-li (trembling leaf of the long stalk/breath) and buried him near the eastern corner of their house. That way he would always be close to them. Ho‘ohōkūkalani’s tears watered the earth where he was born. They visited him and cared for that tiny plot of land every day.

Soon after, they noticed an unusual plant growing, one they had never seen before, sprouting from the very spot where Hāloanakalaukapalili was buried. This plant had green, heart-shaped leaves connected to a long stem. Below the stem, in the ground grew the corm. This amazing plant was the very first *kalo*! Wākea and Ho‘ohōkūkalani were so happy and cared for this plant.

The *kalo* continued to grow bigger and was soon surrounded by many little plant shoots called ‘*ohā*. These shoots were planted and grew into kalo plants which would ultimately feed the people.

Wākea and Ho‘ohōkūkalani soon had a second child, a healthy boy. They named this little baby Hāloa, after his older brother. He grew up to be a strong man. He was the very first Hawaiian *kanaka* (person). All Hawaiians are descended from Hāloa. In this way the *kalo* plant was first born and is the *kua‘ana* (older sibling) of the Hawaiian people. Hawaiians are the *kaikaina* (younger siblings) of Hāloanakalaukapalili. It is the *kuleana* (responsibility) of the elder *kalo* plant to care for his younger siblings by feeding them so they never go hungry. In return, it is the *kuleana* (responsibility) of Hawaiians to care for their elder brother, the *kalo* plant. This relationship continues to be honored today. *Kalo* feeds the Hawaiian people and the Hawaiian people continue to care for the *‘āina* (land) and for the *kalo*.

As descendants of Hāloa, the Hawaiian people continue to honor these important ancestral relationships.