

mother silently listened and then said that she believed the voice was the old Filipino man's spirit which had been restless and alone in that remote little graveyard. He had needed someone to talk to, and when he told them "salamat," before they left, his spirit must have felt very happy.

"Why would he be thanking us?" Jayson asked his mom.

"Because you went there," she explained, "and it was like you were visiting him in his grave so that is why he was thanking you. So you should not feel frightened, but be very happy."

For over 80 years the *Obake* Church has excited the imagination of Watalua residents, sparking tales of intrigue, mystery and the supernatural. For one young couple, Julie and Jay Balanay, the ruins of that old Catholic Church will be an unforgettable memory of a day they kept company with the dead and were blessed in return with his eternal gratitude.



THE RESTLESS SPIRITS OF MAO VALLEY

When Greg Kalani Yee was a young boy in the sixties growing up in a small subdivision outside of Waituku, Maui, "small kid time" consisted of playing in the neighborhood in the afternoon with his friends, hanging out at the local "mama and papa-san" store, enjoying shave ice, going to the beach with his uncle, and night-fishing with his Dad on the weekends. It was an absolutely normal childhood with only one small, strange detour into the world of Hawaï's supernatural.

It began as a nightmare that plagued Greg when he was seven years old. He woke up in the middle of the night, disturbed by the sound of ancient Hawaiian drums in his closet. The drumming was followed by the thunder of marching feet behind the closed door, enough feet to easily make up a small army. The whole house seemed to vibrate as he sat up in his bed, watching scores of Hawaiian warriors pressing through his closet door, their bodies literally moving through the wood as their transparent forms knew no material barrier. Young Greg watched horrified as these men marched silently through his room, one after another, each one vanishing as they moved toward the wall. Scores of these ancient warriors came out of his closet until the last marcher appeared and then vanished. At that moment, the drums suddenly stopped, and the room became deathly still.

While seeing an army of warriors walking out of your closet would be reason enough to be terrified, the young boy was more horrified by their facial and bodily features. For these Hawaiian spirits did not resemble any human male that he had ever seen. Their bodies were broken, gnarled and twisted as if they had been mangled in some hideous accident. The grimaces upon their faces was equally hideous and tortured—they appeared like a gallery of demonic freaks whose pain was hellish and eternal. The long strands of their hair were matted, filthy clumps which stuck out in all kinds of strange and frightening ways.

The first time that he had the nightmare, he ran crying and screaming to his parents' bedroom. When they asked him what was wrong, he tried to describe what had happened in detail. His parents reassured him it was only a bad dream and the next night left a small lamp on the dispel his fears. The hideous marchers, however, returned that night, and the next and the next. Night after night he would have this reoccurring vision until finally his mother, convinced that her son's dreams may be a sign that their house was haunted, sought out the counsel of an elderly Hawaiian woman who was known on Maui for her spiritual powers.

When the Hawaiian woman visited the home, she immediately felt a spiritual disturbance throughout the entire subdivision which was focused in young Greg's bedroom. Performing the *pikai* ritual, or sprinkling of Hawaiian salt to purify the home, she explained that sometimes spirits of the past were trapped in the agony they experienced at the time of their deaths. The grotesque nature of their bodies, face and hair was a spiritual distortion of the suffering they felt in life. This was especially intense for these spirits, she said to the family, because the spirits marching through this house had died during a terrible battle.

"This area was a battleground?" Greg asked wide-eyed.

"Not exactly," answered the elderly spiritualist. "The battle actually took place in 'Iao Valley."

In the days of Kamehameha's wars to extend his control throughout the Hawaiian Islands, a great battle took place on the lands of Wailuku. Kamehameha and his chiefs landed their invading force in war canoes that covered the beaches from

Kahului to Hopukoa. The fighting was intense for two days as the Maui warriors fiercely defended their island. Finally, a foreign cannon manned by the *haole* advisors John Young and Isaac Davis was brought up to the battle by Kamehameha. The slaughter was horrible. The defending armies were pushed back up into a narrow pass in 'Iao Valley where the cannon bombarded them mercilessly. Having finally routed the Maui warriors who scrambled up the side of the steep cliffs to escape the torrent of the foreign weapon, Kamehameha ordered his men to pursue the vanquished defenders. The battle was thereafter known as *Ka'uwa'upali* ("clawed off the cliff") and *Kapaniwai* ("the damming of the waters") for the corpses of the dead were piled so high that the stream through 'Iao was dammed up. The waters turned to the color of blood.

"So Kamehameha fought right here where we live?" Greg again pressed the elderly Hawaiian woman for an answer.

"No," she carefully explained to his parents. "But after the battle, the bodies were left by the victors to bake in the sun. In time many of them washed out of 'Iao Valley, their bones finally coming to rest on this plain where they were finally buried by silt, mud and sand. Their remains are beneath your house and their spirits are restless and disgraced in death. The child can sense what adults cannot."

The blessing of the house by the Hawaiian spiritualist seemed to have helped. Greg no longer had the vision of the wild-eyed, tormented victims of the battle of 'Iao Valley walking through his bedroom. But the thought that their house was over this type of burial site was too disturbing to his parents, who moved away to another district on Maui.

As for the house, Greg sometimes takes a drive up to the subdivision to just cruise past the home. Over the years he's noticed that families move in and out of the house on a very short-term basis. Not having the courage to ask any of the occupants if they have experienced any untoward disturbances, he is resigned to carry that unanswered curiosity about them throughout his life. Yet on some quiet evenings in the moment before sleep, he still vividly recalls the closet door through which marched an army of defeated men, their tormented souls seeking pity through endless history.