



Pele and Hiiaka: A Myth from Hawaii

Nathaniel B. Emerson

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Pele and Hiiaka are Hawaii's most spectacular female deities, and this story of their conflict over the mortal Lohi'au stands at the fountainhead of Hawaiian myth, oral tradition, and dance. For centuries, however, it was a varied collection of disparate versions told by widely scattered Hawaiian poets, raconteurs, and dancers.

Author, Dr. Nathaniel Emerson spent years traveling, talking to Hawaiians, and compiling notes in an attempt to organize and preserve its text. The result of his efforts, *Pele and Hiiaka: A Myth from Hawaii* was published in 1915, and that edition has since become a rare and expensive collector's item. This digital edition of that book contains all of Emerson's original text as well as a new introduction and new photographs.

Pele the fire goddess, who dwells in the Kilauea firepit, is quick-tempered and violent. Hiiaka, her sister, is calm and benevolent and given to wandering through groves of scarlet-blossomed 'ohi'a trees. Pele's roaming dream-spirit falls in love with the handsome chieftain Lohi'au, and Hiiaka is sent to bring him back from Kaua'i to Pele's waiting immortal body. In the saga of Hiiaka's arduous journey are the exploits of stirring romance.

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