The KUMULIPO
An Hawaiian Creation Myth
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Thanks are due Barbara Dunn, of the Hawaiian Historical Society, who kindly provided access to a copy of the 1897 edition of The Kumulipo; and, Rich Regan, who reproduced from the Archives of Hawaii the photo of Liliuokalani used as Frontispiece of the book. And Sylvia Krewson-Reck, who persistently encouraged me to reissue the Pueo Press edition.

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FOREWARD

The KUMULIPO is a mele ko‘ihonua. It is a remembrance from the lipo of our deep past to the lipo of our unknown future. It heralds existence from dawn to dawn or the numerous beginnings and endings. The Kumulipo acknowledged the waliwali as the earthy matter from which all living forms have ascended. The fundamental images, thoughts, forms and shapes from waliwali evolved and increased into familial patterns. It is the organic inception of all family systems. This, our kūpuna believed!

The KUMULIPO articulates and reveals the connections of the sky and earth, the ocean and land, the land and man, the man and gods and returns again to repeat the cycle with the sky and earth, who are the gods. The Kumulipo recognized that the interrelationship of all things is an everlasting continuum, it is Ponahakeola, the chaotic whirlwind of life. This, our kūpuna knew!

The KUMULIPO echoed the complexities and details of the Hawaiian thought process. His skillful observation and examination brought understanding and respect to everything in his world. He realized that the powers for growth and bounty were the basic universal elements. The moon cycle was the principle motivator of the earth. It generated extreme movements of the ocean, and caused the eyes of the land and sea to bloom and dictated the time for earth to commence or rest from production. The sun and rain were the penetrating nourishing forces into the earth. The wind, ocean currents and rivers provided mobility for
things and objects incapable of movement. The Hawaiian and all other natural forms of his world were the beneficiaries of this primal cadence and flowed with the rhythm of the universe. This, our kūpuna experienced!

The KUMULIPO maintained the theme of survival, urgency for life and preservation of the species with procreation and evolution as the sinew. The dualistic nature of this poem supports this theme. The dichotomy of land-ocean pairing strengthened the notion for procreation and survival of the species. The drama of manipulation between Wākea, sky-father and Papa, earth-mother, is the ultimate example of procreation and regeneration. The assimilations with the taro child, the many fold generation forms of Haumea and Hina, with her multiple nature forms continue the episode of preservation, evolution and survival. This, our kūpuna learned!

The KUMULIPO is the reality of our dim past, the foundation for our present and the pathway into the future. It is a cognizant reminder of our ancestors, their intelligence, failure, conquest and defeat. This song is a gift which encourages the warrior within us to awake to the contests and challenges which constantly confront us by using intelligence and ancestral experiences. It is our genealogy connecting mankind to earth and sky. You are the Kumulipo, know that esoteric soul inside of you and celebrate your ponahakeola.

He makana kūpuna kēia no kākou apau!

Pualani Kanaka‘ole Kanahele
October, 1997
For some time, I have been working with a manuscript written by the Hawaiiana scholar Theodore Kelsey on the Kumulipo chant. While planning the publication of Mr. Kelsey's translation and notes, it occurred to me that the first English translation of this work ought to be available to general readers and students. The Liliuokalani version has been out of print since its publication in 1897. Most students have been able to see the book only in library rare-book sections.

That edition has been reproduced verbatim, the only changes being typographical breaks in Queen Liliuokalani's original introduction. It is hoped that this will be a useful tool for modern Hawaiians attempting to understand, preserve, and revitalize Hawaiian culture. For further reference, a brief list of additional works appears at the end of the text.

Liliuokalani translated this work from an Hawaiian text published by her brother, King Kalakaua, in 1889. The immediate sources of the Kalakaua text are not absolutely known, but his motives in publishing it are relatively clear. He had come to the throne by election, a process instituted when the direct line of the Kamehameha dynasty died out. After one unsuccessful attempt, Kalakaua was elected to succeed William G. Lunalilo. Kalakaua, interested in providing a more substantial and dignified presence than the election afforded him, used the Kumulipo geneology to establish himself as a descendant of the ancient chiefs of Hawaii.

It was immaterial to Kalakaua that many of the ali'i (chiefs) could also claim the same lineage; he was king. To ensure a Kalakaua dynasty, he named Liliuokalani as his heir. After his
death in 1892, his sister's forthright desire to rule as a monarch led to her overthrow by the primarily American businessmen who ran the islands. It was during the period between the end of the Hawaiian monarchy and the annexation of Hawaii by the United States that Liliuokalani finished the translation and had the Kumulipo published. Its publication was both a personal pleasure and an act of policy by Liliuokalani. It refuted the claim popular as a pro-annexation argument that Hawaiians were ignorant savages and had had no culture prior to the arrival of Captain Cook. The culture evoked in the rich and haunting lyrics of the Kumulipo is as viable today as when first published.

The difficulty comes in preserving and applying that which is valuable in these times of change. The study of history can lead to action, not just reverie. As is so often the case, I found a perfect expression of my feelings in the work of Mary Kawena Pukui: “Love sometimes retains the sweetness of one’s memory after all is gone.”

Here, we are speaking not only of affection for past times and people, but of respect and understanding for them. As we try to understand the things we have valued, and still value in Hawaii, we create a moral vision of what we would like a future Hawaii to be.

Kimo Campbell
Hawaii/California
Summer 1978
AN ACCOUNT
OF
THE CREATION OF THE WORLD
ACCORDING TO
HAWAIIAN TRADITION
TRANSLATED FROM ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS PRESERVED
EXCLUSIVELY IN HER MAJESTY'S FAMILY
BY
LILIUOKALANI OF HAWAII
PRAYER OF DEDICATION
THE CREATION
FOR
KA I MAMAO
FROM HIM TO HIS DAUGHTER
ALAPAI WAHINE
LILIUOKALANI'S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER
COMPOSED BY
KEAULUMOKU IN 1700 AND TRANSLATED BY LILIUOKALANI DURING
HER IMPRISONMENT IN 1895 AT IOLANI PALACE AND AFTERWARDS
AT WASHINGTON PLACE HONOLULU WAS COMPLETED
AT WASHINGTON D.C. MAY 20 1897

PUEO PRESS
1978
INTRODUCTION.

There are several reasons for the publication of this work, the translation of which pleasantly employed me while imprisoned by the present rulers of Hawaii. It will be to my friends a souvenir of that part of my own life, and possibly it may also be of value to genealogists and scientific men of a few societies to which a copy will be forwarded. The folk-lore or traditions of an aboriginal people have of late years been considered of inestimable value; language itself changes, and there are terms and allusions herein to the natural history of Hawaii, which might be forgotten in future years without some such history as this to preserve them to posterity. Further, it is the special property of the latest ruling family of the Hawaiian Islands, being nothing less than the genealogy in remote times of the late King Kalakaua,—who had it printed in the original Hawaiian language,—and myself.

This is the very chant which was sung by Puou, the High Priest of our ancient worship, to Captain Cook whom they had surnamed Lono, one of the four chief gods, dwelling high in the heavens, but at times appearing on the earth. This was the cause of the deification of Captain Cook under that name, and of the offerings to him made at the temple or Heiau at Hikiau, Kealakekua, where this song was rendered.

Captain Cook's appearance was regarded by our people then as a confirmation of their own traditions. For it was prophesied by priests at the time of the death of Ka-i-i-mamao that he, Lono, would return anew from the sea in a Spanish man-of-war or Auwaalalu. To the great navigator they accordingly gave a welcome with the name of Lono.
INTRODUCTION.

The chanters of this great poem were Hewahewa and Ahukai, and by them it was originally dedicated to Alapai, our ancestress, a woman-chief of the highest rank, then at Koko Oahu. Keeaumoku was lying on his death-bed. The Lonoikamakahiki, of whom this chant sings so eloquently in our native tongue, is none other than Kalaninuiiamamao (Ka-I-i-mamao). His name was also Lonoikamakahiki. He was thus called by his mother, Lonomaikanaka, from the very moment of his birth. It was his grandmother Keakealani who changed his name at the time he was dedicated to the gods and the sacred tabus of the Wela, Hoano, and the Moe; or, translated, Fire, Honor, and Adoration were conferred upon him at the time when his navel string was cut at the Heiau at Nueku, Kahalu, Kona, Hawaii. The correct name of this chief was Ka-I-i-mamao, but the bards of his day named him in their chants Kalaninuiiamamao; thus he was styled in their Mele or chant called Kekoauli-kookea ka lani. The words “lani nui” were simply inserted by them as it was their intention to hand the young prince’s name down to posterity in song, while to explain the object of the parents in naming him Ka-I-i-mamao it signified that when Keawe married Lonoma-I-Kanaka it was an infusion of a new royal blood with that of their own royal line of I, the father of Ahu, the grandfather of Lonomaikanaka. By this it was also intended to show that he, that is Ka-I-i-mamao, was above all other I’s, for there were many families, descendants of I, a high and powerful chief, and the last term, “mamao,” means “far off” and above all the rest of the I’s.

Before he was deposed by the people of Kau he was called Wakea on account of his wicked actions, and, like Wakea, he married his own daughter. By this name he wandered through the wilds of Kahihikolo at Kalihi, Kalihiwai, and Hanalei, and ultimately became demented. Through all his wanderings he was followed by his faithful attendant and retainer Kapaihi a Hilina.

This historical character is distinct from the Lonoikamakahiki, son of Keawenuiaumi, the same one who chal-
INTRODUCTION

lenged Kakuhihewa at checkers, Konane. He figured at a different period. There were really three persons of the name of Lonoikamakahiki; the first of these was the son of Keawe-niaumi; the second was a celebrated hunchback son of Kapu-lehuwaihele, and belonged to Makakauali.

The third Lonoikamakahiki is the one for whom this prayer was composed. His parents were Keaweikekahialiio-kamoku and Lonomaikaamaka. Ka-i-i-mamao was the father of Kalaniopuu, this last-named being ancestor in the third degree of King Kalakaua, who reigned over the Hawaiian kingdom from 1874 to 1891, and of Liliuokalani, who reigned from 1891 to 1893. He was also ancestor in second and third degree to the wife of Kalakaua, at present the dowager Queen Kapiolani.

It will be seen, therefore, that as connecting the earlier kings of ancient history with the monarchs latest upon the throne this chant is a contribution to the history of the Hawaiian Islands, and as it is the only record of its kind in existence it seemed to me worthy of preservation in convenient form.

I have endeavored to give the definition of each name as far as it came within my knowledge of words, but in some cases this could not be done because the true signification has been lost. The ancient Hawaiians were astronomers, and the terms used appertained to the heavens, the stars, terrestrial science, and the gods. Curious students will notice in this chant analogies between its accounts of the creation and that given by modern science or Sacred Scripture. As with other religions, our ancient people recognized an all-powerful evil spirit: Mea was the King of Milu as Satan is of the infernal regions, or hell.

I hope that to some interested in all that pertains to Hawaii, this may give one-half the pleasure which it gave to me in the translation and preparation of the manuscript.

LILIUOKALANI, of Hawaii,
Patron of the Polynesian Historical Society.
(An ancient prayer for the dedication of the high chief Lonoikamakahiki to the gods, soon after his birth, and at which time the honors of Kapu, Wela, Hoano, and Moe were conferred on him by his father, Keawekekahialiiokamoku, King of Hawaii. After the ceremony his name was changed to Ka I I Mamo.)

HE KUMULIPO
(THE CREATION)

FOR

KA I I MAMAO.

FROM HIM TO HIS DAUGHTER, ALAPAI WAHINE.

THE FIRST ERA, OR AGE.

FIRST VERSE.

At the time that turned the heat of the earth,
At the time when the heavens turned and changed,
At the time when the light of the sun was subdued
To cause light to break forth,
At the time of the night of Makalii (winter)
Then began the slime which established the earth,
The source of deepest darkness.
Of the depth of darkness, of the depth of darkness,
Of the darkness of the sun, in the depth of night,
It is night,
So was night born.
Kane was born to Waiololi, a female to Waiolola. The Wi was born, the Kiki was its offspring. The Akaha’s home was the sea; Guarded by the Ekahakaha that grew in the forest. A night of flight by noises Through a channel; water is life to trees; So the gods may enter, but not man.

SECOND VERSE.
Kumulipo was born in the night, a male. Poele was born in the night, a female. A coral insect was born, from which was born perforated coral. The earth worm was born, which gathered earth into mounds, From it were born worms full of holes. The starfish was born, whose children were born starry. The phosphorous was born, whose children were born phosphorescent. The Ina was born Ina (sea egg). The Halula was born Halula (sea urchin). The Hawae was born, the Wana-ku was its offspring. The Haukeuke was born, the Uhalula was its offspring. The Pioe was born, the Pipi was its offspring (clam oyster). The Papaua was born, the Olepe was its offspring (pearl and oyster). The Nahaweke was born, the Unauna was its offspring (muscle and crab in a shell). The Makaiaulu was born, the Opahi was its offspring. The Leho was born, the Puleholeho was its offspring (cowry). The Naka was born, its offspring was Kupekala (rock oysters). The Makaloa was born, the Pupuawa was its offspring. The Ole was born, the Oleole was its offspring (conch). The Pipi was born, the Kupee was its offspring (limpets). Kane was born to Waiololi, a female to Waiolola. The Wi was born, the Kiki was its offspring. The Akaha’s home was the sea; Guarded by the Ekahakaha that grew in the forest. A night of flight by noises Through a channel; water is life to trees; So the gods may enter, but not man.
THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

THIRD VERSE.

Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Akiaki was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Manienie Akiaki that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

FOURTH VERSE.

Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Aalaula was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Alaalawainui that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

FIFTH VERSE.

Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Manauea was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Kalo Manauea that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

SIXTH VERSE.

Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Koeleele was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Ko punapuna Koeleele that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

SEVENTH VERSE.

Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Puaiki was born and lived in the sea;
THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

Guarded by the Lauaki that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

EIGHTH VERSE.
Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Kikalamaoa was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Moamoa that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

NINTH VERSE.
Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Limukele was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Ekele that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

TENTH VERSE.
Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Limukala was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Akala that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter, but not man.

ELEVENTH VERSE.
Man by Waiololi, woman by Waiolola,
The Lipuupuu was born and lived in the sea;
Guarded by the Lipuu that grew in the forest.
A night of flight by noises
Through a channel; water is life to trees;
So the gods may enter but not man.
FIFTEENTH VERSE.
A husband of gourd, and yet a god,
A tendril strengthened by water and grew
A being, produced by earth and spread,
Made deafening by the swiftness of Time
Of the Hee that lengthened through the night,
That filled and kept on filling
Of filling, until, filled
To filling, 'tis full,
And supported the earth, which held the heaven
On the wing of Time, the night is for Kumulipo (creation),
'Tis night.
A BRANCH OF THE TWELFTH ERA.

(The husband. — The meaning.
Paliku (standing precipice).
Palika (rolling precipice).
Lakaunihau.
Nalaunuu (eaten leaves).
Kapapanuiniuauakea.
Kapapaku (standing board).
Kapapaluna (board above).
Olekailuna (naught above).
Kapapanuiialeka.

Wife. — The meaning.
Palihai (broken precipice).
Palihai (falling precipice).
Keaona (to be taught).
Puukahalelo (standing heap).
Kainainakea.
Kapapamoe (lying board).
Kapapailalo (board beneath).
Kapapapaa (firm board).
Kapapahanauua (board that brought rain).

(Wife. — The meaning.
Lanikupu (the night of standing heavens).
Haanahinakiipapa.
Ouoanahinakiipapa.
Waluanahinakiipapa.
Lohanahanahinakiipapa.
Owe (grating sound).

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

The husband. - The meaning.
Haakoakoalauleia.
Kupo (stood at night).
Nahaeikekaua (torn by war).
Keakenui (great longing).
Kahianakiiakea (open space for gods).
Koluanahinakiiakea.
Limaanahinakiiakea.
Hikanahinakiiakea.
Iwanaahinakiiakea.
Welaahilauinui (burning heat of her beauty).
Kahikoluamea (strewing of age of Mea).
Wakea who was husband of Haumea, Papa, and Hoohokalani, and Haloa was born.
Yes, 'twas Haloa.
(Wakea was the first man and Papa the first woman.)

A BRANCH OF THE TWELFTH ERA.

(Turn to the 65th page, from whence this genealogy of Paliku began.)

The husband. — The meaning.
Haakoakoalauleia.
Kupo (stood at night).
Nahaeikekaua (torn by war).
Keakenui (great longing).
Kahianakiiakea (open space for gods).
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Wakea who was husband of Haumea, Papa, and Hoohokalani, and Haloa was born.
Yes, 'twas Haloa.
(Wakea was the first man and Papa the first woman.)
THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

The husband.—The meaning.
Kapapanuikahulipali. Kapapaianapa (board that flashed).
Kapapanuiakalaula. Kapapaholahola (spread board).
Kapapakiilaula (the broad board of idols). Kapapaikea (wide board).
Kapapaiaoa (groaning board). Kapapapoukahi (single board post).
Kapapauli (dark board). Kapapapoha (board of loud report).
Kapapapahu (short board).
Kapoheenalu (the night of surf riding). Kamauliainaina.
Kahookokohipapa. Mehakuakoko.
Papaiao (board of day). Mauluikonanui (tired of greatness).
Papaheenalu (surf board). Hanuua (birth of rain).
Oliaikuhonua was born in the night of Puukahonualani.
Then next in birth was Honuakau (earth hung).
Ohomaili (beautiful hair). Kuhaleikahu (back that bore his follower).
Kehaukea (white dews). Luukualani (showers that deluged heaven).
Mohala (opening). Hinawaino (Hina of the gurgling waters).
Kahakuaweaukelele. Hinawaioki (Hina of the cutting waters).
Kaokuhookelemoana.
Mulinaha (last of broken birth).
Then was born Ipoi (held up).
Laumiha, the woman that dwelt with Kekahakualani.
Kahaula, the woman that dwelt with Kuhulihonua.
Kahakauakoko, the woman that dwelt with Kulaniehu.
Haumea who dwelt with Kanaloaakua.
Kukauakahi, the man who dwelt with Kuaimehana.
Kauahulihonua.
Hinamanouluae.
Huhune.
Haunuu.
Haulani.
Hikapuanaiea. Haumea was discovered.
Haumea of mythic form, Haumea with eight different forms,
Haumea of several forms, Haumea in form of a shark.
Whose many forms took different shapes,
And at the birth of Hikapuanaiea her breasts were caught by the heavens.
This woman of Nuumea was discovered by a dog.
Nuumea was the land, Nuupapakini the earth,
Where Haumea’s grandchildren increased.
In Kio sickness ended, the brains began to roll.
This woman that gave birth from her head,
Children were born from her brains.
This woman of the darkest night, of Nuumea,
And lived at Mulinaha,
Gave birth to Laumiha through the brain;
Gave birth to Kahaula, a woman, through the brain;
Gave birth to Kahakauakoko through the brain.
Haumea was the same woman
Who lived with Kanaloaakua.
Kauakahiakua was born from the brains;
Her children were mostly born from the brains;
With great slime was the birth from the brain
By “Papa who sought the earth” (people),
By “Papa who sought the heavens” (chief),
By Papa the great producer of lands,
By Papa who lived with Wakea.
Haalolo was born a woman.
Accompanying its birth were anger and jealousy.
Wakea became false to Papa.
Changed the days and months,
Ordered the nights of Kane towards the last of the month
And the nights of Hilo to be first;
And established sacred tabus across his threshold.  
Such was the house that Wakea lived in.  
The food of the parent chief became sacred;  
The Ape, so bitter, became sacred;  
The Akia (sour) became sacred;  
The Auhuhu (pungent and bitter) became sacred;  
The Uhaloa for its life-giving properties became sacred;  
The Laalo, so acid, became sacred;  
The Haloa that grow by the edge of the patch became 
sacred.  
Plant the Haloa, the leaves will grow tall;  
So grew the sprout of Haloa in the day and  
Thrived.

THE FOURTEENTH ERA.

The husband.—The meaning.
Liaikuhonua (longing for 
earth).
Laka (subdued).
Kamoalewea (serpent in 
space).
Maluapo (shade of night).
Kinilauemanu.
Halo (peer around).
Kamanookalani (shark of 
heavens).
Kamakaokalani (eyes of the 
heavens).
Koeookalani (hair of the 
heavens).
Kaleiokalani (wreath of the 
heavens).
Kalalii (day of chiefs).
Malakupua.

Wife.—The meaning.
KeakahuliHonua (shadow 
that sought the earth).
Kapapaialaka (board that's 
laka's).
Lapuukahonua (doubled up 
earth).
Laweakeao (taken to the 
clouds).
Upalu (tender, soft).
Kinilauewalu.
Kalanianoho (sitting heav-
ens).
Kahuaokalani (fringe of the 
heavens).
Kamaookalani (quietness of 
the heavens).
Kapuohiki (pile of ohikis).
Keaomele (day of songs).
Keaoaoalani.