

## KUMULIPO

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The Kumulipo is a special chant which honors the birth and sacred lineage of a high chief named Kalani'īiamamao, named by his paternal grandparents and Lonoikamakahiki by his mother.

The chant is an example of a *pule ho'ola'a ali'i* or a prayer to sanctify a chief. (When a chief was born, a ceremony to establish the sacredness of the infant took place soon after his/her birth.)

Keaweikekahiali'iokamoku, the ali'i nui of the island of Hawai'i at that time and father of Ka'īimamao, ordered his genealogical experts to compose a chant to sanctify his child. This Kumulipo was recited in the ceremony and the infant was given the sacred *kapu wela* or the fearful burning kapu.

Ka'īimamao was one of several chiefs with the name of Lono, the god of agriculture. He became connected with the Lono myth and when he died, it was predicted that he would return on a very large double-hulled canoe.

Ka'īimamao's son, Kalani'ōpu'u, eventually became ruler of the Big Island. He greeted Capt. James Cook when he landed at Kealakekua, Hawai'i, in January, 1779. It is believed that the Kumulipo was recited to Capt. Cook as he was given treatment worthy of an akua.

The Kumulipo is divided into two main sections (*pō* and *ao*) with a total of sixteen *wā*, or sections based on time periods. The first seven *wā* describe the initial period of darkness, *pō*, marking the genesis of the universe and its life forms out of the original slime. In the second section, daylight, *ao*, emerges and man is created. The remaining *wā* document the genealogy of the royal lineages down to Ka'īimamao.

### 1. First Age

'O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua	At the time when the earth became hot
'O ke au i kahuli lole ka lani	At the time when the heavens turned about
'O ke au i kuka'iaaka ka lā	At the time when the sun was darkened
E ho'omālamalama i ka mālama	To cause the moon to shine
'O ke au o Makali'i ka pō	The time of the rise of the Pleiades
'O ka walewale ho'okumu honua	The slime, this was the source of the earth
'O ke kumu o ka lipo, i lipo ai	The source of the darkness that made darkness
'O ke kumu o ka pō, i pō ai	The source of the night that made night
'O ka lipolipo, 'o ka lipolipo	The intense darkness, the deep darkness
'O ka lipo o ka lā, 'o ka lipo o ka pō	Darkness of the sun, darkness of the night
Pō wale ho'i	Nothing but night
Hānau ka pō	The night gave birth
Hānau Kumulipo i ka pō, he kāne	Born was Kumulipo in the night, a male
Hānau Pō'ele i ka pō, he wahine	Born was Pō'ele in the night, a female...

## A. Marine invertebrates

- 1) Coelenterata (animals such as corals, sea anemones jelly fishes and hydroids)  
Born was the coral polyp, born was the coral, came forth . . .
- 2) Annelida (segmented invertebrates such as marine worms, earthworms and leeches)  
Born was the grub that digs and heaps up the earth, came forth . . .  
Born was his [child] and earthworm, came forth
- 3) Echinodermata (radially symmetrical marine animals such as starfish and urchins)  
Born was the starfish, his child the small starfish came forth  
Born was the sea cucumber, his child the small sea cucumber came forth  
Born was the sea urchin, the sea urchin [tribe]
- 4) Mollusca (animals eighth a soft unsegmented body usually enclosed in a calcareous shell, such as snails and clams) Born was the mother-of-pearl, his child the oyster came forth Born was the mussel, his child the hermit crab came forth

## B. Marine flora

- 1) Algae (sea and fresh water)  
Born was the man for the narrow stream, the woman for the broad stream.  
Born was the 'Ekaha moss living in the sea . .
- 2) Ferns (pollen)  
Guarded by the 'Ekahakaha fern living on land
- 3) Grasses (jointed stems, seeded)  
Born was the Kō'ele seaweed living in the sea  
Guarded by the long jointed sugar cane, the kō'ele'ele, living on land . . .
- 4) Flowering plants, shrubs and trees  
Born was the hairy seaweed living in the sea  
Guarded by the hairy pandanus vine living on land . . .

## 2. Second Age

- 5) Marine vertebrates (fishes, cetaceans)

Born is the child of the hilu fish and swims  
The hilu fish rests with spreading tail-fin . . .

Born is the I'a, born the Nai'a in the sea there swimming,  
Born is the Manō, born is the Moano in the sea there swimming . . .

## 3. Third Age

- A. Winged life; egg bearing, air respiring

Kinohi

1) Insects

Born was the Pinworm, the parent  
Out came its child, a fly, and flew . . .

2) Birds

Born was the egg, the parent  
Out came its child a bird and flew  
Born was the Snipe, the parent  
Out came its child a Plover, and flew . . .

4. Fourth Age

A. Reptilian creatures (turtle, lizards)

B. Carapaced, and egg-bearing

C. Amphibians; air- and water- respiring  
The night gives birth to prolific ones  
The night is swollen with plump creatures  
The night give birth to rough-backed turtles . . .

5. Fifth through seventh Ages

A. Mammals

B. Live-births (Amniotic egg)  
Let it dig at the land, increase it, heap it up  
Walling it up at the back  
Walling it up in front  
The pig child is born  
Lodges inland in the bush . . .  
With whiskers upstanding  
They hide here and there

A rat in the upland, a rat by the sea  
A rat running besides the sea . . .

A dog child of the Night- creeping-hither  
A dark red dog, a brindled dog  
A hairless dog of the hairless ones  
A dog as an offering for the oven . . .

6. Eighth Age

A. Human beings

Well-formed is the child, well-formed now  
Child in the time when men multiplied  
Child in the time when men came from afar  
Born were men by the hundreds . . .

1) La'ila'i (first female) and Ki'i (first male)

Born was La'ila'i a woman  
Born was Ki'i a man