Kumulipo

This is an excerpt taken from the *koʻihonua* (cosmogonic genealogy chant) Kumulipo, “source of darkness,” that was composed to sanctify the birth of high chief, KaʻTimamao, son of Keaweikekahialiiokamoku. These are the first fourteen lines of the 2102 lines of this *pule hoʻolaʻa aliʻi*.

**Ka Wā ‘Akahi (First Age)**

1. ‘O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua  
   At the time when the earth became hot
2. ‘O ke au i kahuli lole ka lani  
   At the time when the heavens turned about
3. ‘O ke au i kūkaʻiaka ka lā  
   At the time when the sun was darkened
4. E hoʻomālamalama i ka mālama  
   To cause the moon to shine
5. ‘O ke au o Makaliʻi ka pō  
   The time of the rise of the Pleaides
6. ‘O ka walewale hoʻokumu honua ia  
   The slime, this was the source of the earth
7. ‘O ke kumu o ka lipo i lipo ai  
   The source of darkness that made darkness
8. ‘O ke kumu o ka pō, i pō ai  
   The source of night that made night
9. ‘O ka lipolipo, ‘o ka lipolipo  
   The intense darkness, the deep darkness
10. ‘O ka lipo o ka lā, ‘o ka lipo o ka pō  
    Darkness of the sun, darkness of the night
11. Pō wale hoʻi  
    Nothing but night
12. Hānau ka pō  
    The night gave birth
13. Hānau Kumulipo i ka pō, he kāne  
    Born was Kumulipo in the night, a male
14. Hānau Pōʻele i ka pō, he wahine  
    Born was Pōʻele in the night, a female
The Kumulipo is a special chant which honors the birth and sacred lineage of a high chief named Kalani‘i’i'amamao, 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‘i‘imamao, 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 wele or the fearful burning kapu.

Ka‘i‘imamao 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‘i‘imamao’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‘i‘imamao.

1. First Age

‘O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua
‘O ke au i kahuli lole ka lani
‘O ke au i kuka‘iaka ka lā
E ho‘omālamalama i ka mālama
‘O ke au o Makali‘i ka pō
‘O ka walewale ho‘okumu honua
‘O ke kumu o ka lipo, i lipo ai
‘O ke kumu o ka pō, i pō ai
‘O ka lipolipo, ‘o ka lipolipo
‘O ka lipo o ka lā, ‘o ka lipo o ka pō
Pō wale ho‘i
Hānau ka pō
Hānau Kumulipo i ka pō, he kāne
Hānau Pō’ele i ka pō, he wahine

At the time when the earth became hot
At the time when the heavens turned about
At the time when the sun was darkened
To cause the moon to shine
The time of the rise of the Pleiades
The slime, this was the source of the earth
The source of the darkness that made darkness
The source of the night that made night
The intense darkness, the deep darkness
Darkness of the sun, darkness of the night
Nothing but night
The night gave birth
Born was Kumulipo in the night, a male
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
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
2) Gods Kāne and Kanaloa
   Born was Kāne a god
   Born was Kanaloa the hot-striking octopus . . .

Note: the gods Kāne and Kanaloa were created after the creation of Laʻilaʻi and Kiʻi.

There were those who gave birth
The little ones, the older ones
Ever increasing in number
Man spread abroad, man was here now
It was Day!

It is day, Ao, and the chief Kaʻiʻimamao is born. The remaining eight wā document his genealogy and ends as follows:

ʻĪ, to ʻĪ is the chiefship, the right to offer human sacrifice
The ruler over the land section of Pakini
With the right to cut down ʻōhiʻa wood for images, the protector of the island of Hawaiʻi

To Ahu, Ahu son of ʻĪ, to Lono
To Lonoikamakahiki.

A major concept of the Kumulipo is the understanding that all life evolved from simple to complex life forms (human beings). The second is that of dualism, that is the understanding that opposite forces are necessary to achieve balance and harmony (lōkahi).

The Moʻokūʻauhau of Kalanitiʻimamao aka. Lonoikamakahiki to Kamehameha, Paiʻea.

Keawe (k) = Lonomāʻaikanaka (w)

Kalaninuiʻiʻimamao (k) = Kamakaʻimoku (w) = Kalanikeʻeaumoku (k)

Kalola (w) = Kalaniʻōpuʻu (k) Keōuakupuapaikalaninui (k) = Kekuʻiapōiwa II

Kīwalaʻō (k) = Kekuiapoʻiwa Liliha (w) Kamehameha (k)

Keōpūolani (w) = Kamehameha (k)

Liholiho (k)
Kauikeaouli (k)
Nahiʻenaʻena (w)
The Hawaiian Kumulipo

In the Wa Akahi
(The First Age) many Marine Invertebrates first appear:
Corals (Phylum Coelenterata)
Worms (Phylum Annelida)
Starfish, Sea Cucumbers, Sea Urchins (Phylum Echinodermata)
Barnacles (Phylum Arthropoda)
Oysters, Mussels, Clams, Limpets, Cowries, Conches, Snails (Phylum Mollusca)

In Ka Wa Elua
(The Second Age) come Marine Vertebrates (Phylum Chordata):
Rays and Sharks (Class Chondrichthytes)
Bony Fishes (Class Osteichthytes)
Porpoise (Class Mammalia)

In Ka Wa Ekolu
The "Winged Creatures" appear:
Birds (Phylum Chordata, Class Aves)

In Ka Wa Eha
come "The Crawlers":
Turtles (Phylum Chordata, Class Reptilia)
Geckos (Phylum Chordata, Class Reptilia)
Lobsters (Phylum Crustacea, Class Malacostraca)

In Ka Wa Elima
"The Night Diggers" come forth:
Pigs (Phylum Chordata, Class Mammalia, Order Artiodactyla)
Certain classes of people (Phylum Chordata, Class Mammalia, Order Primates)

In Ka Wa Eono
"The Nibblers" appear:
Rats (Phylum Chordata, Class Mammalia, Order Rodentia)

In Ka Wa Ehiku
comes "The Dog Child"
Dog (Phylum Chordata, Class Mammalia, Order Carnivora)

In Ka Wa Ewalu
"The Dawn of the Day"
In this Wa large numbers of people (Phylum Chordata, Class Mammalia, Order Primates)

The final lines of this Wa states: 'O kanaka lele wale, o kanaka nei la Ua a--o--
"Adults, human beings, people, here now, it was Day"