



# The KUMULIPO

A Hawaiian Creation Myth

*As translated by  
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## FOREWORD

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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 kúpuna 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 Pohnahakeola, the chaotic whirlwind of life. This, our kúpuna 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 cadence of the universe. This our Kúpuna experienced!

The KUMULIPO maintained the theme of survival, urgency for life and preservation of the species with procreation 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 kúpuna 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 pohnahakeola.

He makana kúpuna keia no kākou apau!

Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahahele  
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