

Mele Ko‘ihonua - ‘O Wākea Noho iā Papahānaumoku (Adv. #1)

A mele ko‘ihonua is a genealogical chant that describes various characteristics or traits of the people involved in a particular genealogy. In this particular chant, the genealogy is that of the Hawaiian Islands themselves. According to Hawaiian tradition, the islands were born (for the most part) from the union of Wākea, often referred to in other cultures as Sky Father, and Papahānaumoku, the earth mother.

There are many versions as to how the islands were born. This particular mele comes from the Hawaiian Antiquities collection of noted Hawaiian scholar, David Malo. It is usually done in the kāhoahoa style, a style that resembles a call-response type of chanting.

Alaka‘i: ‘O Wākea noho iā Papahānaumoku

Wākea mated with Papahānaumoku

Hui: Hānau ‘o Hawai‘i he moku

Born was Hawai‘i, an island

Hānau ‘o Maui he moku

Born was Maui an island

Alaka‘i :Ho‘i hou ‘o Wākea noho iā Ho‘ohōkūkalani

Wākea mated with Ho‘ohōkūkalani

Hui: Hānau ‘o Moloka‘i he moku

Moloka‘i was born, an island

Hānau ‘o Lāna‘ikaula he moku

Lāna‘ikaula was born, an island

Alaka‘i: Lili‘ōpū punalua ‘o Papa iā Ho‘ohōkūkalani

Papa was jealous of Ho‘ohōkūkalani

Ho‘i hou ‘o Papa noho iā Wākea

And returned to mate with Wākea

Hui: Hānau ‘o O‘ahu he moku

Giving birth to O‘ahu, an island

Hānau ‘o Kaua‘i he moku

Giving birth to Kaua‘i, an island

Hānau ‘o Ni‘ihau he moku

Giving birth to Ni‘ihau, an island

He ‘ula a‘o Kaho‘olawe!

The red afterbirth was Kaho‘olawe!

The attached audio clip features the chant being done in the kāhoahoa style.