

Manu o Kū

Manu-o-Kū are known by traditional Hawaiian navigators as one of the best indicators of land. Manu-o-Kū go out to sea in the morning to feed on fish, and return to land at night to rest. The flights of such birds are useful signs for those seeking landfall since they provide a fairly specific direction to the seafarer. Observing the daily flight patterns of these birds can indicate the direction of islands far out of the range of sight. When foraging for food for their young, it is estimated that Manu-o-Kū may forage as far as 120 miles from land.

In Hawaiian culture, some seabirds are often referred to as extensions of land because of their connection to islands. The meaning of Manu-o-Kū is often interpreted as "bird of Kū". Kū is one of the four major Hawaiian gods and is associated with diverse aspects of the Hawaiian universe such as governance, certain types of fishing and crop production, carving of canoes, long life, and family, among other aspects. Some of the meanings of the word kū, that are also associated to the god Kū, are upright, to rise up, or to establish. As reliable patrons of navigation and wayfinding, Manu-o-Kū embody the energy of Kū and his concern for the governance and prosperity of a rising nation like an island from out of the sea.

Mele no Papahānaumokuākea

Na Kainani Kahaunaele a me Halealoha Ayau

Mālamalama ka lā nui a Kāne puka i Ha'eha'e
'Apakau ke kukuna i ka 'ili kai o nā kai 'ewalu
He 'ike makawalu ka'u e 'ano'i nei,
'O nā au walu o Kanaloa Haunawela noho i ka moana nui
He Hu'akai ka makani o Lehua 'au i ke kai
Kū'ono'ono ka lua o Kūhaimoana i ke kapa 'ehukai o Ka'ula
'O Kū i ka loulu, ulu a'e ke aloha no Nihoa moku manu

Manu o kū i ka 'āhui, he alaka'i na ka lāhui

'O Hinapūko'a
'O Hinapūhalako'a
'O Hina kupukupu
'O Hinaikamalama

Hua ka 'ōhua, lu'u ke koholā
Aloha kahi limu kala, kia'i 'ia e ka 'ākala noho i uka
Hānau ka pe'a, puka ka pe'ape'a i ke kai
He 'ina'i ka 'ina, 'ono i ka huna o ka pa'akai
Manomano ka 'ike li'u o ka houpō o Kanaloa
Ko'iko'i lua ho'i no ka lehulehu, 'o ku'u luhia
Hanohano wale ka 'āina kūpuna, 'o nā moku lē'ia
No Papahānaumokuākea lā he inoa

The sunrise of Kāne at Ha'eha'e shines bright
The rays of the sun spread throughout Hawai'i
I yearn for the deep knowledge
The knowledge of Kanaloa who lives in the ocean
The Hu'akai wind is of Lehua that swims in the sea
Rich is the pit of Kūhaimoana in the seaspray of Ka'ula
Kū is of the loulu and our respect grows for Nihoa, isle of birds

Manu o kū flies in a bunch and leads the nation
The multiple forms of Hina of coral and moon

The 'ōhua spawns, the whale dives
Love for the limu kala, whose land counterpart is the 'ākala
The pe'a gives birth to the pe'ape'a in the sea
The 'ina is the seasoning, delicious with salt
The deep knowledge of our Kupuna lies in the depths
Extremely important for us to grasp, it is my passion
Honored of the land of my ancestors, the abundant islands
A name song for Papahānaumokuākea