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Kalanimoku: Iron Cable of the Hawaiian Kingdom, 1769–1827

EVERY HISTORY OF HAWAI‘I that covers the later years of Kamehameha I, the reign of Kamehameha II, and early years of Kamehameha III, that is from 1782 to 1827, refers to the high chief Kalanimoku numerous times. Sea captains and foreigners who visited the Islands or resided in Hawai‘i for periods of time, early American, English, and French missionaries, old and modern writers of history, foreign and Hawaiian, tell of his deeds. Yet the story of Kalanimoku’s life has never been recounted chronologically.

This article is an attempt to assemble information from dozens of books, journals, letters, and other documents, into a biographical account of this noteworthy Hawaiian *ali‘i*, warrior, counselor, statesman, and entrepreneur. It should be noted that the sources from which this information has been gathered are either in the English language, or English translations of Hawaiian, and therefore present a perspective that might differ from one derived from reading actual texts in the Hawaiian language.

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Throughout these writings, Kalanimoku's name appears with various spelling. Sometimes he is called Kalaimoku, which refers to the role of chief councilor or prime minister. In documents personally signed by him, he spells his name Karaimoku. Foreigners record the name as Crymokoo, Craymoku, Craimoku, Krimokoo. The foreign community generally referred to him as Billy Pitt, a name he assumed because of his great admiration for the British Prime Minister, William Pitt. In fact, the name carried down through two succeeding generations; a son was named William Pitt Leleiōhoku, and a grandson William Pitt Kīna'u. Kalanimoku has also been referred to as Hū'eu Kalanimoku. To his own people, he was commonly known as "*kaula hāo*," the "iron cable," a name bestowed on him by an elderly woman upon his return from Kaua'i after a potential political disaster which he brought to a peaceful end.¹ Except in direct quotes, he is referred to in this article as Kalanimoku, the name most commonly used in modern times.

EARLY YEARS

Kalanimoku lived during times of great political, social, and religious unrest, and dramatic cultural change. He and his contemporaries were thrust into unfamiliar circumstances for which they had no experience. On one hand, he was forced to deal with foreigners from different parts of the world, who spoke different languages and possessed diverse sets of values, and some with intentions less than honorable. He was often opposed by other chiefs of his own kingdom, many of whom had different objectives. However, his innate wisdom, common sense, and leadership qualities saw him through difficult times during which he was able to maintain peace and order, or when that was not possible, to be a strong and valiant warrior, not afraid of doing battle.

Kalanimoku was born in Ka'uiki, Hāna, Maui, around 1769.² Both parents were descended from Kekaulike, an 18th century *ali'i nui* of

¹ Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1981) 247.

² John G. Stokes, "New Bases for Hawaiian Chronology," *HHS Annual Report* (1933) 41.

Maui, who died around 1736. Kekuamanohā, Kalanimoku's father, was a son of Kekaulike by his wife Ha'alo'u and Kalanimoku's mother, Kamakahukilani, was Kekaulike's granddaughter through his wife Kahawalu. Kalanimoku, his brother Poki (Boki), and sister, Kahakuha'akoi, were all born of the same parents. Their father's sister, Nāmāhana, was the mother of Ka'ahumanu.³ Thus Kalanimoku and Ka'ahumanu were first cousins; throughout their lives, they remained fiercely loyal and supportive of each other. After the death of Kamehameha I, their nearly parallel roles in government strengthened the ties between them.

Kalanimoku and Ka'ahumanu were raised together on Maui in the household of a chief named Kapo'o, where they were treated as equals, although Ka'ahumanu was, by lineage, of senior rank.⁴ In the ranking of chiefs, Kalanimoku, by birth, was a chief of the third or fourth rank. By virtue of his important role in government and the status it accorded him, Kalanimoku rose to the highest position of power and influence, surpassed only by the king.⁵

There are varying accounts of how Kalanimoku entered the court of Kamehameha. According to Captain George Vancouver, Kalanimoku was taken under the care of Kamehameha in early infancy.⁶ Fornander states that around the age of 13 he journeyed to Hawai'i from Maui in the entourage of his aunt, Kalola, a wife of Kalani'ōpu'u, king of Hawai'i, and mother of heir apparent, Kīwala'ō. He remained on that island, in the court of Kīwala'ō, who succeeded his father as king of Hawai'i in 1782. The ensuing wars over the redistribution of lands pitted Kīwala'ō against his cousin, Kamehameha. After the decisive battle of Moku'ōhai in 1782, in which Kīwala'ō was killed, Kalanimoku was taken captive by the victorious army and might well have been killed but for the intervention of Kamehameha, who took him under

³ Abraham Fornander, *Ancient History of the Hawaiian People* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1996) 212.

⁴ John Papa Ii, *Fragments of Hawaiian History*, trans. Mary Kawena Pukui, ed. Dorothy Barrère (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1959) 53.

⁵ William Ellis, *Journal of William Ellis* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1979) 300.

⁶ George Vancouver, *Voyages to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World*, vol. II (Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1967) 161.

his care.⁷ The great chief showed a personal liking for the young man and made sure he received excellent training. His education included martial arts as well as *lonopūhā*, the art of healing wounds.⁸ Yet another version states that when Kamehameha took Ka'ahumanu as his wife, Kalanimoku went with her to live in the king's court.⁹ At the time he would have been about 13 years of age.

Kalanimoku, at 24 years of age, is portrayed by Captain George Vancouver, on his fourth visit to Hawai'i in 1793, as someone possessing "vivacity, and sensibility of countenance, modest behavior, evenness of temper, quick conception. . . ." He also speaks of the mutual respect and devotion that existed between Kalanimoku and his mentor, Kamehameha, and the trust and authority the latter placed in the young chief. Vancouver also describes him as someone intensely interested in learning foreign ways, including language, customs, religion, attire, and form of government; he states that Kalanimoku is "deserving of the highest commendation."¹⁰

Despite high praise heaped on Kalanimoku by fellow countrymen, foreign businessmen, and missionaries for his many admirable character traits and superior abilities, the great chief at times displayed conduct unbecoming to one of his exalted stature. In his earlier years, Kalanimoku was known for excessive drinking, and according to S.M. Kamakau, was the first Hawaiian chief to buy rum.¹¹ Historian John Papa 'Ī'i tells of an occasion when Kalanimoku led a group of close to 50 chiefs in a rum-drinking escapade lasting several hours, during which 31 gallons of liquor were consumed.¹²

Incidents such as this appear to be an exception and did not obviously affect his ability to govern or carry out his responsibilities. Neither did his stalwart reputation appear to suffer unduly as a result. This behavior appears to have ceased after his acceptance of the Christian faith.

⁷ Fornander, *Ancient History*, 346.

⁸ Samuel M. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* (Honolulu: The Kamehameha Schools Press, 1992) 179.

⁹ Jane L. Silverman, *Ka'ahumanu: Molder of Change* (Honolulu: Friends of the Judiciary Center of Hawaii, 1987) 7.

¹⁰ Vancouver, *Voyage to the North Pacific*, vol. II, 161.

¹¹ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 193.

¹² Ii, *Fragments of Hawaiian History*, 86.

KALANIMOKU AND KEŌPŪOLANI

A recently unearthed paper in the archives of Bishop Museum by David Malo states that Keōpūolani, sacred wife of Kamehameha, was also the wife of Kalanimoku.¹³ According to this document, it appears that the marriage took place sometime before the Battle of Nu‘uanu in 1795 when he would have been about 25 years of age. During their marriage, Kamehameha continued to sleep with Keōpūolani and fathered her three royal children, Liholiho (Kamehameha II), Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III), and Nahi‘ena‘ena. Keōpūolani and Kalanimoku did not have any children between them. Malo states that “Later, Kalanimoku left Keōpūolani and went to Kūwahine.” This would have occurred sometime prior to 1805.¹⁴

ABDUCTION OF KŪWAHINE

An incident involving Kalanimoku, recorded in history as an infamous revenge against innocent people, occurred in 1805. When his wife, Kūwahine, ran off with Kuakini, Kalanimoku, desolate at being unable to find her, set out with a group of followers. Going on a rampage, they set fire to homes of both chiefs and commoners. Branching off, some of the torch wielders proceeded toward ‘Ewa, spreading the conflagration through Moanalua and as far as the district of ‘Ewa. Another group passed through Wai‘alae, torching homes all the way to Waimanalo. The burning continued until Kūwahine was found and returned to her husband. Not only did Kamehameha participate in this retaliatory incident, but is said to have suggested it.¹⁵

ROLE IN GOVERNMENT

During the early years of Kamehameha’s rule over Hawai‘i, his closest advisors were four Kona chiefs: Ke‘eaumoku, Kame‘eiamoku, Keawe-

¹³ Charles Langlas and Jeffrey Lyon, “Davida Malo’s Unpublished Account of Keōpūolani,” *HJH*, vol. 42 (2008).

¹⁴ Langlas and Lyon, “Davida Malo’s Unpublished Account of Keōpūolani,” 38.

¹⁵ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 197, 389.

heulu, and Kamanawa. After their deaths, their sons, Ke‘eaumoku, Hoapili, Nāihe, and Koahou, replaced their fathers as Kamehameha’s counselors. Kalanimoku was also made part of this group, and over time, his role became the most important in the kingdom, next to that of Kamehameha, whose rule was absolute.¹⁶

Kalanimoku’s role was likened to that of prime minister. In admiration of the British statesman and prime minister, Kalanimoku adopted the name of Billy Pitt, the sobriquet by which he was known throughout the foreign community.¹⁷ The name was carried down through two generations; both a son and grandson were christened William Pitt.

When Kamehameha set out to conquer O‘ahu in 1795, Kalanimoku commanded a large segment of the invading army. The defeat of O‘ahu’s king, Kalanikūpule, made Kamehameha undisputed ruler of Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaho‘olawe, Lāna‘i, Moloka‘i, and O‘ahu.¹⁸ It also accelerated Kalanimoku’s rise to power in the king’s service.

An example of Kalanimoku’s unfaltering loyalty to Kamehameha can be found in the dilemma he faced when his cousin, Ka‘iana, also a follower of Kamehameha, was suspected of plotting against Kamehameha at the time of the imminent invasion of O‘ahu after the death of Kahekili. A commander in charge of a large segment of Kamehameha’s forces, and with a sizeable army and fleet of canoes of his own, Ka‘iana was left out of important meetings held between Kamehameha and his chiefs. Realizing that the chiefs had turned against him, possibly out of jealousy, and that his life might be in jeopardy, Ka‘iana deserted Kamehameha and joined forces with his cousin, Kalanikūpule, son of Kahekili, who had succeeded his father as king of O‘ahu. Before leaving, he confided in Kalanimoku, whose sympathy was divided between his cousin and his mentor. After much soul-searching, Kalanimoku reported Ka‘iana’s plan to Kamehameha. Not overly concerned, Kamehameha continued his invasion and in the battle of Nu‘uanu, Ka‘iana was killed.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom 1778–1854, Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968) 53.

¹⁷ Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom 1778–1854*, 53.

¹⁸ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 173.

¹⁹ David G. Miller, “Ka‘iana, the Once Famous Prince of Kauai,” *HJH*, vol. 22 (1988) 14.

THE RUSSIAN INCIDENT

In 1812, the seat of government was moved back to Hawai'i when Kamehameha and his chiefs left O'ahu and returned to live in Kona. In 1816, while Kamehameha and his chiefs were on Hawai'i, word reached them that a Russian warship had arrived at O'ahu with plans to occupy the island. Kalanimoku, with a group of warriors, was dispatched to Honolulu with orders to determine the intentions of the foreigners and proceed accordingly; if their intentions were peaceful, the foreigners were to be supplied with provisions; otherwise, they were to be forcibly evicted from the island.²⁰

On arrival, Kalanimoku found that the Russians had begun construction of a trading post at the entrance of Honolulu Harbor and were flying the Russian flag. However, when confronted by Kalanimoku's warriors, they quickly departed and no hostilities took place. Realizing the advantage of a fortification at the harbor's entrance, Kalanimoku issued a proclamation ordering people throughout the island to assist in the construction of a fort.²¹ From far and near, large numbers of laborers, both men and women, complied. Built in the same location as the unfinished Russian blockhouse, the fort, built under Kalanimoku's supervision, measured 340 feet by 300 feet, with 12 foot high walls, and cannons mounted on its parapets. Its use, however, as a military fortification was never realized; the only shots fired were those saluting ships entering and departing the harbor. Ironically, the first ship saluted by the fort was the *Rurick*, a Russian naval vessel. For more than 40 years the fort served as headquarters for government operations and as the site of the jail. It was demolished in 1857 in order to enlarge the harbor's facilities.²²

DEATH OF KAMEHAMEHA

As Kamehameha's health slowly declined, Kalanimoku's role increased exponentially; as treasurer of the kingdom, he supervised the collec-

²⁰ Walter F. Judd, *Palaces and Forts of the Hawaiian Kingdom* (Palo Alto: Pacific Book Publishers, 1975) 41.

²¹ Judd, *Palaces and Forts*, 43.

²² Judd, *Palaces and Forts*, 59.

tion of taxes and oversaw the lucrative sandalwood trade, which, at the time, was a monopoly of the king. He supervised gathering the wood and collecting the profits, much of which was in European merchandise. He handled all business dealing with foreigners and internal matters among the chiefs.²³

Kalanimoku was one of several chiefs who treated Kamehameha as his illness worsened. When their efforts brought no improvement, a Spaniard, Don Francisco de Paula Marin, was sent for. Although not a doctor, Marin was reasonably knowledgeable in medicine and had treated the king previously. His efforts were also to no avail, and on the night of May 8, 1819, Kamehameha died at his chiefly residence at Kamakahonu, Kailua, on the Kona Coast of Hawai'i.²⁴ This night was called Hoku, according to the Hawaiian calendar.²⁵

Following the wishes of Kamehameha's sacred wife, Keōpūolani, Kalanimoku took charge of matters, deciding who might remain with the body, and dispatching messengers by land and sea to spread the news to all islands. He declared strict *kapu* throughout the kingdom and enforced them for the ensuing ten days. For his strong leadership and strength in a time of great turmoil, Keōpūolani declared Kalanimoku the *ivikuamo'o*, literally the spine or backbone, defined as "a near and trusted relative of a chief who attended to his personal needs and possessions and executed private orders."²⁶ Kalanimoku, following ancient custom, offered himself as a death companion to the great chief he so idolized; he was prevented from carrying out his desire by other chiefs.²⁷

END OF THE KAPU SYSTEM

When the iron rule of Kamehameha came to an end, 21-year-old Liholiho, heir to the throne, was named successor with the title of

²³ Patrick V. Kirch and Marshall Sahlins, *Anahulu: The Antitropology of History in the Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. I (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 61.

²⁴ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 210.

²⁵ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 212.

²⁶ Stephen L. Desha, *Kamehameha and His Warrior Kekūhaupi'o*, trans. by Frances N. Frazier (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press, 2000) 484.

²⁷ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 213.



Portrait of Kalanimoku in 1819 by Alphonse Pellion. Portion of Plate 84, *Atlas Historique*, prepared for Louis Claude de Saulces de Freycinet's *Voyage Autour du Monde*, 1825. State Archives of Hawai'i.

Kamehameha II. Under the influence of his mother, Keōpūolani, and Ka'ahumanu, the great chiefs favorite wife, a reluctant Liholiho went along with the wishes of the two powerful chiefesses and proclaimed an end to the *kapu* system under which the Hawaiian people had lived since ancient times. He then sent messengers throughout the islands ordering the destruction of *heiau* and images of the gods.²⁸

Many chiefs refused to give up the basic system of beliefs under which they and their ancestors had lived for centuries, and prepared to fight for the right to retain them. The ensuing rebellion might well have brought total chaos to the government and an end to the Kamehameha dynasty had not the wise and capable Kalanimoku,

²⁸ Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1968) 57.

who supported the women, successfully held the kingdom together. The biggest threat was from Kekuaokalani, a cousin of Liholiho and nephew of Kalanimoku, who had inherited the war god Kūkā'ilimoku from Kamehameha I. He refused to accept the new order and vowed to go to war rather than abandon the ancient system. In an attempt to reason with him, Keōpūolani traveled with a delegation to Ka'awaloa to confer with the defiant Kekuaokalani and convince him to return with her to Kailua to discuss the matter with the king. He tentatively agreed, in what was apparently part of a scheme concocted by other chiefs to kill Keōpūolani. Sensing deception, the queen escaped unharmed and returned to Kailua where Kalanimoku and Liholiho were awaiting her arrival. Keōpūolani wasted no time in ordering Kalanimoku to prepare for battle; that night an army was assembled and arms and ammunition were distributed.²⁹ Meanwhile, another group of dissenters in Hāmākua also defied the king. Threatened on both sides, the young king's future was in serious jeopardy.

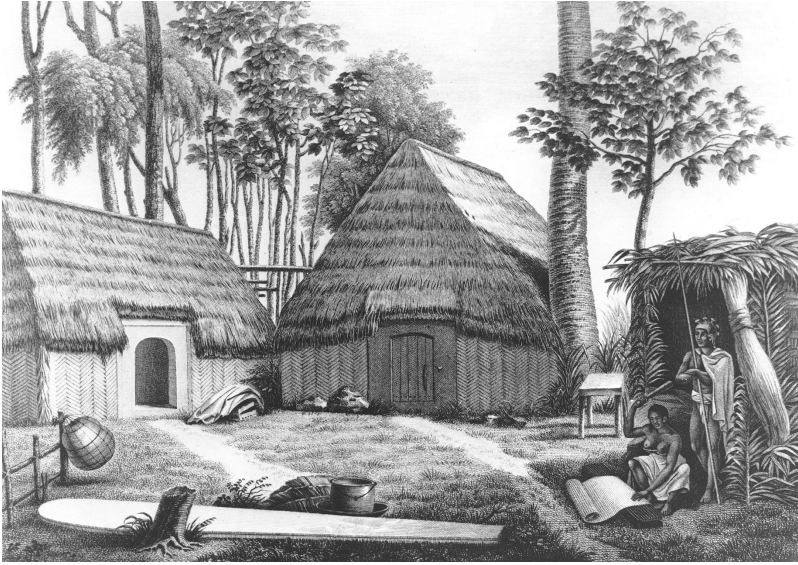
Kalanimoku resisted the urging of many chiefs to send an army to Hāmākua. Instead, he led a group of warriors to Keauhou where he set up camp. As Kekuaokalani was the son of his sister, Kalanimoku genuinely wished to avoid war, and in a final appeal, sent a messenger inviting him to meet with Liholiho. The messenger was rebuffed and forced to jump in the ocean and swim for his life. Both sides then advanced toward each other, meeting at Kuamo'o where Kalanimoku's forces won a decisive victory. Both Kekuaokalani and his wife, Manono, were killed in battle.³⁰ The insurrection at Hāmākua was then put down and the ancient religion, which had impacted the lives of both *ali'i* and commoners for centuries, was officially terminated.

With the dissolution of the old way of life, the kingdom was left without a clear system of religion, laws, or any restraints on behavior. That Kalanimoku was able to prevent anarchy and maintain a viable government operation is a tribute to his strength of character and capable leadership.

Under Liholiho, Kalanimoku continued to function much as he had under Kamehameha I, as both prime minister and treasurer of

²⁹ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 227.

³⁰ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 228.



An 1819 Depiction of Kalanimoku's Residence in Kailua, Kona by Alphonse Pellion. Plate 86, *Atlas Historique*, prepared for Louis Claude de Saulces de Freycinet's *Voyage Autour du Monde*, 1825. State Archives of Hawai'i.

the kingdom, but it was Ka'ahumanu who assumed the superior title of Kuhina Nui and whose power superseded his. Throughout the years, there is no indication that there existed any disagreement or jealousy between them; they appeared supportive of, and loyal to, each other, in their separate but closely related capacities. However, their control of government, business, and life in general in the kingdom left little opportunity for the young king to develop into a strong leader, and may well have contributed to his early, decadent lifestyle.³¹

SANDALWOOD TRADE

From around 1810 to 1837, the Hawaiian kingdom's major export commodity was sandalwood, despite the fact that it was not of the highest grade. What it lacked in quality, it made up for in quantity, as

³¹ Ellis, *Journal of William Ellis*, 19.

there was an abundant supply in the mountainous areas of most of the islands. During the lifetime of Kamehameha I, the sandalwood trade was the king's exclusive monopoly. Early arrangements for export of the fragrant wood consisted of contractual agreements with foreign ships' captains to deliver cargoes of sandalwood to China, with Kamehameha receiving a portion of the profit, usually in foreign goods rather than money. Eventually he acquired his own fleet of ships and took personal control of a larger segment of the islands' commerce.³²

After his father's death, Liholiho succumbed to pressure from the chiefs to participate in the lucrative business whose primary market was Canton.³³ Foreigners as well flocked to the islands hoping to make a fortune in the burgeoning sandalwood trade. It was necessary for them to deal with Kalanimoku for everything from the acquisition of wood to payment of debts incurred by the government.

Honolulu businessman Stephen Reynolds' journal shows almost daily entries mentioning his dealings with Kalanimoku to acquire sandalwood of an acceptable quality for export.³⁴ The value of the wood was referred to in piculs, rather than dollars.³⁵ One picul weighed $133\frac{1}{3}$ pounds and was worth around \$10.00. Missionary William Ellis, on the island of Hawai'i, describes a procession of 2,000 to 3,000 men with from one to six piculs of sandalwood tied to their backs, marching long distances from mountains to shore, from whence the wood was shipped to O'ahu.³⁶

Besides dealing with the chiefs and foreign traders, both Kalanimoku and his brother, Boki, traded in sandalwood, personally accompanying men to the mountains to cut wood, arranging for its exportation, and acquiring ships necessary for transporting it. There is evidence that Kalanimoku owned at least two ships used for this purpose.³⁷ The demand for sandalwood eventually resulted in its depletion from the

³² Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History*, vol. I, 61.

³³ Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom 1778-1854*, 86.

³⁴ Stephen Reynolds, *The Journal of Stephen Reynolds: Volume I: 1823-1829*, ed. by Pauline N. King (Salem: Ku Pa'a Incorporated and the Peabody Museum at Salem, 1989) 82.

³⁵ Ellis, *Journal of William Ellis*, 27-29, 46.

³⁶ Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History*, vol. I, 59.

³⁷ Ross H. Gast, *Contentious Consul: A Biography of John Coffin Jones First United States Counselor Agent at Hawaii* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1976) 15, 25.

forests. The lucrative trade that was once a major source of income for the government was replaced by the arrival of the whaling ships.

KALANIMOKU'S BAPTISM

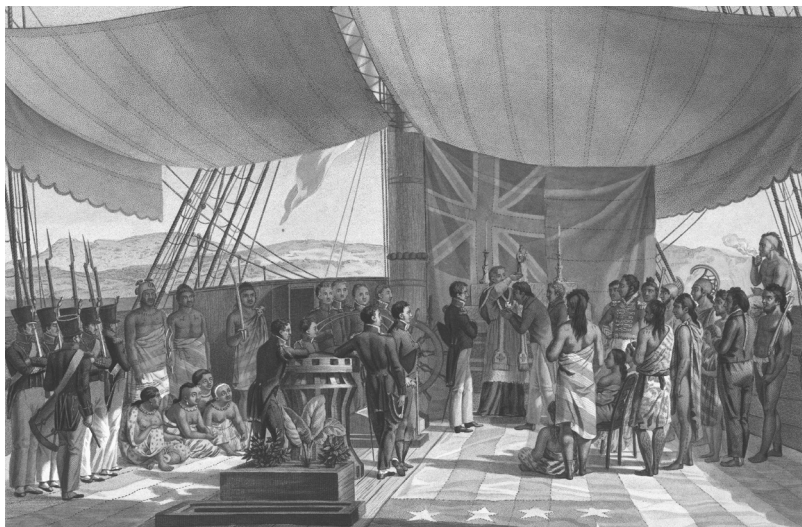
Kalanimoku holds the distinction of being the first Hawaiian chief to be baptized in the Catholic faith. In the latter part of 1819, not long after the death of Kamehameha I, the French corvette *Uranie* arrived at Kawaihae under the command of Captain Freycinet. Kalanimoku, accompanied by John Young and others, paid a visit to the ship where they were invited to stay for dinner. In her memoirs, Mde. Rose de Saulces de Freycinet, the captain's wife, who was accompanying her husband on the voyage, writes of the incident. She states that Kalanimoku was asked to bring his favorite wife, indicating that he had more than one. She described Kalanimoku as "going on board dressed in loin cloth and a European shirt, more dirty than clean." His wife, Likelike, a former wife of his brother Boki, she depicts as "quite young and of very attractive appearance, less fat than the others I had previously seen."³⁸

According to Captain Freycinet's account, during the evening Kalanimoku became interested in the role of the ship's chaplain and informed the priest that he had wished to become a Christian for a long time and begged to be baptized. The ritual was performed the next day in an elaborate ceremony attended by Liholiho, his five wives, younger brother Kauikeaouli, and a large entourage. Kalanimoku's brother, Boki, was also baptized.³⁹

A watercolor of the event by French artist, Jaques Arago, aboard the *Uranie* for the purpose of visually interpreting the many races observed during the voyage, depicts the flag-draped ship and Hawaiian chiefs and ship's crew observing the ceremony with great interest. Whether Kalanimoku understood the deep significance of the ritual has been questioned; it is possible that he did not. However, he was a willing participant, and as Captain Freycinet described him, "deeply

³⁸ *Paradise of the Pacific*, "Mde. Rose de Freycinet in Hawaii 1819," Jan. 1937: 26.

³⁹ Louis Claude de Saulces de Freycinet, "Hawaii in 1819: A Narrative Account by Louis Claude de Saulces de Freycinet," *Pacific Anthropological Records*, no. 26 (Honolulu: Department of Anthropology, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1978).



The 1819 Baptism of Kalanimoku into the Catholic Faith on Board the *L'Uranie*. Jacques Arago, Plate 89, *Atlas Historique*, prepared for Louis Claude de Saulces de Freycinet's *Voyage Autour du Monde*, 1825. State Archives of Hawai'i.

moved." At any rate, the baptism was recognized by the protestant missionaries when he was later accepted into their church.

ARRIVAL OF THE PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES

On March 30, 1820, the Brig *Thaddeus*, carrying the first company sent to the islands by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, arrived at Kawaihae on the northwest side of the island of Hawai'i after 164 days at sea. The company consisted of seven married couples from New England, and included three young Hawaiians, Thomas Hopu, William Kanui, and John Honoli'i. The young men had found their way to Cornwell, Connecticut, where they attended school and were subsequently converted. Also on board was Hume-hume, also known as George Kaumuali'i, son of Kaua'i's *ali'i nui*.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Bernice Judd, advisor, *Missionary Album: Portraits and Biographical Sketches of the American Protestant Missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands, Sesquicentennial Edition* (Honolulu: HMCS, 1969) 7.

When the ship anchored at Kawaihae, an emissary was sent into the village to learn the whereabouts of the king. Lucy G. Thurston, wife of Reverend Asa Thurston, recounted the event. “Approaching Kawaihae, Hopu went ashore to invite some of the highest chiefs of the nation. Kalanimoku was the first person of distinction that came. In dress and manner he appeared with the dignity of a man of culture.” Obviously familiar with western customs, the chief gallantly bowed and shook the hands of the ladies. Mrs. Thurston continued, “The effects of that first warm appreciating clasp I feel even now. (Sixty-two years later.) To be met by such a specimen of heathen humanity on the borders of their land, was to stay us with flagons, and comfort us with apples.”⁴¹

Rev. Hiram Bingham, a member of the company, described the same visit to the *Thaddeus*. After sending gifts of hogs and sweet potatoes, Kalanimoku appeared and Bingham comments on “his great civility.” Describing his attire, he said: “His appearance was much more interesting than we expected. His dress was a neat dimity jacket, black silk vest, mankin pantaloons, white cotton stockings, and shoes, plaid cravat, and a neat English hat.”⁴²

After a brief stop at Kawaihae, where they learned of the death of Kamehameha and the abolition of the old religion, they proceeded down the coast to Kailua with the chiefs on board to meet with the new king and hopefully gain permission to remain in the islands to establish a mission.

Although their initial reception by the king was cordial, an indecisive Liholiho was noncommittal until a council of chiefs, which lasted for several days, advised him to let the foreigners remain for a year for what might be considered a probationary period.⁴³ Rev. Thurston and his wife remained on Hawai‘i; the other missionaries went on to O‘ahu and Kaua‘i.

Kalanimoku appears to have developed an immediate and sincere liking for the New Englanders. Throughout his life, they turned

⁴¹ Lucy G. Thurston. *The Life and Times of Lucy G. Thurston* (Ann Arbor: S.C. Andrews, 1882) 31.

⁴² Hiram Bingham, Asa Thurston, Elisha Loomis, “Journal of the Sandwich Island Mission,” Oct. 23, 1819, vol. 10: 25, Journal Collection, HMCS.

⁴³ Ellis, *Journal of William Ellis*, 21.

to him for assistance and their requests invariably met with positive results. He helped them acquire land, build homes, and establish schools; he worked to smooth relations between the missionaries and foreigners who resented their proselytizing among the natives and inflicting their strict moral values on the community.⁴⁴

EVENTS LEADING TO KALANIMOKU'S CONVERSION

In February 1821, Kalanimoku's wife, Likelike, gave birth to a child in Honolulu. The joyous occasion was celebrated with the shooting of cannons and guns which began at night and continued throughout the following day, close to the house where the mother and child were confined. The clamor was so loud that both died from shock. Kamakau attributes the cacophonous noise to Boki and Kalanimoku,⁴⁵ but the missionaries' journal reported that it was the common people who over-zealously displayed their happiness in a manner popular at the time.⁴⁶

The great joy turned quickly to sadness and grief when news of the deaths spread throughout the town. Kalanimoku drowned his sorrow by engrossing himself in a popular guessing game, *no'a*, a favorite of the chiefs. The game was played by hiding a small stone under one of five small pieces of crumpled *kapa*. The object was to guess the stone's location, striking it with a small rod.⁴⁷ It was while he was engrossed in this pastime that Reverends Bingham and Thurston visited Kalanimoku to ask permission to hold a funeral service for his wife and child. The desolate chief consented and the ceremony took place at 10:00 a.m. on March 11, 1821. A large crowd gathered at the house where the deceased lay, consisting of captains and officers of ships in port, foreign residents, and a large contingent of Hawaiian chiefs. The sermon was conducted by Rev. Hiram Bingham and it was said

⁴⁴ Levi Chamberlain, "Journal of Levi Chamberlain," Nov. 11, 1822–Aug. 4, 1823, vol 1: 53, Journal Collection, HMCS.

⁴⁵ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 250.

⁴⁶ Bingham, Thurston, Loomis, "Journal of the Sandwich Island Mission," 10:126.

⁴⁷ Kenneth P. Emory, "Sports, Games and Amusements," in *Ancient Hawaiian Civilization, A series of lectures delivered at Kamehameha Schools* (Rutland, VT.: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc., 1965) 155.



Portrait of Likelike, a wife of Kalanimoku, in 1819 by Alphonse Pellion. Portion of Plate 83, *Atlas Historique*, prepared for Louis Claude de Saulces de Freycinet's *Voyage Autour du Monde*, 1825. State Archives of Hawai'i.

that: "Krymokoo gave an attentive ear to the first intelligible sermon in the Hawaiian language which he ever heard."⁴⁸

The following month, on March 31, 1821, another of Kalanimoku's wives, Kiliwehi, gave birth to a son at Kailua on the island of Hawai'i. The infant was named William Pitt Leleiōhoku.

Not long after these events, Kalanimoku became an ardent student of the missionaries, expressing a strong interest in learning to read and write, as well as acquiring more knowledge of the Protestant religion. Both he and Ka'ahumanu attended the mission school regularly. Lucy Thurston, after referring to Kalanimoku as "the most pow-

⁴⁸ Bingham, Thurston, Loomis, "Journal of the Sandwich Island Mission," 10:26.

erful executive man in the nation,” remarked that: “Now the great warrior was among us, learning the English alphabet with the docility of a child.”⁴⁹

In 1822 a British missionary named William Ellis arrived from Tahiti after spending several years in the Society Islands under the auspices of the London Mission Society. Accompanying him were two young Tahitian converts. The American missionaries welcomed them with open arms, recognizing that their mastery of the Tahitian language, so similar to Hawaiian, would be of invaluable help to them. Convinced to remain in Hawai‘i, Ellis, after returning to Tahiti for his wife, joined the American mission and remained in the islands for two years.⁵⁰ Ellis and the Tahitians were early instructors of Keōpūolani and remained close to her until her death. Kalanimoku highly respected Ellis and was significantly influenced by him. It was probably his admiration of the Englishman that prompted Kalanimoku to build a home in close proximity to his.

The American missionaries had been given land on the outskirts of Honolulu on which to establish their headquarters. Ellis built his house nearby at the corner of King and Punchbowl streets. Kalanimoku, who had previously lived on the waterfront, or occasionally in the fort, wanted to live near the man he so admired. Close by he built a large stone house, three stories high with a basement and large screened verandah across the front. Next to his modern, western style home, Kalanimoku built a large grass house. The area, called Pohukaina, was enclosed with a heavy wooden fence, behind which was an enclave of homes of the high ranking chiefs including Ka‘ahumanu, Boki, Kina‘u, Kekāuluohi, and others. The area encompassed the grounds of the present ‘Iolani Palace, as well part of the grounds of what is now the Hawai‘i State Library.⁵¹

DEATH OF KEŌPŪOLANI

Keōpūolani, the sacred wife of Kamehameha I and once the wife of Kalanimoku, moved to Lahaina, Maui, in May 1823, accompanied by

⁴⁹ Thurston, *Life and Times*, 33.

⁵⁰ Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom 1778–1854*, 103.

⁵¹ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 272.

her daughter, Nahi'ena'ena, young son Kauikeaouli, and her household. In order to continue both her lay and religious education, she requested that missionaries accompany her to Maui. The Reverends Charles Stewart and William Richards answered the call, and complying with the queen's wishes, taught classes and conducted services each morning and evening.⁵² To the last days of her life, she deplored the decadent lifestyle of her son, Liholiho, whose drinking and debauchery caused her great sorrow.

In September, when Keōpūolani became seriously ill, Liholiho, Kalanimoku, and other chiefs were sent for. On her deathbed, the high chiefess pleaded with Kalanimoku, saying: "Do not you neglect to pray to God; cease not to regard the Sabbath; commit no sin; and love Jesus Christ."⁵³ It was a poignant moment for the chief, whose religious convictions were strengthened by her words. Keōpūolani also exhorted him to take care of her young children, Nahi'ena'ena and Kauikeaouli, and to make sure they learned the way of the Christian God and to keep them from evil companions. Also at her bedside were the Reverends Bingham and Stewart who baptized her, making her the first royal Hawaiian convert to the Christian faith. Keōpūolani's death marked the passing of the highest ranking *kapu* chiefess in the kingdom.⁵⁴ She was given a Christian burial and entombed at Kaluaokiha in Lahaina on the island of Maui.

KAUAI'S ALLEGIANCE HOLDS FAST

Two years earlier, in July of 1821, Liholiho and several of his wives had sailed to Kaua'i, accompanied by a contingent of chiefs including Kalanimoku. In 1796 and again in 1803, Kamehameha I had made two unsuccessful attempts to invade Kaua'i. In order to avoid the continued threat of war from Kamehameha's superior armies, Kaumuali'i had pledged his allegiance to him in return for the right to rule his island in peace for the rest of his life. Liholiho and his companions

⁵² Marjorie Sinclair, *Nahi'ena'ena Sacred Daughter of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1995) 36.

⁵³ Charles Stewart, *Residence in the Sandwich Isles* (Boston: Weeks, Jordon Company 1839) 139.

⁵⁴ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 262.

were royally treated by Kaumuali'i who acknowledged Liholiho as his sovereign and offered him some of his lands, which the young king refused. On returning to O'ahu, Liholiho brought Kaumuali'i with him, possibly abducting him, and shortly after, the Kaua'i *ali'i nui* and Ka'ahumanu married. The powerful chiefess then married Kaumuali'i's younger son, Keali'iahonui, further cementing the bonds between Kamehameha's kingdom and Kaua'i and Ni'ihau, the only unconquered islands in the chain.⁵⁵ Kaumuali'i died on O'ahu in July, 1824.

LIHOLIHO SAILS FOR ENGLAND

King Kamehameha II and his wife, Kamāmalu, sailed for England on November 27, 1823, on the British whale ship *L'Aigle*, accompanied by an entourage of 12, including Boki and his wife Liliha. Thousands of people lined the wharf as the ship departed, many wailing and mourning for fear that they would never see their king again. The king's ten-year-old brother and successor, Kauikeaouli, was placed under the guardianship of Ka'ahumanu and Kalanimoku.

After Liholiho's departure, missionary influence increased; Ka'ahumanu and Kalanimoku established rules such as the strict observance of the Sabbath, attendance at school and church, abstention from gambling, and in general, obeying the word of God. The positive effect of these rules on the community was lauded by both missionaries and most foreigners.⁵⁶

TROUBLE ON KAUA'I

Not long after the royal party departed for England, Kaumuali'i became seriously ill. When his illness appeared terminal, he was asked to name a successor and to state his wishes regarding the disposition of the lands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau. It was customary, on the death of a ruling chief, to redistribute the lands, and in many instances, this

⁵⁵ Douglas Warne, *Hume'hume of Kaua'i: A Boy's Journey to America, a Ali'i's Return Home* (Honolulu: Kamehameha Publishing, 2008) 164–165.

⁵⁶ Daws, *Shoal of Time*, 72; Warne, *Hume'hume of Kaua'i*, 14–15.

precipitated war. It was not until he was close to death that Kaumuali'i pronounced Liholiho as his heir, true to his agreement with Kamehameha I. The Kaua'i chief also decreed that the land remain in the hands of those who possessed it, stating: "Let the lands be as they are, those chiefs who have lands to hold them and those who have not to have none."⁵⁷

Kalanimoku sent his nephew, Luanu'u Kahalai'a, to Kaua'i as temporary governor while he arranged his own departure for that island to hold a council with its chiefs for the purpose of settling land holdings. Although the Kaua'i chiefs were apprehensive, and some distrustful of Kalanimoku's intentions, neither were they united among themselves. Some expressed loyalty to Liholiho, accepting him as their sovereign, while others supported George Humehume, Kaumuali'i's oldest son, who had grown up on the east coast of the United States. In 1804, at the age of four years, Humehume was entrusted to a sea captain who was handsomely paid to have the boy cared for and properly educated in the western manner. He suffered great hardship when the captain reneged on his promise to Kaumuali'i and failed to provide the child with a proper up-bringing.⁵⁸ Humehume finally returned to the islands in 1820 aboard the *Thaddeus* with the first company of American missionaries, fully expecting to take his place as his father's rightful heir.

Humehume found, upon his return, that he had a younger brother who was of higher chiefly rank by virtue of his mother's lineage. He was further disappointed to learn of the agreement his father had made with Kamehameha.⁵⁹

When Kalanimoku arrived on Kaua'i in August of 1824, he explained to the chiefs the wishes of Kaumuali'i. Those who had expected to receive land in the redistribution argued that the decision was decidedly against tradition, but Kalanimoku stood fast. Accepting the fact that the chief from O'ahu would not change his mind, Humehume enlisted the sympathies of other disgruntled chiefs and plotted a war, which, if successful, would once again establish the sovereign indepen-

⁵⁷ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 265.

⁵⁸ Warne, *Humehume of Kaua'i*, 171.

⁵⁹ Warne, *Humehume of Kaua'i*, 20, 22.

dence of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau. Their plan was to sneak into Pā'ula'ula o Hipo, originally named Russian Fort Elizabeth, on the east bank of the Waimea River, where the Kaua'i chiefs and soldiers loyal to Liholiho were quartered.⁶⁰ Kalanimoku and his forces were encamped on the west side of the river awaiting developments. Humehume knew of a secret cache of arms and ammunition hidden in the basement of the fort; if they could take possession of a sufficient number of guns, they could stage their revolt from inside out. Although they managed to gain entry into the fort without being detected, a soldier loyal to Kalanimoku awoke in time to set off an alarm and the plot was foiled. Kalanimoku and his army across the river heard the alarm and responded quickly. Humehume and his meager forces, with insufficient arms and a single cannon, hastily retreated. Kalanimoku sent his superior forces across the river to secure the fort, although he himself remained behind to participate in the prayer service he requested of the Reverends Bingham and Whitney. In the ensuing skirmish, several of Humehume's soldiers were killed.⁶¹

Kalanimoku then sent for reinforcements from O'ahu and Maui by means of a schooner on which he also sent the Reverends Bingham and Whitney and their families to remove them from harm's way. Ka'ahumanu's response was to immediately call up troops to sail for Kaua'i in support of her cousin, Kalanimoku. Meanwhile, Humehume, with his small army of rebels and meager supply of arms, retreated overland several miles. Barricading themselves behind a rock wall, the Kaua'i loyalists dug in to make a last stand despite overwhelming odds. Kalanimoku sent his large army, led by Hoapili, a valiant warrior from Maui, in pursuit of the fleeing rebels.⁶² During a fierce gun battle, in which Humehume's forces were greatly outnumbered, more than 100 people were killed; the rest, including Humehume, fled for their lives. After hiding in the rainforests of Kōke'e for nearly a month, the exhausted and defeated chief gave himself up. He was brought to Waimea and placed in a jail cell in the fort, awaiting the arrival of Kalanimoku, in whose hands his fate lay. When

⁶⁰ Warne, *Humehume of Kaua'i*, 185–186.

⁶¹ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 267.

⁶² Warne, *Humehume of Kaua'i*, 194.

the interview took place the next day, the prime minister sat draped in a magnificent feather cape. Humehume, fully expecting to be sentenced to death, hung his head. Gazing at the unkempt man before him, Kalanimoku removed the cape and placing it over the shoulders of the prisoner, said, "Humehume, live".⁶³ Other captives received similar reprieve; they were sent home with spelling books and advised to live in peace, cultivate their lands, learn to read and write, and worship the true God.⁶⁴

Before his conversion to Christianity, it is less likely that Kalanimoku would have exhibited such magnanimity. But the missionaries had indeed been successful in instilling the virtues of mercy and forgiveness in one of their most devout pupils. From this time forward, the Hawaiian Islands would be truly united under one ruler; the Kamehameha dynasty had once again prevailed.

DEATH OF LIHOLIHO

In May of 1824, after 164 days at sea, Liholiho and Kamāmalu and their suite arrived at Portsmouth, England. The entourage proceeded to London where it was installed in Osborne's Caledonian Hotel. The king and queen were treated with all the respect and consideration accorded visiting royalty. They were lavishly entertained and given tours of London's important sites. While awaiting an audience with King George IV, they, and several others in their party, were stricken with measles, an illness against which they had no immunity. Although the British king sent his personal physicians to attend them, their efforts were in vain. Kamāmalu passed away on July 8; Liholiho followed barely a week later, breathing his last on July 14. Five other members of the company succumbed to the disease.⁶⁵

The British government did all in its power to placate the desolate survivors and tend to their needs. With Boki now in charge, arrangements were made to return the bodies of the deceased to their homeland on the warship, *Blonde*, whose captain was Lord George Anson

⁶³ Warne, *Humehume of Kawa'i*, 202; Bingham, *Residence of Twenty-One Years*, 247.

⁶⁴ Ellis, *Journal of William Ellis*, 107.

⁶⁵ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 257; Sinclair, *Nahi'ena'ena*, 78.

Byron, cousin of the famous poet. The ship sailed from Portsmouth on September 28, 1824.

It was eight months before word of the tragic event reached the Hawaiian Islands.⁶⁶ As word spread throughout the kingdom, people wailed and mourned the loss of their sovereign. Again, in this time of crisis, Kalanimoku rose to the occasion. One of his first acts was to send a letter to Nahi'ena'ena on Maui, as well as chiefs on Hawai'i and Kaua'i, informing them of the demise of their king. The missionaries were concerned about the effect the deaths might have on the people, but Kalanimoku kept order in the kingdom, maintaining stability and calmness where violence or a return to ancient customs might well have prevailed. The Christian influence was by then strong enough to enable Kalanimoku and Ka'ahumanu to restrain the populace and to allay any bitterness or resentment they might harbor toward the country where their king had lost his life.

On receiving the news, Nahi'ena'ena responded with a letter to Ka'ahumanu and Kalanimoku asking them to be parents to twelve-year-old Kauikeaouli and herself. "It is not good for us to be without parents," she lamented.⁶⁷ The *Blonde* anchored in Honolulu Harbor on May 6, 1825 after a brief stop at Lahaina, where a sorrowful Nahi'ena'ena and other Maui chiefs boarded the ship for the trip to O'ahu. Ka'ahumanu, Kalanimoku, and Kauikeaouli along with thousands of Hawaiians, chiefs and commoners, foreigners, and missionaries, gathered in sadness to meet the ship.

Boki was one of the first to debark; his grieving brother, Kalanimoku, was waiting for him and they embraced in tearful reunion. Lord Byron left the ship the following day for a formal meeting with Kalanimoku and other chiefs. The audience was held in Kalanimoku's newly constructed grass house, located near his western-style stone residence. The royal siblings, Nahi'ena'ena and Kauikeaouli, were seated prominently on a Chinese sofa placed on a raised platform. Four towering *kāhili* fluttered gently in the breeze behind them. On a large red chair next to the heir was Kalanimoku; Ka'ahumanu

⁶⁶ Sinclair, *Nahi'ena'ena*, 77.

⁶⁷ Sinclair, *Nahi'ena'ena*, 78.

sat beside the princess. After greeting the assemblage and conveying the sympathy of his king and government, Lord Byron presented gifts to the high chiefs. To Kalanimoku he gave a gold hunting watch; Ka'ahumanu received a silver teapot engraved with her name and the British coat of arms.⁶⁸ After the gifts had been received, Kalanimoku proposed that prayers be said for the departed.

When bodies of the deceased king and queen were brought ashore on May 11, 1825, the Hawaiians were in awe of the richly crafted caskets provided by the British government, the likes of which they had never seen. In an elaborate procession led by *kāhili* bearers and followed by a marine band from the *Blonde*, the caskets, draped in rich crimson Genoa velvet and studded with gilt nails, were carried to Kawaiaha'o Church.⁶⁹

Despite Liholiho and Kamāmalu not having been formally accepted into the church, the funeral service and interment ceremonies were conducted by the missionaries, the first Christian burial rites held at Kawaiaha'o Church for members of Hawaiian royalty. As Kauikeaouli was just 12 years old when he received the title of Kamehameha III, Ka'ahumanu and Kalanimoku continued to rule the kingdom.

CHRISTIANITY FLOURISHES IN THE KINGDOM

Ka'ahumanu and Kalanimoku's passion for Christianity, which followed the departure of Liholiho, increased even more after his death. Barely a month had passed since the funeral, when both requested membership in Kawaiaha'o Church. Before accepting them, the missionaries imposed a probationary period of six months. During this time, Ka'ahumanu and Kalanimoku actively propagated the faith, enforcing a strict adherence to the Sabbath. Following in the footsteps of the two powerful *ali'i*, commoners flocked to the church in droves each Sunday where a congregation of more than 3,000 regularly gathered to hear the preaching of Reverend Bingham.⁷⁰ The *kuhina nui* and prime minister would have adopted the Ten Commandments as

⁶⁸ Sinclair, *Nahī'ena'ena*, 83.

⁶⁹ Stewart, *Residence in the Sandwich Islands*, 284.

⁷⁰ Daws, *Shoal of Time*, 74–75.

the law of the kingdom but for the strong objections of the business community and some of the chiefs.

On December 4, 1825, Ka'ahumanu and several chiefs, including William Pitt Leleiohoku, the four-year-old son of Kalanimoku, were baptized.⁷¹ Although Kalanimoku was formally accepted into the church, because of his previous baptism by the French priest, he did not participate in the ritual.

Not only did this foreign religion flourish under the missionary influence, but the desire for education increased dramatically as well. According to Kamakau, "They [the chiefs] learned to repeat the Lord's Prayer, and teachers were sent to all the country districts. Every chief's household had a teacher, some of them women."⁷² Schools were established throughout the islands; 40 were built in Honolulu, with an equal number in Waikīkī. Observation of the Sabbath was strictly enforced. Within a decade of the arrival of the missionaries, Hawai'i was transformed from a society with no written language to one with a high degree of literacy rivaling many parts of the civilized world.⁷³ By 1830, one third of the population was enrolled in school.⁷⁴

That *ali'i*, such as Ka'ahumanu and Kalanimoku, not only actively pursued education for themselves, but encouraged their people, commoners as well as chiefs, to espouse learning is a tribute to their intelligence and foresight. It contributed to the survival of the kingdom amid increasing foreign political involvement and social change.

ILLNESS AND DEATH OF KALANIMOKU

While in his forties, Kalanimoku was struck with an illness that plagued him for the rest of his life and eventually caused his death. The disease, referred to as "dropsy," or *'ōpū 'ōhao* by the Hawaiians, caused swelling due to accumulation of excess water in the body's tissues. Today the illness is called edema. Many journals written during the

⁷¹ Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom 1778–1854*, 123.

⁷² Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 270.

⁷³ Benjamin O. Wist, *A Century of Public Education in Hawaii 1810–1850* (Honolulu: Hawaii Educational Review, 1940) 2.

⁷⁴ Mary Atherton Richards, *The Chiefs' Children's School 1839–1850* (Honolulu: Honolulu Star Bulletin, Limited, 1937) xiii.

mid-1820s refer to his debilitating condition, mentioning scheduled meetings and other functions that were cancelled because Kalanimoku was too ill to attend. Spaniard Don Francisco de Paula Marin, who lived in Hawai'i for 40 years and was an intimate associate of Kamehameha I, Kalanimoku, Ka'ahumanu, and many other chiefs, was often consulted by them concerning medical problems. In his journal, of which only fragments exist, Marin first mentions Kalanimoku's illness in 1818, when he would have been about 49 years old. Marin treated him with herbal medicines, including "canchalagua" plants sent to him by a friend in California.⁷⁵

When the *Blonde* arrived in early May, 1825, Kalanimoku was ill, although it appears he was able to carry out his official duties to some extent. Several days after the funeral of Liholiho and Kamāmalu, on May 23, the ship's surgeon "tapped" Kalanimoku for the first time, removing a gallon and a half of liquid. In those days, the most effective treatment for dropsy was to surgically drain the excess fluid from the body, providing temporary relief. He had previously tried traditional native medicines, to no avail. In September, when the prime minister was again ill, a Russian ship visited Honolulu and its surgeon repeated the procedure. Dr. Abraham Blatchley, a missionary physician, performed the operation twice; in one instance, he removed more than three gallons of liquid from Kalanimoku's body. Marin's journal cites five instances when the Prime Minister underwent this process during 1825 and 1826.

There does not appear to be a record of the death of Kalanimoku's wife, Kiliwehi, but on June 28, 1825, Kalanimoku married a Kona chiefess named Akahi who was a great granddaughter of Keōua, father of Kamehameha I. Since the wedding occurred not long before his acceptance into the church, Akahi was probably his only wife at the time. The wedding took place at 4:00 p.m. in Kawaiaha'o Church and was attended by a large contingent of chiefs and foreigners.⁷⁶ No further reference to Akahi could be found pertaining to her marriage to Kalanimoku, but she is listed in the Mahele Book as owner of vast

⁷⁵ Ross H. Gast, *Don Francisco de Paula Marin* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1973) 102.

⁷⁶ Reynolds, *Journal of Stephen Reynolds*, 97.

amounts of land on both Oah‘u and Hawai‘i which were eventually bequeathed to Bernice Pauahi.⁷⁷

Kalanimoku’s health, which had been poor for several years, deteriorated in the winter of 1825, despite frequent operations. Often confined to bed, he nevertheless continued to fulfill his obligations as prime minister and treasurer of the kingdom and his mind remained “active and unimpaired.”⁷⁸ In January of 1827, feeling that the end was near, Kalanimoku returned to his home in Kona, Hawai‘i Island, after a brief sojourn in Lahaina. While on Maui, the missionaries held a celebration of the “Lord’s Supper” in his honor. He was also present to witness the baptisms of Nahi‘ena‘ena and other *ali‘i* into the church.

Kalanimoku continued to Kamakahonu on the Kona coast, bringing with him his foreign doctor, John Pellham. His health continued to decline and on February 8, 1827, at four o’clock in the afternoon, the great chief passed away in the presence of Ka‘ahumanu, Kuakini, Hoapili, and other chiefs, who all wept inconsolably at his death at the age of 59. Many of his followers reverted to ancient customs to express their grief. A man is said to have “hung himself, head down, from the ridge of the house where the body was laid, and wailed bitterly.”⁷⁹

Thus the iron cable which held the government together for so long was broken. A sorrowful nation grieved at the loss of this great chief whose wisdom and foresight guided the struggling kingdom through times of great turbulence and upheaval. Because of his strength of character and native intelligence, he was a strong force in preserving the Kamehameha dynasty on more than one occasion when it was on the verge of dissolution. The loyalty and faithfulness he showed toward Kamehameha I, his cousin Ka‘ahumanu, as well as Liholiho and Kaukeaouli, are proof of an unselfish leader who put his country above any personal ambition. His death was a great loss to the Hawaiian kingdom.

⁷⁷ Barrère, Dorothy B., “The King’s Mahele: The Awardees and their Lands.” Manuscript, 1994: 1-3, AH

⁷⁸ Gast, *Don Francisco de Paula Marin*, 112.

⁷⁹ Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 278.