

# No Ke Kanawai Mamalahoa

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Ke Kanawai Mamalahoa, also known as Ke Kanawai Mamalahoe, calls for the protection of the vulnerable during times of war.

“E hele ka elemakule a moe i ke ala, e hele ka luahine a moe i ke ala, e hele ke keiki a moe i ke ala,” is the kanawai delivered by Kamehameha I during his pursuit of forcefully uniting the Hawaiian Archipelago under his rule. During Kamehameha I’s struggle to take the island of Hawaii, many other alii had weakened his forces. Notably, Keawemauhili and Keoua Kuahuula joined forces against Kamehameha in Hilo. Kamehameha and his warriors sheltered themselves at Laupahoehoe in Hilo Palik. After some time had passed, he and Kahakui paddled to Papai, Keaau, and Puna and saw multitudes of people fishing; one of them had a child on their back. Realizing that they were about to depart Papai, Kamehameha leaped from his wa’a, intending to catch and kill them to remain unnoticed by other alii. Two men stayed back to defend the father and child, and as Kamehameha pursued them, his foot was caught in a crevice and stuck. Then the fisherman thrashed him over the head with a paddle until he nearly perished. The struggle was called Kaleleiki and led Kamehameha to proclaim the kanawai, which was later adopted across the whole archipelago because of its fair treatment of all vulnerable people during struggles and wartime. Kamehameha largely forgot this struggle until later in his life, when the two fishermen were brought before Kamehameha to be put to death. Kamehameha, but they were spared and honored for their bravery. Many of Kamehameha’s warriors reluctantly agreed to the kanawai because the island of Hawaii came under his rule through war. Still, alii on other islands shared the same values and sympathy for all vulnerable people during war.

Some mistakenly believe this is the first kanawai ever established; however, many other kanawai persisted during Kamehameha's time: some were passed down by different akua, others related to particular genealogies, and many others came to be afterward.