

Where are the Waters of Kāne?

The Water of Kāne is an ancient Hawaiian chant called an “oli.” It is part of an oral tradition and was used as a way to pass knowledge down from one generation to the next. This oli was recorded in writing the first time in 1909. The translation here attempts to reclaim as much scientific knowledge as possible but is not as poetic as the translation made in 1907 by missionary, Nathaniel Emerson.

Setup:

Print enough copies of the handout for each student. Ask your students to stand in a circle. It is important to recite this oli with great respect.

Beginning:

You can either recite it in Hawaiian first and then English. Or alternate between Hawaiian and English as it is presented here. You can ask volunteers to take turns reading the stanzas, or you can read it in unison.

Ending:

After you are finished you can continue to ask the question as a call and response game.

Q: “Anabelle, where is the Water of Kāne?” A: “Here in my water bottle. There is the Water of Kāne.” Q: “Kaleo, where is the Water of Kāne?” A: “In my fish tank at home. There is the Water of Kāne.” Etc...

The Water of Kāne

He ui, he ninau:
E ui aku ana au ia 'oe,
Aia i hea ka Wai a Kāne?
Aia i ka hikina a ka la,
Puka i ha'eha'e;
Aia i laila ka Wai a Kāne.

E ui aku ana au iā 'oe,
Aia i hea ka Wai a Kāne?
Aia i kaulana a ka lā,
I ka pae 'ōpua i ke kai,
Ea mai ana ma nihoa,
Ma ka mole mai o lehua;
Aia i laila ka Wai a Kāne.

E ui aku ana au iā 'oe,
Aia i hea ka Wai a Kāne?
Aia i ke kuahiwi, i ke kualono,
I ke awāwa, i ke kahawai;
Aia i laila ka Wai a Kāne.

E ui aku ana au iā 'oe,
Aia i hea ka Wai a Kāne?
Aia i kai, i ka moana,
I ke kualau, i ke ānuenuē
I ka pūnohu, i ka ua koko,
I ka 'ālewalewa;
Aia i laila ka Wai a Kāne.

E ui aku ana au iā 'oe,
Aia i hea ka Wai a Kāne?
Aia i luna ka Wai a Kāne.
I ke 'ōuli, i ke ao 'ele'ele,
I ke ao panopano,
I ke ao pōpolohua mea a Kāne lā, 'ē!
Aia i laila ka Wai a Kāne.

E ui aku ana au iā 'oe,
Aia i hea ka Wai a Kāne?
Aia i lalo, i ka honua, i ka wai hū,
I ka wai kau a Kāne me Kanaloa,
He wai puna, he wai e inu,
He wai e mana, he wai e ola,
E ola nō, 'eā!

Ask the question:
Where is the water of Kāne?
To the east with the sun,
rising in the sky;
There is the Water of Kāne.

Where is the water of Kāne?
There because of the mighty Sun,
in the bank of cumulus clouds
on the ocean horizon,
in the wavy rising vapor,
in the tap root of the lehua tree;
There is the Water of Kāne.

Where is the water of Kāne?
There on the mountain, near the top,
in the valley, in the river;
There is the water of Kāne.

Where is the Water of Kāne?
Over the sea, over the open ocean,
In the windy shower, in the rainbow,
In the billowing mist,
In the rainbow hued rain,
In the buoyant and floating;
There is the Water of Kāne.

Where is the Water of Kāne?
There above is the Water of Kāne.
In the ominous dark clouds,
In the nimbostratus clouds,
In the cumulonimbus clouds of Kāne!
There is the Water of Kāne.

Where is the Water of Kāne?
There under the ground,
In the spring water bubbling up,
In the exceptional water of
Kāne and Kanaloa,
A water spring, a water to drink,
A water of spirit, a water of health,
Sustaining Life!