

HEIAU OF HAWAI'I

The people related to their gods frequently while at work and at play. They also provided a variety of special places, simple to elaborate, for special services or observances. These ranged from small shrines to the huge sacrificial heiau. About a dozen different names were used to identify these various places of worship.

In nearly every instance the ceremonies on the heiau were carried out to secure the help of the gods in bettering the living conditions of the people or accomplishing some of their special desires. These included being favored with better crops, more fish, success in battle, shelter from the elements and healing the sick.

LUAKINI HEIAU

These were also called heiau po'o kanaka, where human sacrifices were offered. Built only by the paramount chief and usually rebuilt by each succeeding chief. The luakini ritual was that of the great god Kū, strict and arduous. The priests were all alii, of the order of Kū and their ancestor Kanalu. These were also called heiau kaua or war heiau.

The timbers in the structures were 'ōhi'a and the thatch of loulu palm or uki grass. The surrounding fence was of 'ōhi'a with the bark removed. The images were also of 'ōhi'a. The human sacrifices were adult male law-breakers or war captives. Unfortunately some were victims who had been wrongly accused.

The chief consecrated places in and around the luakini were:

Ka paehumu - the sacred enclosing wall of stone or 'ōhi'a poles.
 Ka 'ili'ili - the pebbled floor
 Ka 'anu'u - the oracle tower
 Ka hale mana - the mana house
 Ka hale pahu - the drum house
 Ka hale wai ea - small house where the 'aha cord was stretched.
 Ka mo'i - the main image of 'ōhi'a, the lord of images
 Ka lele - the sacrificial stand

Elaborate and usually lengthy ceremonies were conducted by the high chief and the kāhuna. These priests wore white and did not cut their hair or beards.

David Malo wrote of a prayer service which was a part of the consecration of a sacrificial heiau (luakini). Called kuili, it was of unusual interest because of the number of baked hogs served to the worshippers. Fortunately for the farmer some years lapsed between the building and dedicating of these important luakini.

On the first night 800 hogs were baked for the priests and their men. They ate the pork and continued their prayers until morning.

The kuili service continued all day during which time 400 more pigs were baked and served. During the service which continued all night 240 more pigs were baked and eaten.

During the next and last day 400 more baked pigs were served to the priests but not to the chiefs.

A total of 1840 hogs were used in dedicating and freeing the luakini from kapu.

The following day another feast, with an unspecified number of pigs, was served to celebrate the ceremony of girding a malo on the haku 'ōhi'a image.

After this feast the high chief offered his gods 400 pigs, 400 bushels of bananas, 400 coconuts, 400 red fish and 400 pieces of 'oloa kapa. (Malo, 1976, pp. 171-74.)

Human sacrifices were offered to insure the kokua of the war gods in aiding the worshippers to overcome the enemy. The presence and power of the gods destroyed the courage and strength of the enemy and filled their hearts with terror, the chiefs and kāhuna believed.

Captives in war, kapu breakers and men who had displeased the chief were selected for sacrifice. Men, numbering two to twenty, were clubbed, stoned or strangled in a manner not to mangle their bodies. They were carried into the temple nude and placed on the lele face down in rows before the image. Hogs were laid upon the human bodies at right angles. Prayers were offered and all were left to putrefy.

MĀPELE HEIAU

These heiau were for the worship of Lono. The ritual was mild and the service comfortable. The requests were for an ample supply of food. Priests, lower in order than those of the luakini, were of the order of Lono or Palikū.

Any chief was at liberty to construct a māpele. Here the ruler and his chiefs prayed most frequently.

The wood in the fences surrounding the māpele and the framework of the structures was of lama. Special plants in or near the māpele were bananas.

Other names for shrines dedicated to Lono were:

ho'oulu 'ai - for the increase of food crops. The first fruits were offered to insure further growth.

ho'oulu ua - offerings were made to increase rain when needed.

ewe'ai is another name for a shrine devoted to bringing rain.

ma'o (meaning green) were small, temporary heiau used for the ho'oulu 'ai ceremony to bring food.

HO'OLA HEIAU

These healing temples were for treating the sick and were unique to Hawai'i where medical knowledge and practices exceeded that of other Pacific peoples. The kahuna lā'au lapa'au, the herb doctor, was assisted by some 16 additional specialists.

Before 1819 there was at least one healing heiau in each district throughout the inhabited islands. Two known on O'ahu today are Keāiwa on 'Aiea Heights and another on Kahuna Sam Lono's property at Ha'ikū.

PU'UHONUA

These were places of refuge, of peace and of safety. They may be walled structures such as the Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau in Kona. When dedicated it was called the City of Refuge National Historical Park.

A pu'uhonua may be an ahupua'a or other open land area such as was once true of the ahupua'a of Kualoa, Waikāne and Kailua.

A pu'uhonua may be a person. Ka'ahumanu was given such powers and used them to pardon the defeated O'ahu chiefs and people after the battle of Nu'uani in 1795.

A pu'uhonua may be a god-image. Kūkā'ilimoku was given these powers and his lands were declared pu'uhonua. The details of their use seem to be lacking in the literature.

Persons accused of a crime would flee to these places of refuge and would be forgiven while within its confines. They were then free to return to their normal life. During war times the aged, infirm and the women and children would take refuge in the pu'uhonua.

The missionaries compared these to the Cities of Refuge of the Hebrew people as described in Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 19 and Joshua 20.

HEIAU WAIHAU

Some of these are described as agricultural heiau. Lono was the patron and the offerings were from the plantations and gardens. Chief among the offerings were pigs, bananas and coconuts.

Waihau of stones and coral were built near the sea and near fishponds. 'Aoa was the name given to shrines built near the royal ponds where the offerings were a black pig, mullet, taro and bananas.

Some of the waihau were for the mo'o or female deities who were the guardians of fishponds and for the akua mo'o, the major gods of the female chiefs.

Waihau were more numerous than luakini.

UNU.

These were crude altars or shrines built by and for the fishermen. A chief, however, would build an unu o Lono which was enclosed by a fence of lama wood and contained structures thatched with dried ti leaves.

KŪ'ULA

Kū'ulakai was a noted fisherman in Hāna, Maui years ago. Long after his death he became the god of fishermen. Stones a yard or more high were set up along beaches to attract fish and to cause them to multiply. Smaller flat stones were placed along the shore to receive offerings of fish. (See sketch in Resource Units, 1982, p. 151). Smaller kū'ula, natural or carved stones, were carried to sea in canoes to attract fish.

KO'A.

Most of these were small stone platforms. Ceremonies on or near the ko'a were to insure an abundance of fish. Ko'a on islets frequented by birds or in the mountains were for offerings to increase bird life.

There seems to be little or no difference between the shrines called kū'ula and ko'a.

PŌHAKU O KĀNE

A single stone pillar or monument was set up by a member of the family as indicated by their 'aumakua. Here the family would commune with their 'aumakua, other gods and with Kāne. The entire family would gather here in contrast to the service in the hale mua which was exclusively for the men. Ti leaves were planted around Pōhaku o Kāne.

IPU O LONO

In the men's house, the hale mua, hung a gourd called ipu o Lono which was suspended by four cords. The offering placed within was termed 'ai or food and i'a or fish. A piece of 'awa root was tied to the cord handle. Each morning and evening the head of the house prayed and offered the food to the family god. When the god had taken the essence of the offering the householder was free to eat the food.

KŪKOA'E

A temple for purification ceremonies and for prayers for food.

NĀ KO'A HEIAU HOLOMOANA

This structure was built for the family 'aumakua who would help the family in their voyaging to foreign lands.

KE'E, HĀ'ENA, KAUA'I

Here are the remains of a large heiau dedicated to the hula. It was once very large, sacred and famous. It was dedicated to the goddess Laka. Lohi'au dance here.

KŪKANILOKO

This sacred shrine near Wahiawā, O'ahu, served as a pu'uhonua and a birthplace for the highest chiefs. From the 12th century

many ali'i of distinction were born here. The illness of the queen mother Keōpūolani prevented her from giving birth to Liholiho at Kūkaniloko. The story of these sacred stones and the genealogy of a chiefess was given in detail in an early copy of Ka Lono, the news letter of Hui 'Imi Na'auao o Hawai'i.

Holoholokū near the mouth of the Wailua River on Kaua'i is a sacred birthplace and a pu'uhonua.

DATA ON O'AHU HEIAU

Total known - 139
 Destroyed - 117 or 84%
 Existing 22 or 16%

Kāne'ākī at Makaha was restored in 1969-70. It was probably rebuilt from a waihau to a luakini in the late 1700's. Pu'u o Mahuka, Ulupō, Kawaewae and Kupolopolo, all luakini are in fair condition. Keāiwa is in poor condition.

DATA ON HAWAI'I ISLAND HEIAU

The chief one in each of the six districts:

Kona - Hikiau
 Ka'u - Punalu'u
 Puna - Waha'ula
 Hilo - Kānoa
 Waipi'o - Honua'ula
 Kohala - Mo'okini

Other heiau of note are:

Kawaihae - Puukoholā
 Mailekini
 Kailua - Ahu'ena
 Keikipu'ipu'i
 Waipi'o - Paka'alana