

## Glossary of Hawaiian Words

ahupua'a. Subdivision of a district. Theoretically it was a section of land extending from the sea to the mountains and that included within its boundaries a fishery, cultivable lands, and forest land. So-called because its boundaries were marked by a heap (ahu) of stones, surmounted by an image of a pig (pua'a) or because a pig or other tribute was offered as tax to the chief.

'ai pa'a. Cooked taro pounded into a hard mass not mixed with water, sometimes preserved in ti-leaf bundles. Lit., hard poi.

ali'i. Chief, chiefess, king, queen, noble; royal.

aloha. Love, affection, greeting.

anu. Cool, cold. anuanu. Reduplication of anu, cold. Reduplication consists of repetition of all of a major word or a part of it. Reduplications are usually spoken quickly with close transition between the members.

'a'ole. No, not; to be none, to have none.

hale kahu. House of a pastor.

haole. White person, Caucasian; formerly, any foreigner.

hāpu'u. An endemic tree fern (Cibotium splendens) common in many forests of Hawai'i.

heiau. Pre-Christian place of worship. Remains found have included foundations for buildings and/or altars. Some were elaborate stone platforms, others merely earth terraces.

hōlua. Sled, especially an ancient sled used on a long, narrow course running down a steep hill and extending onto a plain. Some slides were paved with stones and then covered with packed dirt and a layer of grass. Most of the Moloka'i slides did not have stone paving. The hōlua was a sled on runners about six inches wide and twelve feet long. Hōlua sliding was a sport for chiefs and chiefesses. Only one person slid at a time, and the winner was the one who went the farthest.

ho'oka'awale. To separate, to cause a division. Ma'i-ho'oka'awale. Leprosy.

hui. Club, association, society.

hula. The hula, a hula dancer.

'ili. A subdivision of an ahupua'a. An 'ili kūpono was a subdivision of an ahupua'a that paid tribute directly to the ruler of the kingdom and not to the chief of the ahupua'a. Practically independent of the ahupua'a although located within it.

kahuna. Priest, minister, sorcerer; native doctor.

kalo. Taro, a food staple cultivated since ancient times. See taro.

kama'āina. Native-born; original residents.

kānāwai. Law, code.

kapu. Taboo, forbidden.

kēia. This.

kī. Ti, a woody plant (Cordyline terminalis) in the lily family. Formerly the leaves were used by the Hawaiians for thatching, food wrappers, hula skirts, and sandals, while the sweet roots were baked and eaten or distilled for brandy.

kiawe. The algaroba tree, first planted in Hawai'i in 1828, where it has become one of the commonest trees.

koa. The largest of native forest trees (Acacia koa) with light-gray bark and white flowers.

kōkua. Helper, comforter.

koli'i. A native lobelia shrub (Trematolobelia macrostachys) up to six feet high.

Kona. Leeward sides of the Hawai'ian Islands, name of a leeward wind. The islands lie within a belt of northeasterly trade winds that persist throughout the year but are occasionally interrupted during the winter by southerly or Kona winds that blow for only a few days at a time. Both trade and Kona winds bring rain.

kōnane. Ancient game resembling checkers, played with pebbles on a stone or wood board.

konohiki. Headman of an ahupua'a land division under the chief.

kukui. Candlenut tree (Aleurites moluccana), whose nuts, wood, gum, roots, leaves, and flowers all had uses in Hawai'ian culture.

kuleana. Small piece of property within an ahupua'a. In later times, the landholding of a former tenant.

Laka. Name of the hula goddess.

lānai. Porch, verandah.

lehua. The flower of the 'ōhi'a tree (Metrosideros macropus, M. collina); also the tree itself. The plant has many forms, from tall trees to low shrubs. Also a variety of taro, used for red poi.

lū'au. Hawaiian feast named for the taro tops always served at one; not an ancient name.

luna. Foreman, overseer, boss.

ma. At, in, on, beside, through.

ma'i. Patient, sick person; sickness, disease. Ma'i-Pākē. Leprosy. Lit., Chinese disease. Ma'i ali'i. Noble or royal sickness or disease.

makai. Toward the sea.

mauka. Inland, toward the mountain.

moku. District, section. Largest geographical subdivision of an island.

mo'o. Lizard, reptile of any kind; succession, esp. a genealogical line.

'ohana. Family, relative, kin group.

'ōhi'a. Two kinds of trees: 'ōhi'a-'ai, 'ōhi'a-lehua. A native variety of sugar cane; a variety of taro.

ōkolehao. Liquor distilled from tī root in a still of the same name.

pa'i 'ai. Hard, pounded but undiluted taro.

pali. Cliff, precipice.

pili. A grass (Heteropogon contortus) formerly used for thatching houses in Hawai'i.

poi. The Hawai'ian staff of life, a paste made from cooked taro root pounded and thinned with water.

pū hala. The pandanus or screw pine (Pandanus odoratissimus), native from southern Asia east to Hawai'i. It has many branches tipped with spine-edged leaves; its base is supported by a clump of slanting aerial roots. Parts of the tree had many uses: leaves for mats, baskets, and hats; fruit sections for leis; male flowers to scent tapa; the aerial root tip was a source of Vitamin B.

taro. Kalo (Colocasia esculenta). Staple vegetable food of the Hawai'ians from earliest times to the present. All parts of the plant are eaten, its starchy root principally as poi.

'uala. The sweet potato. Staple food since ancient times in many parts of Polynesia. 'uala 'awa'awa, sweet potato beer.

wahi. Place.

Sources:

Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert,  
Hawaiian-English Dictionary (Honolulu:  
University of Hawaii Press, 1961)  
Catherine C. Summers, Molokai: A Site  
Survey, Pacific Anthropological Records  
No. 14 (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop  
Museum, 1971)