The Meaning of 'Aina in Hawaiian Tradition

Stephen T. Boggs
University of Hawaii

Abstract:

Interviews with twelve Hawaiians, eleven of them kupuna (elders) who were raised on Hawaii, Maui, Molokai, and Oahu around the turn of the century, indicate the following attitudes and beliefs about the land. Above all the land was regarded as the provider of everything: "food, shelter over your head, and a place to plant your feet and stand firm." Land also meant work—hard work, because if you "turn your hands down to work you live; turn them up and you get nothing." For some land symbolized life, and in pre-Christian tradition mana (power). Since the 'ohana (relatives and friends) lived on the land, and their spirits returned there generation after generation, the land was also closely tied in thought with the chain of being: it was like a piko (umbilical cord). Just as one felt aloha for the 'ohana, so one felt toward the land on which the 'ohana worked, lived, and stayed in eternity. Aloha for the 'aina was expressed by attitudes of respect, returning gifts to the land, beautifying it, and using it properly (not greedily). More than anything else land, and all that was associated with it, gave a sense of identity to Hawaiians. Thus, for example, aloha 'aina meant love of country during the years when Hawaii's government was being overthrown. Thus it is understandable that those concerned with their Hawaiian heritage today, regardless of their religious or political beliefs, look first to the land which in former times was theirs.
Introduction

In talking with Hawaiians over the past ten years the subject of land has been repeatedly volunteered. The context was invariably the loss of family lands, or threats of loss. The feeling was strong in each case. But because anger, resentment, and the feeling of injustice dominated in these accounts, it was some time before I began thinking about what the land itself meant, distinct from feelings about losing it. It was not until I heard the late George Helm, Jr., express his feelings about the land that I clearly focussed upon this topic. And so I determined to interview as many old people as possible and ask them what the land meant to their kupuna or makua when they were growing up with them.

During April and May, 1977, I interviewed twelve persons on this topic. All resided on Molokai or Oahu. All but one was over 50, five were past 70. They had grown up in four locations on Maui (Waikapu, Keanae, Kaupo, and Hana), three locations on Hawaii (Kalapana, North Kohala, and Kona) and in two places on Molokai (Wailau and Hoolehua) around the turn of the century and the first decades of this century. The one man under 50 had grown up on Oahu. All had been raised in families which depended upon taro, including one man whose parents were fishermen. Three of the informants were still growing taro and had done so for most of their lives, one still pounded taro on the board. One was also an expert on the land laws of nineteenth century Hawaii.

From the standpoint of assessing their views about the land it is important to note that the religious backgrounds of the informants varied. Five were Mormon, four Evangelical or Fundamentalist Christians, two were Catholic, and one professed no allegiance other than Hawaiian religion. This same variety characterized all of the Hawaiians I have known. The only way in which the twelve differed was that the degree of their spiritual
preoccupation was greater than that of most Hawaiians (cf Howard).

Each was asked what the land meant to them and what they had learned from their *kupuna* or *makua* about the proper care of the land, as well as anything they had observed in this regard. As we shared ideas and stories I had heard from others most of the topics discussed below were raised. Each interview lasted several hours. Near the end several made a comment *ho'omanawanui*, meaning patience, endurance, referring to what they had said. Although the interviews were conducted in English, unfortunately, the informants always gave key words in Hawaiian first and then translated them.

Half of the informants were raised by grandparents, usually as only children. The others learned strictly from the parental generation. Most of the information comes from the first half of the nineteenth century, when Hawaiian culture was changing drastically. Nevertheless the pattern of *konu* cultivation described, and the practice of food offerings, are similar to Handy, Handy, and Pukui's accounts from their earlier informants. The earliest information recorded here came from the grandparent of a grandparent, whose experience went back to pre-contact Hawaii. This is a description of a blessing ritual (see below). Because all of the informants left their grandparents before reaching middle age, or never knew their grandparents, much has been lost from what is recorded here. This should be considered in weighing the number of informants who report, or fail to report, a given practice or attitude.

Confirmation of the information here rests not upon the number of persons reporting a particular thing, but rather upon the logical consistency and integration of the information. The reader can draw his or her conclusions about this. I find the information consistent among these informants, and also consistent with information already published by Pukui, Handy, Kamakau, and others. It also adds to what they have told us.
Land and work as the basis of life

As others have pointed out the land was regarded as the center and basis of life. Honua, one word for land in the sense of earth or plains, also meant basic or fundamental, the central part of a canoe (rather like the meaning of "spaceship earth"). 'Aina, the other word for land, in the sense of soil, meant "that which feeds." The informants constantly mentioned that the land provided everything: as one said, "food, shelter over your head, and a place to plant your feet and stand firm."

A woman recalled with pleasure and satisfaction the taro growing in the lo'i and the fruits growing at the door of her childhood home.

Another described the different kinds of potatoes, green onions, chili peppers, including one that only her grandparents grew, and the taro, pumpkin, corn, banana, guava, and mango on her grandparents' kuleana. The plantings were staggered, she said, so that some food would always be ready to use.

A man recalled all of the useful plants that used to be grown on the banks of the lo'i.

Without exception people stressed the hard work needed to produce this bounty: how hard the grandparents worked— all the daylight hours. Only when the work was done could you rest.

As a child one man worked in the lo'i early every morning until time to go to school, and then had to run two miles to keep from being late. (Another used to get his time off by going fishing, instead of going to school, and hiding from his sister when she came to take him back to school.)

The older kids would talk with the adults in the evening after supper, one said. Next morning the older ones knew where the huli
were that were ready for planting and the place made ready to plant them. Father would put a pole in the ground and the kids, starting from the oldest to the youngest, would line up and put the huli in straight lines down to the end of the patch. Then move on to the next row. No one had to do a lot of explaining.

In addition to foods grown there were foods to be collected. Up to the mountains for fruits and ulu, down to the beach for limu, fish, crab, and squid. As one woman summed it up, "Livin gotta be hustle."

A lot of work went into the making of a new lo'i. The whole family, one said, would tramp around for about four hours on a Saturday, and repeat this for three Saturdays. Another said that a horse was easier and faster for this purpose. One woman, by contrast, had never heard of packing the earth for a lo'i, although she had made many. Apparently, there were differences in soil quality, for people in the next valley over from where she grew up packed the earth. It is also noteworthy that some had never seen a lo'i constructed because they were already long established. This was reported at Keanae and Waikapu, Maui.

Several of these old people give unspoken evidence of their commitment to work on the land by their lives today. One man spends two hours every day tamping the earth with a 4 x 4 timber. In three weeks he can prepare a patch, he says, which he then plants with one of the 17 varieties of taro that he grows. His lo'i cover a total area over 30 feet square. He smiles as he points out that this is his only machinery, and it is home-made. Another man grows dry taro in an area over three times this size. It requires constant weeding, most of which is done by hand, although he uses a tractor occasionally. He is 88 years old. He does mix his poi by machine, though. Another old couple is constantly at work on their land, clearing, planting, and weeding, getting out every last root. The woman says that she likes
to work "when I have nothing else to do." Twice as we talked she asked if she could get back to her washing, even though she was very interested in what she was telling me.

The dependence upon work was reflected in a saying that everyone mentioned: "turn your hands down to work and you live; turn them up and you get nothing." Or, as one man concluded the saying, "...you suck wind." Such a person in the old days, he explained, would "watch the smoke" of the imu, so as to know when it was time to eat. A chief would ask about such a person, "Where were you when the rains came?" (cf Judd), meaning when it was time to work hard. The value placed upon work is reflected in these sayings and also in the response of a woman to them. She denied scornfully that anyone would have behaved like that when she grew up. Only if they smelled coffee brewing, maybe, she added.

Everyone did not look back upon this labor with nostalgia, however. A man who spent his childhood going from his urban home to work in the taro patch recalled it thus:

"Come around six o'clock...you so damned hungry, cold, your fingers ache from being wet all day, the feet—I hated it. Now I think back it's not as bad. I guess when you're young, coming from two worlds, one the city and weekends you're going, just all day, bent over, pulling weeds and the sun hitting the back—it's no fun. From when I was a young kid I remember working in the taro patch. So, you know, I don't think it was that great. ...I think I leave it for other guys who might want to do it (laugh)."

Others, however, recalled good feelings. Thus, one man told of tramping around in the mud "holding hands and talking story. We had a good time," although it was always serious, he added. A woman remembered mischief as well. When adults were not around the children would throw mud, just like kids at the beach, even in the face.
The importance of practical work was also reflected by the details that informants gave about work on the land: the tools used to clear and level the land, the construction of an *imu*, cooking, how to make and wrap *pa'ai* (cooked, slightly pounded taro). Others described fishing: how you caught white eels and stripped them with your hands into their hole so that another would come there, catching *ulu*, rules for sharing fish caught from a canoe, fishing for crab and *o'opu*, catching mullet in a net, turning them (*wili*) and biting the heads to kill them, drying *opae* in mosquito nets after turning them in salt, etc.

The motivation for this work was the food produced and consumed, not the sale of food for cash. Good evidence of this was provided by Rachel Naki's description of life in Wailau valley before 1919:

A large family would make up to 2,000 *pa'ai* (taro slightly pounded and wrapped in *ti* and *ape* leaves, tied with string), each weighing about 25 pounds, once each year. These would be taken by ship to Kalaupapa. The people would be paid in gold on a return trip, which would also bring their supplies for the year. Only limited purchases were made: coffee, salt, brown sugar, kerosene, and flour. Much of the money was never spent, but hidden in the ground.

Informants often mentioned growing food to share, as described below. But none mentioned growing food for sale, except as just described. Several of the taro growers today would not even sell their taro, even though often asked by dealers to do so. Some people in the old days bought large quantities of food partly to share with others. Thus one man described his family buying rice in 100 pound bags, sugar in big bags, salmon, sardine, tuna, Spam and corned beef by the case, and soap in 20 gallon drums. All of this was in addition to taro grown in the country, ulu and mango harvested in several places, fish, shrimp, etc. Indeed for this large urban family
"livin had to be hustle."

Hard as it may have been where they grew up, pioneers on the homestead lands at Hoolehua all stressed how much harder the early days had been there. The solution for them had been relentless effort—and prayer. This is the recurrent theme of work upon the land. All available resources also were used. Surplus water from the nearby plantation was rescued, a tank was built to store it, and taro was planted. But there wasn't much water and taro was scarce. They ate pumpkin in place of it—"pumpkin poi" it came to be called. People went hungry in those days. Parents would feed the children in the evening, drink a little water, and then go down to MoomomiBeach at night to catch fish and crabs. The children did not realize until later that their parents were starving. Work was hard. Some recall planting corn by hand, as children, guiding the mules, piling dirt around the shoots on hands and knees in windswept fields, and tying down the watermelon vines to keep them from spinning around in the wind. The kuleana of their former homes seemed idyllic by comparison.

Some of those who continue to work their land today do so because of the firm belief that the time is fast approaching when everyone will have to provide for themselves. But this theme of self-sufficiency is traditional. As one man put it, "we always prayed that we might work to grow our own food and not depend upon others." Belief that the final days were near was shared by Evangelical believers and Mormons.

I asked most informants if Hawaiian people today could return to such a life on the land. One woman was scornful, even before the question was raised. The mo'opuna today, she said, believe in stealing and even killing before working for their food. (This was just weeks before the fatal shoot-out between local young men on Molokai where she lives.) She had helped several young haoles, by contrast, showing them how to clear their land, plant taro, and make poi. Young Hawaiians, she said, would not work that
hard anymore. Another man replied to the question that it depends upon making up your mind. One local man has recently succeeded in growing his own taro. He works hard at it. One of the man's grandsons, by comparison, worked on the lo'i for two days and has found something else to do ever since. (Compare the man above who would "leave it for others.")

To sum up, land was regarded as the provider. As practical people, Hawaiians stressed the hard work and techniques needed to obtain their food. Work was a matter of pride, self-sufficiency, and having something to share. Food was not grown for sale. Some are convinced today that the time is coming when all of us will have to "turn the hands down and work" the land if we are to live. They may well be right.

Land and 'ohana

"The 'ohana lived on the land." This statement introduces another theme present in attitudes about the land: the close identification between the 'ohana and a particular locality. Because of this, feelings about the 'ohana also attached themselves to the land.

One man said, "the whole family worked the lo'i. Our parents never made us work. They were getting older. They asked us and we did. It was a good feeling. There was a lot of peace in our family" (ten boys and two girls).

Even the man who hated working in the lo'i recalled his huge household and his aunties and uncles with great affection. He went fishing with one uncle, to the taro patch near another's place, "and if we got there early he would let us ride his horse. He was kind of gruff, but I loved him, my tutuman." Prayers at planting time would ask that the land be fruitful for the family according to another informant.

Different households in a locality cooperated in many ways. Thus families needing water for irrigation would go together to find the best source and dig the ditch together. The ditches were maintained by all
who used them, according to several. There was no trouble taking turns in the use of water. If one did not need it on a certain day, the family would trade with another. (Compare Handy's description of this.) Later, people of whatever ethnic background were included in this system. Only the ranch tried to use all the water, according to one informant. On that occasion the 'ohana went to court. There were lawyers and even a judge in the 'ohana and they won their rights to their water supply.

Labor was also shared: "When the sound of pounding was heard all came with their boards to help make pa'ai (see previous section)." According to another, people would pitch in when things needed to be done.

Food and other goods were shared. One grandparent always planted lots of corn, "so he could give it away and everyone would have a good time." A man described going to get ulu from an aunty's big tree, borrowing a horse from a neighbor to plow a new lo'i, getting salt, mullet, crab, o'opu, and vegetables, all in return for taro which they grew and poi that they made. Either that, or have people stay with them when they came to town. Filipinos were included in this exchange. One woman recalled the old days on Molokai when everyone would say, "hele mai, 'ai" (come in, eat). No more, she lamented. Today people pass you by "maka'ewa'ewa-- they look like they don't know you." Molokai must have been even more friendly in the old days, for even now newcomers are surprised to receive friendly waves from local people who drive by in their cars. As mentioned, newcomers of all backgrounds were included in this exchange. One man remembered sharing food with the Russian camp. As a consequence he developed a great liking for certain Russian foods. He did not go as often to the Japanese camp, however, because "they acted like they thought you came there to steal."

Old-timers regarded everyone who lived on the same land as part of
one 'ohana. Neighbors and those who shared became "aunties" and "uncles," whatever their genealogy, their children became "cousins" and their grandchildren became "nieces" and "nephews," according to one informant. As one woman explained to a grandniece in my presence, "this is your uncle. Everyone who comes to your door is your 'ohana. Go fix your uncle something to eat." A man recalled his mom inviting anyone who needed help to stay with them until they got on their feet, for months at a time. "I never had any hangups about bringing friends there," he said. Many neighbor kids grew up with his family and they were treated just like brothers and sisters—all equally. To feed this large household, food was purchased in bulk, as noted earlier. This family is widely known today for its generosity. It exemplified values shared by all.

Sahlins has advanced the interpretation that the 'ohana in its broadest sense, including relatives and adopted members, was the unit that managed and utilized the land in a particular locality. His view, based upon nineteenth century records of land transfers by inheritance and otherwise, is consistent with the information presented above. Fukui and Handy have given the same picture. Because of this close association between the 'ohana and a particular locality it is understandable that the land connoted the ancestors as well. This was stated by several informants. One said that when the members of the 'ohana died "they want to return. So you plant food for them so they will have something to eat." Ancestors were buried on the land belonging to the 'ohana, thus further strengthening the link between land and 'ohana. This theme is developed further in discussing the symbolism of land below.
Land as a symbol

Many persons spoke of "respect for the land." Asked what she meant by it one woman said, "the love I feel for what the land gave to my kupuna--food and life." This summarizes what the land means as the basis of life for the 'ohana. And it links the love which Hawaiians feel for the kupuna with the love they feel for the land which sustained them.

One woman who has made a special study of her heritage, and serves as an ordained minister, said that in pre-Christian Hawaii "the land was sacred." It was the piko (umbilical cord) because it was the source of food and life at the creation, according to the Kumulipo--the creation legend of the Hawaiian people. The land was "like Mother Earth, the source, the Alpha and Omega." The kupuna likewise are regarded as the source of life. The symbolic value of land was reflected, according to her, in the practice on Kauai and Hawaii of bringing some earth when a woman was about to give birth, so that the newborn would touch it first. Likewise the practice of rubbing some earth on the left foot at the arch and the right hand "in order to keep the child on the land." Another informant said that in the old days a fruit tree would be planted over the child's placenta, a different fruit for each child. (It is interesting to note that pua means flower and child.) Both informants noted that planting is like returning life to the land, continuing life. This, as we shall see, is one reason why people beautify the land (see below on returning gifts to the land).

Mana and the spirits of the land

To a Western mind religion is sharply divorced from the natural world. The two interact, but only in a "supernatural" way, which many Westerners reject. The dichotomy between religion and nature did not exist in pre-Christian Hawaiian culture. Then every object, whether "animate" or
"inanimate" in Western terms, had an inherent power, called *mana*, which
gave the object all of its tangible features, plus certain intangible ones
that could be used for various purposes, such as representing the gods in
sacrifices, healing specific disorders, causing another to love, to sicken
and die, to be lured to destruction, to protect and promote safe birth.
Given the pervasiveness of the belief in *mana* it seems safe to assume
that land had inherent *mana*. One informant or another spoke of new lava,
certain boulders (*pohaku*), and places as having a power like that of *mana*.
In addition there are spirits of various kinds, some human and some not,
that are believed to inhabit or visit certain places. It is not always
possible to distinguish such spirits from the mana of a place, and to
ancient Hawaiians it probably made no difference.

Informants' views about *mana* and spirits of the land today are quite
varied and even ambivalent in some cases. Thus, one man denied that there
was any *mana* in the land today, because the old *mana* was abandoned when
Hawaiians were baptized as Christians. Others denied that there were
dangers inherent in uninhabited or uncultivated land. On the other hand
such land is typically blessed before being used, as we shall see, and the
reason for this is to remove any danger that may have been left on such
land. Few Hawaiians, or indeed other local people, will work on a con­
struction site that has not been blessed.

One woman reported being told as a child not to make noise in the
forest because the spirits who lived there did not want to be disturbed
by noisy children (this was explained only after they were back home).
Another believed that the *'uhane* (spirits) of a place should not be di­
surbed when the land at that place was blessed. If they were disturbed
some disaster would occur, and she cited an example. Several pointed out
the danger of going to the island of Kahoolawe without rigorous prepara­
tion and correct rituals upon landing. A kahuna who attempted such a visit, they said, had to be absolutely certain, confident. Otherwise the kahuna would forfeit his or her life. These informants clearly believe that there is a strong power on Kahoolawe. Whether or not other places are as powerful did not come up in the interviews.

One person pointed out that some people on Hawaii today regard lava as powerful because it is given by Pele and believe that lava and Pele's tears (pellets of lava) have to be blessed in order to remove their power, which might otherwise harm those who possess them. This belief is frequently encountered on all of the islands. Since all of the land was once lava, as Hawaiians are well aware, all land is in this sense a gift of Pele, and contained at its origin her mana.

Several informants recounted the powers of specific pohaku (large rocks or boulders). One such as Hawanawana, not far from Halawa, Molokai, was used by kahuna of old to communicate with kahuna in the upland who made use of a similar pohaku. On a certain day without any other communication the people of the upland would come to the beach bringing vegetables and useful materials. After a day or two of feasting they would return with dried fish, limu, and squid. In one place on Oahu a pohaku is still used to call the spirits of that place. One informant explained that pohaku shaped like certain life forms were regarded by people of old as representatives of certain gods (akua) and shrines were built around them. A woman on Oahu has rescued one such pohaku, shaped originally like a frog, which she regards as a spirit who has long dwelled in that place. She has rededicated it as a Christian shrine. It is beautifully landscaped with both flowering and useful plants. She says that she goes there for spiritual strength before undertaking tasks that are stressful.
The blessing of land

Christianity is the obvious cause of ambivalence in present day Hawaiian beliefs about mana and spirits in the land. In its popular forms, at least, Christianity recognizes no spiritual power in the land. It is also hostile to any spiritual beings but the one God. It is difficult, therefore for Hawaiians to integrate their Christian faith with traditional beliefs in the mana and spirits of the land. There is nearly unanimous agreement among informants, and in the wider population, that the blessing of land is necessary. But there is outright disagreement among informants about the role of spirits of the land in such blessings. Thus, one person who blesses land will only conduct a Christian blessing, because that is what she learned from her kupuna and she is "not going to turn her back on her kupuna." Another would not conduct a pre-Christian blessing because, as she said with deep feeling, "I don't want my people returning to the worship of idols." Yet a third person strongly objected to a Christian blessing that would disturb the spirits of the place, or ask that they "be taken into God's hands."

Most informants view the purpose of blessing the land today as the removal of any danger that may have been left by the people of old, such as heiau (altars), graves, karu (prohibitions), curses, or forms of pollution, such as menstruation. In this common belief there is no mention of mana or spirits of the land.

In olden times according to one informant the land was blessed in order to make it permanently fruitful. One place so blessed was Paka'ika'i, high up the Wailua Valley of Molokai. According to oral tradition this was used as a hiding place for the infant Kamehameha I. According to photographs the taro still grows high in straight rows even though it is
shaded by a giant mango tree and has been untended for centuries. Many exotic flowers grow there as well (see returning gifts below).

The oldest ceremony for blessing the land which was encountered was one witnessed by the informant's grandmother when she was young. The grandmother recalled that the grandfather had walked around a new plot of land to be cultivated, turning the earth and chanting as he went. She remembered that he went to each of the four corners, and thought that the purpose of this was to "tie the corners together." The blessing was for a plentiful harvest. Unfortunately, the grandfather never explained to the child what he did, and he passed away before she grew up. It is interesting to note that a similar procedure was stated to be the proper way to approach the island of Kahoolawe by another informant. First, he said, you would pray upon landing, then go completely around the island, praying all the way, throughout one or more days, until it had been circled three times. He cited the story of Josue at Jericho as evidence that even Christians knew about such a ritual. This is an interesting instance of the integration of Christian and pre-Christian beliefs. He pointed to the exorcism of spirits as another example.

All informants described ancient rituals used at planting to insure a good yield for a particular plant. Since these rituals do not refer to the land itself, they are better considered as an aspect of planting to return gifts to the land.

Land as a source of knowledge and power

To ancient Hawaiians mana was knowledge as well as power. If the land had mana, then it also had knowledge. This was stated or implied by several informants. Thus one said that in the old days "you learned all you needed to know from the land." She illustrated by telling how her mother read the clouds at evening in order to prophecy the kind of
fish her absent father would catch. This is also a clear reference to land being thought of as a locality and not in the narrow sense of a plot of soil. Another person was insistent that you cannot restore anything that is on the land without having the mana'o (will, knowledge) of that specific land. Another said that you could only learn the mana'o of Kahoolawe by going there and carrying out the correct rituals while there. This last statement is particularly significant as it highlights a point made in all descriptions of rituals: namely, that they must be carried out on the particular land affected. You must go to that land to carry them out. Finally, as already mentioned, one woman goes to her pohaku shrine to gain spiritual strength.

Returning gifts to the land

The essence of aloha is giving and sharing out of love. Aloha for the 'aina thus means giving or returning something to the land—not just living off of it, as one person put it. Several beliefs and practices can be seen as expressions of aloha 'aina.

There is a saying that the land should not be left idle (poho). This may be one reason why Hawaiians have always devoted so much labor to the beautification of their land. Thus, one woman recalled with feeling her grandmother's love of flowers, the many exotic flowers she grew, and the lei she made to give away. One couple today has transformed a small plot of ground, formerly covered with junk and kiawe, into a beautifully landscaped garden, full of food and ornamental plants. Another woman has plants of all kinds crowding every inch of her small grounds, and has created a garden and shrine on an adjoining hillside, as mentioned earlier. No one said that these were offerings, but they clearly were expressions of aloha.
In pre-Christian times offerings of foods grown or harvested were made, for instance at several stages in the growth of taro (see Kamakau, cited in Handy). These offerings were made to the gods, particularly to Kane, the god of growth and vegetation, and then consumed at meals by the family. Since this closely approximates Christian grace said at meals, the latter easily replaced the old offerings. Most informants said that these were the only offerings made today. With this change, however, conscious attention seems to have shifted from the growth of the crops and the land to God as the provider. As one man put it, "man does the work, but God provides."

Some informants made little mention of the symbolic aspect of gifts to the land. Yet these same persons had devoted their lives to work upon the land. One can see this as a kind of offering. As one person aptly put it, "Hawaiians put their spirit into the land through work."

Feelings about the land

One must experience the feeling that Hawaiians express toward the land to fully understand all that it means. Half of the persons interviewed gave direct expression of such feelings.

One woman began to explain what the land meant to Hawaiians, and to her, but broke into tears. It was some moments before she could continue. She then said, "It means a lot to me."

Another expressed great pleasure remembering the land where she grew up. She then told how her aged father was forced to sell that land, which would have come to her. Later on she explained why she was planning to move into a home for senior citizens. It seems that her husband, who is not Hawaiian, cannot inherit her homestead lease. She recalled a neighbor who had been forced to
move after his wife died. "He put all his belongings in a bag, took his children, and just walked down the road." So she did not want that to happen to her family. As she described each incident, she cried. She was explaining what the land meant to her.

Another woman was very practical, gruff, and humorous throughout the interview. She suddenly paused at one point and said, seriously and simply, "I love my land." She went on to say that the only ritual she carried out for her land was to pray for strength in order to do her work so that she could take care of herself.

A man remembered how "depressed" he had felt, fifty years ago, when the water ran out and he had to quit growing taro and leave. Again growing taro today, he has no one to help him and dreams of the time when his sons, now off in the city and on the mainland, will return and take over for him.

A woman who has known more suffering than most expressed the most feeling when describing how her aged grandfather had been forced to mortgage, and subsequently lost, the land that she would have inherited.

The woman who built the shrine told how she had cried when a heedless bull-dozer operator destroyed the plants and shattered the pohaku (see above). Patiently and lovingly with the help of neighbors she has gathered the pieces and restored the beauty of the place.

**Destruction of land**

When I asked the woman of the last story what would happen to the bulldozer operator, she indicated that he would suffer misfortune.

A woman who blesses land said that she includes in her petitions that those who disturb the land will leave it no less beautiful than God made it.
When I asked her what would happen if they left it marred or desolated, she said that they would surely have bad luck, adding, "no matter who they were."

Hawaiians in pre-Christian times had no experience with the deliberate destruction of land by man. But it seems reasonable to infer in the light of the attitudes and beliefs described above throughout that they would have regarded it, as all do today, as wrong. To ancient Hawaiians it would have been a sacrilege, and like all serious breaches, one that was punished by misfortune or death. The intent or identity of the violator made not the slightest difference. For theirs was a universe in which there were no excuses for mistakes. Disaster awaited those who were not in tune with man, nature, and the ancestors and gods; just as bounty, peace, and love came to those who were.

Conclusions.

(See Abstract)
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Howard, Alan

Judd, Henry P.

Kamakau, Samuel M.

Pukui, Mary Kawena, E.W. Haertig and Catherine A. Lee

Sahlins, Marshall

Persons interviewed about land in April and May, 1977:

(Name, place interviewed, place raised, secondary place of residence as an adult before present place interviewed, religious background, age.)

**Ho'olehua**
- Kumu Makaiwi, Waikapu, Maui, Mormon, 70 plus.
- Elmer Wilson, Kalapana and roots in Hilea, Hawaii, 60 plus.

Harriet Ne, Kala'maula, Ho'olehua, Molokai, Evangelical, 60.

Mary Lee, Ho'olehua, Ma'alaea, Waikapu, Maui, Mormon, 60 plus.

Paul Ilia, Ho'olehua, Keanae, Maui, Pearl Harbor, Mormon, 88 yrs.
- East End, Molokai

Rachel Naki, Wailau, Molokai (till 1919), Puko'o, Molokai, Evangelical, 70 plus.

Zelie Sherwood, Kilohana, Moookai, Kaupo, Maui, Honolulu, Catholic, 70 plus.

John Kainoa, Halawa, Molokai, Keanae, Maui, Fundamentalist Christian, 60.

Mary Sing, Kalaupapa, Molokai, Ko'ike, North Kohala, Hawaii (till 1917), Mormon, 70 plus.

Elroy (Makia) Malo, Papokolea, Oahu, Kaaupapa, Maui, Mormon, 30-40.

Leilana Fernandes, Kamokila's, West Beach, Oahu, Kona, Hawaii, and Molokai, Hawaiian religion, 50-60.

Mary Lorenzo, Honolulu, Hana, Maui, Kaneohe, Oahu, Catholic, 53 yrs.
Notes on testimony after meeting on 6/19/77.

1. What is the relevance of this testimony? What does it add to the testimony of Emma De Fries and Ed Kealanahele?

   It describes the attitudes and beliefs of living kupuna who have not benefited from the special training which Emma and Ed have had. It thus provides evidence that their opinions were widely shared by Hawaiians, regardless of their religious backgrounds, political opinions, or place of origin.

2. What are Hawaiian beliefs about the land?

   Briefly, land was regarded as the center or basis of life. (One word for land was honua, which also means fundamental, the middle section of a canoe.) Land was regarded as fundamental because it was the provider of everything—"food, shelter over your head, and a place to plant your feet and stand firm" (the word for land was 'aina which means that which feeds); it was where one worked to support the family, where one lived, died, was buried, and returned after death in spirit. Because of all of these things, land was regarded as a symbol of life, and some still speak of it this way. For example, one refers to it as the piko (the umbilical cord, the life-giving connection with the ancestors). In return for life, Hawaiians felt great aloha for land. This aloha was expressed by feelings of respect, returning gifts to the land, beautifying it, not leaving it idle (poho) and using it properly, not greedily. The feeling was expressed by one who said "I love the land for what it gave to my kumuna (beloved grandparents)—food and life." It was the depth of feeling about the land that first alerted me to its importance for Hawaiian people.

3. How does this relate to Kahoolawe?

   Kahoolawe is being treated with total lack of respect, as Hawaiians traditionally would view it, that is, it is being left idle, not beautified, but destroyed, and is being used for human greed by the Navy.

4. Would someone have to go to Kahoolawe in order to restore the land?

   Everything that is done to show aloha for the 'aina has to be done on that particular 'aina—it cannot be done anywhere else. For instance, Hawaiians had a kahu or haku (care-taker, or boss, respectively) to look after or care for the family's land (kuleana). That person lived on the land, or visited it regularly, at the least. A blessing in the oldest days was carried out at each of the four corners of a piece of land, going all about it, and the same was done for a house or the body (see Nānā I Ke Kumu, vol. 1).

Stephen Taylor Boggs
Anthropologist