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Explanation of Land History

(Written by our Prophet of Land Matters)

To the Ali'i 'Ai-aupuni (ruler of the government), also called the Ali'i 'Ai-moku, belonged the whole kingdom. All lands, such as moku (district) kalana (land division smaller than a moku), kupono (land section) and ahupua'a (land division extending from hills to the sea) belonged to him and to his heirs after him, in the time when there were no constitutional laws, that is, before the reign of Kamehameha III and the laws governing the crown lands held by the throne. There is a similarity in both, that is, that all lands belonging to him [the ruler] remained with him and his heirs. In the time when there were no laws [governing lands], the lands belonging to the Alii-'Ai-aupuni were passed on to his heirs and this is also true of the crown lands held by the occupant of the throne. The heirs have a right to them and this is how we know it to be so.

Let us begin with Kamehameha I and back. When Kamehameha I died, the kingdom passed on to Kamehameha II, which was ruled by Ka'ahumanu as his regent. His lands, such as the kalana, kupono and other divisions were inherited by his relatives and heirs. For instance, Waimea was inherited by Kahalai'a, a relative and heir of Liholiho, Kamehameha II; Waiakea in Hilo and other lands on Hawaii were inherited by Kauikeaouli, a relative and an heir. So were the lands of Kamehameha II inherited by his many relatives and heirs, but the kingdom itself could not be inherited by the many heirs and relatives, for it belonged to the entire people.

Kamehameha I. Upon his death, his own lands were inherited by his many relatives and heirs. Kiholo and Puako in Kohala and Waipi'o in Hamakua, went to Kauikeaouli, but the kingdom went to Liholiho. So did other relatives and heirs receive land from the Ali'i-'ai-aupuni. Those were his own lands, not those given to other chiefs.

Kiwala'o. This Ali'i-'ai-apuni ('ai-moku) died without his heirs and relatives being definitely mentioned as his reign was very short. Here is another thing. It is said that when Kiwala'o ruled as Ali'i-'ai-aupuni, Keawe-a-ma'uuhili held back all of the lands from being given to the chiefs, as he was caretaker and custodian of his property. This caused disturbing thoughts in the minds of the chiefs, therefore the honor fell to Keoua Kuahu-'ula to begin trouble by hewing down the coconut trees at Keomo. That was the beginning of the trouble that grew into the great battle in which Kiwala'o was killed. That was the battle of Moku'ohai and it was the first one in which Kamehameha I fought.

Kaleiopu'u. Upon his death, his own lands went to his many relatives and heirs, such as Halawa, in Kohala. It was given to Kamehameha, the son of his brother, Keoua Kupu-a-pa-i-ka-lani-nui. So were other lands inherited by other heirs and relatives.

Such were the rights of the Alii-'ai-aupuni ('Ai-moku) from Hawaii to Kauai.

It is well for you, of this modern generation, to understand the meanings of these words that are being much misused, Ali'i 'ai-aupuni, 'ai-moku and 'Ai-'aina.

Before the days of the heavenly one, Kauikeaouli Kaleiopapa Hikikaukoli'i, there was a perfect distinction and no confusion in the language as it is today-- in which ali'i 'Ai-moku is said to be the same as ali'i 'ai-aupuni and ali'i 'ai-aina. Therefore there is a confusion. We shall see that there were five classifications in the word 'ai-'aina.

Classification 1. The Alii 'Ai-aupuni held the power above all of the chiefs and commoners of the entire kingdom. That was why the word Alii-'ai-aupuni (Alii of the kingdom) fittingly applied to him.

Classification 2. The 'Ai-'~~ku~~ku. There were many chiefs in this group, such as Wahilani of Kohala, Wanue of Hamakua, Kulukulu-'a of Hilo, and so forth in the days when Keawe-nui-a-'Umi was the Alii-'ai-aupuni of Hawaii. These terms remained distinct until the reign of Kauikeaouli. Wala-wala (w) had half of the district of Kohala; Papa'i (w) had Waimea; Kaleiopu had

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Hamakua; Pi'opi'o (w) had Hilo; Kukaepipi had Ka-'u and Kuakini had Kona. They were all 'ai-moku (district chiefs). The same positions were held when Ke'elikolani had Hawaii, Naha'olelua had Maui, Kekuana'o'a had Oahu and Kanoa had Kauai. The changed term used instead of 'ai-moku today is kia'aina. It is proper and right to change the term to kia'aina. We all have a good opportunity now to put both terms in the same group and apply them to the ruler.

We shall explain how 'ai-moku and 'ai-aupuni differ. The island of Hawaii is divided into six districts, Kohala, Hamakua, Hilo, Puna, Ka'u and Kona. The chiefs appointed by the ali'i 'ai-aupuni over these districts were called 'ai-moku such as were mentioned in the days of Keawe-nui-a-'Umi. The very last of these were in the days of Hikikaukoli'i (Kamehameha III). Thus were they placed on Hawaii. It was not the same on other islands, because Maui was all cut up into moku, kalana and ahupua'a, which was not so on Hawaii, for its kalana and ahupua'a were within the moku (district). It is difficult now to distinguish the various kalana within the six districts of Hawaii. The chiefs placed in charge of the various moku, kalana and ahupuaa of Maui were called 'ai-moku chiefs. It was somewhat confusing and not as clear as it was on Hawaii.

Classification 3. 'Ai-kalana. In a single district, such as Kohala, there might be five kalana and several lele land. Other chiefs or prominent people of the land were placed over them, whomsoever the alii 'ai-moku or the ruler of the entire kingdom regarded as a suitable persons. Each person was an 'ai-kalana.

Classification 4. 'Ai-ahupua'a. This classification of the term 'ai-'aina is similar to that of number three.

Classification 5. 'Ai-'ili-'aina. This was the lowest of the group, for there were eight or more 'ili lands within an ahupua'a. Many were placed in charge, whichever the higher ups deemed suitable.

Under these were the kihapai (field), called noho hale (home lands) by some people. On waterless or kula lands, it was called kihapai and where

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water was plentiful, it was called lo'i (wet patches). Remember, a person
in charge of an ahupua'a, was called a konohiki.