

The Book of Omens Pertaining to Houses

Taken from D. K. Waialeale's "Book of Omens Pertaining to Houses" - A. D. 1834.

The kinds of houses are divided thus: (1) the halau (long) type of houses, with a row of posts and paved with stone; (2) the all thatched houses; (3) those thatched only at the back with a row of posts in front.

*(a niho pohaku)* *(hale piopio)*

Each man builds his own house as he pleases. If it is a long house that is good, or perhaps a smaller house, or a house built with a wall of stone, with beams across the top, or else a wholly thatched house. The house that a man builds for himself, his wife, children and relatives is his refuge in life, and it has all things that give him comfort, night and day. It wards off the heat of the sun, the rain and the wind. Such is the way of a man who heeds the counsels of his parents and grandparents, to make a place to lay his head in time of health and in time of sickness, and a place to enjoy the comforts of life.

*(hale halau)* *(pūnaha)*

The man that makes a hut by laying sticks against the branches and shrubbery with the front left open, like a stone wall in appearance, and uses it every night as his sleeping place is called a low person who sleeps on the pebbles, a very low commoner who goes aimlessly about. For he is the kind of person who does not heed the counsel of his parents and grandparents. Those who heed and observe the advice of parents and grandparents are prosperous persons who enjoy the comforts of life.

*(kawa)* *(lopa kaka haele)* *(ule-hu)* *(hooko)* *(kūnōnō)*

The House Site

When a man begins to build a house, he first prepares the house site until it is good. He clears away the trash, fills in the ground and digs holes all around the house site.

Those who are well educated about house sites on which [it is necessary] to

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set up the long end poles <sup>(pou hana)</sup> for the ridge pole <sup>(kaurakau)</sup> and the gable posts, first did some things which are believed to ward off all unforeseen misfortunes and accidents, for there may be a time when these things would occur. This is called the hoomanalo (to remove the bitterness). The Hawaiian people are accustomed to the things that remove the bitterness in house building with all the rules to make it successful.

There are many things to remove the bitterness that are known and generally used for this part of the work in house building, that is, pork, awa, red fish, makaloa sand crab and other things.

There are many kinds of house sites, one is called the ohiki (sand crab); the poho-holua (sledding-hollow) is another; the poho-uhu (uhu fish's hollow) is another; the mahiki (to peel off) is another; the makaha (hospitable) is another; the malu ohai (Ohai tree shade) is another; the naho (holes where fishes hide in) is another and so on. All of these will be explained later. These are some of the explanations about these sites.

The site called ohiki (sand crab), is one with holes all around the yard. The holes are very much like those seen on sandy beaches, made by sand crabs. The remedy for a site like this is to level up the earth and fill the holes until the surface is even.

The poho holua (sledding hollow) or in other words the holua (sledding) is a site on an elevation of a hill. It should be levelled until the front, where the house is to stand is even. That is the remedy for a site on a hill or a hillock. This is a site that is said to expell its owner if the house is not properly built. Another name for this site is pahee (smooth). As upon the smoothness and slipperiness of the descent of the holua slide, so will the owner of the house slip out of it. If a house is to be built there it should be built on the length of the hill and if it faces the descent of the hill, then the door and the steps should face the length of it.

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The site called poho-uhu (uhu fish's hollow) by the ancients is the one in which the house faces the ascent of a mound or hill. Some people declare it to be an unlucky site and according to others it is a good site. This house site has both luck and misfortune in it.

The Mahiki (Peel off) site, also called Une (pry) is a house with another, a long one attached to it in the rear. It is that house in the rear that pries and peels off. This is a house that sends away and expels those who live in it, and the bodies of the dwellers pay the penalty.

The makaha site is the one in which the house faces the highway traversed by the people. It is a house that does not hold on to its gains, a house that calls friends in, but it is also a house that always receives and is ever lucky.

The malu-ohai (Ohai-tree shade) is a site that is said by the ancients to be a prosperous one. This house is surrounded on all sides by a lanai and the lanai enclosed with lattice. This is a house that is ever lucky and prosperous but it is a house that is not always occupied by the owner.

in Another Side

Omens in Erecting the Gable Posts, Corner Posts and Beams

1. If in putting the long end post into the hole, it should be taken up again, as also the corner posts which occupy the same side with it, it is a sign that soon after the completion of the house the owner will die suddenly.
2. In putting the ridge pole onto the long end posts and the central post where the wooden scaffolding is placed for a man to stand on, then one end of the beam should be laid first on the first long end post that is erected, then the cord is wound around them to hold it in place. Then lift the second end of the ridge pole onto the second long end post. If it barely rests on the end post, the end post should be pushed inward toward the house, and when it rests properly the tying with the cord begins. If the knotting of the cord is on the inside or on the side, perhaps, then the owner of the house will suffer a long

(pou hana)

(pou kiti)

(karpaku)

(kiau ka loa)

(karpaku)

(pou hana)

(kiau iwana)

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