

Hawaiian Traditional Culture Today  
by Yuka Morita

My research theme was What Aspects of Hawaiian Traditional Culture Still Remain? In my interviews, I heard about people's favorite Hawaiian words and some famous Hawaiian songs.

The most popular Hawaiian word is 'Aloha'! It has the meaning of not only 'Hello' but also 'Love' and 'Good'. So, many Hawaiian people often use this word and along with the 'shaka' gesture with their hands. People love Hawaii regardless of their ethnicity, and I think this word is a symbol of their Hawaiian spirit. Furthermore, I was very interested in other two words: 'mauka' and 'makai.' These words indicate directions, towards the mountains and towards the sea. I was amazed that Hawaiian people understand how to go places using these words. They do not need our standard directions, north, south, and so on.

Two famous Hawaiian songs are "My Little Grass Shack" and "The Queen's Prayer." I learned the first song in my class and practiced it on my ukulele. But my performance was very poor. So, my host mother was angry and told me to practice harder. The second one is very popular and often used for wedding parties in Hawaii. It is a slow song, so it is often used for hula dancing, too.

I also went to the Bishop Museum to learn about Hawaiian history. I was very surprised to see, hear, and touch many things I had never known before. And I learned about Hawaii's original culture. Especially, I understood that the immigrants from other countries affected present day Hawaiian culture.

Through this research, I strongly felt that Hawaiian culture is deeply related to great nature and new foreign cultures. Now various people live in and love Hawaii regardless of their ethnicity. Hawaiian culture still remains in people's lives and people have taken over their traditions. So, I think Hawaii is loved by people all over the world.