KEAIWA HEIAU

Keaïwa Heiau is a medicinal or healing heiau known as a heiau ho'olua. At this site, the kahuna (priest, expert) specializing in healing would diagnose and treat various illnesses and injuries. The kahuna would also train haumana (students) in the practice of la'au lapa'a, medicinal healing using plants, fasting, and prayers. Many of the plants and herbs were collected from the neighboring forest while others were planted around the heiau.

The name Keaïwa has been translated as mysterious or incomprehensible. Perhaps, this name refers to the fact that one could not explain the powers of the kahuna and the herbs used in healing.

It is unknown when this heiau was built but one source suggests that it was constructed in the 16th Century by Kakuihiwena, an ali'i (chief) of O'ahu, and his kahuna Keaïwa. The 4-foot high stacked rock wall encloses the sacred area that measures 100 by 160 feet. Within the enclosure was a hōlau (large thatched structure) built for the master kahuna to store the medicinal implements and train the students. Other features might include hale (small thatched structure) and a puholoholo (steam bath).

CAMPING & PICNICKING

There are 4 campsites available for tent camping from Friday through Wednesday. Camping is by permit only. Camping permits may be obtained from the State Parks office in Honolulu (587-0300) or online at www.hawaiistateparks.org. There is a fee per campsite per night. Please check the State Parks website for rates and availability.

Several picnic areas with tables are found along the paved roadway in the park. Some include pavilions with barbeque grills and restrooms nearby.

HIKING

The 'Aiea Loop Trail is a 4.8-mile trail that begins and ends in the park. This trail runs along the ridge on the west side of Hālawa Valley and offers views from Pearl Harbor (Pu‘uloa) and the Wai‘anae Range to Honolulu and Diamond Head (Lē‘ahi). Another trail, the Ka Po‘e Kahiko, begins at the entrance to the park located approximately 12 miles from Waikīkī. Follow H-1 to Moanalua Highway (Hwy. 78). Take the 'Aiea cutoff to the third traffic light, make a right turn at 'Aiea Heights Drive and follow it about 3 miles up to the end of the road. Keaïwa Heiau is located at the park entry.

This hike is not strenuous but involves some gradual uphill climbs with a steep switchback and sections of exposed tree roots. You might also see remnants of a B-24 bomber that crashed in 1944.

The groves of Norfolk pines and eucalyptus trees create a forest recreation environment on the hills above the town of 'Aiea and Pearl Harbor. A resident caretaker near the front gate should be contacted in the event of emergencies.

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