

Ōlelo Hawai'i Lesson 41 (January 2021) by Kēhau Chrisman

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E komo mai, e ka makahiki 2021! Hau'oli makahiki hou! Welcome, 2021...Happy New Year! We all have great hopes that 2021 will be much better than 2020!

The word *Hau'oli* means “happy”, which is always a good word to remember. Happy Birthday, *Hau'oli Lā Hānau*. Happy Thanksgiving, *Hau'oli Lā Ho'omaika'i*. Notice that it has an *'okina* in front of it. *'Oli'oli* means joyful. The word *oli* without the *'okina* is the word for “a chant that was not danced to”. Thus, the importance of a little backwards-curving apostrophe!

The word *Hou* has many meanings. It can mean “new or recent”, as in “New Year”. It can mean “again”, as in “*Hana Hou*” (our Hawaiian version of the shout “encore!” that we often say at the end of a music concert, pleading for just one more song!). It can also mean “sweat or perspiration”. It all depends on the context in which the word it occurs.

And finally....let's look at the word *Makahiki* which we take to mean “year or age”. When we ask “how old are you?”, it translates to *'Ehia ou makahiki?* There is another meaning. In the Ancient Hawai'i culture, *Makahiki* was the name of a festival season dedicated to the god called *Lono-i-ka-Makahiki*. He brought prosperity to the land, and is associated with fertility, agriculture, rainfall, music, and peace. This festival started when the Pleiades (sometimes called Seven Sisters) rises over the horizon in Hawai'i at sunset. (The Pleiades is a star cluster of 800 stars associated with the constellation Taurus. It looks like a smaller version of the Big Dipper.) Its appearance on the horizon usually happens in late October or early November. The *Makahiki* season then lasted another four months. During this time, the Hawaiian people rested and took part in sports, dancing, feasting, and religious festivities. All warring stopped because it was *kapu* (forbidden), and it was a time for chiefs to collect offerings from the commoners (*maka'āinana*). During the Hawaiian Renaissance in the 1970s-80s, there was a revival of this festive custom, and one can often see *Makahiki* celebrations today. So let's dance and be merry—*Makahiki* season is upon us!