



BISHOP MUSEUM

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Bishop Museum Press Reprints *Lā‘au Hawai‘i: Traditional Hawaiian Uses of Plants*
The foundational work is reprinted in honor of Dr. Isabella Aiona Abbott’s 100th birthday

Honolulu, Hawai‘i – Bishop Museum Press has reprinted the classic work, “Lā‘au Hawai‘i: Traditional Hawaiian Uses of Plants,” in celebration of the 100th birthday of the author, Dr. Isabella Aiona Abbott (1919–2010). Abbott was a preeminent Hawaiian ethnobotanist, whose lifelong work on the subject is recorded in this important book. Orders for “Lā‘au Hawai‘i” are being taken online now at www.bishopmuseumpress.org and are available now at Bishop Museum’s Shop Pacifica for \$34.95. The reprint was made possible by a generous gift from the Dolores Furtado Martin Foundation.

After reprinting “Canoes of Oceania” in 2017 and “‘Ōlelo No‘eau” in 2018, the reprinting of “Lā‘au Hawai‘i: Traditional Hawaiian Uses of Plants” marks another stride in the revitalization of Bishop Museum Press and the larger strategic initiative by the museum to improve access to museum collections and make cultural knowledge contained in out-of-print works readily available.

As a multifaceted reference work, “Lā‘au Hawai‘i” is an invaluable tool for anyone interested in Hawaiian plants and culture. The book covers a wide variety of subjects such as food, clothing, cordage, shelter, canoes, tools, housewares, medicines, religious objects, weaponry, personal adornment, and recreation. Specific chapters are dedicated to important aspects of Hawaiian culture and practice such as the staple crops kalo (taro) and ‘uala (sweet potato), and the use of native plants in hula and music. The chapter titled “Food Plants from Aquatic Sources” focuses on limu (seaweeds and other aquatic plants), Abbott’s specific area of expertise.

“Dr. Abbott’s ‘Lā‘au Hawai‘i’ provides foundational insight into the wisdom of the Hawaiian people,” said Leah Caldeira, director of Bishop Museum Library & Archives and interim director of Bishop Museum Press. “Bishop Museum is deeply grateful to the Dolores Furtado Martin Foundation for making this 2019 reprint of ‘Lā‘au Hawai‘i’ possible. Mrs. Martin’s foundation supports efforts to further Hawaiian culture through publications, scholarship, and film. Bishop Museum extends a special mahalo

to her children, Mrs. Mahealani Riley and Mr. Watters O. Martin Jr., for their support. Above all, mahalo nui to Dr. Abbott, whose kindness, dedication and legacy of knowledge continue to inspire.”

Isabella Aiona Abbott, born June 20, 1919, was an honorary research associate at Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum and a member of its Board of Directors. When “Lā‘au Hawai‘i” was published in 1992, Abbott was the G. P. Wilder professor of botany at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, where she taught the undergraduate course in Hawaiian ethnobotany. She was a specialist in limu and published several books and many articles on other botanical and ethnobotanical subjects. Abbott was awarded the Gilbert Morgan Smith Medal in 1997 by the National Academy of Sciences and was also professor emerita of biological sciences at Stanford University.

As a scholar, Abbott drew from the early Hawaiian plant studies of W. T. Brigham, Bishop Museum’s first director, and J.F.G. Stokes, its first curator, as well as from the writings of the nineteenth-century Native Hawaiian scholar Samuel Kamakau. For additional cultural aspects, which are the emphasis of “Lā‘au Hawai‘i,” she also drew from three modern works: E. S. Craighill Handy’s two studies of the Hawaiian planter and Sir Peter H. Buck’s “marvelous volume on arts and crafts of Hawai‘i,” and also looked to instruction from her mother and other kūpuna (elders), among them Mary Kawena Pukui, a family friend, whose knowledge was passed down from generation to generation. With these oral traditions preserved in writing, “Lā‘au Hawai‘i” is one of Dr. Abbott’s finest contributions to Hawaiian culture.

Originally published in 1992, “Lā‘au Hawai‘i” was the first book of its kind, a useful sourcebook of Hawaiian ethnobotany. In her introduction, Dr. Abbott wrote, “this book is, as far as I am aware, the first attempt to draw the varied material on [the traditional cultural uses of plants in Hawai‘i] into a unified account and to make it readily accessible to non-specialists.”

To purchase a copy of “Lā‘au Hawai‘i: Traditional Hawaiian Uses of Plants,” please visit www.bishopmuseumpress.org or Shop Pacifica.

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About Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum:

Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum’s mission is to inspire our community and visitors through the exploration, celebration and perpetuation of the extraordinary history, culture, and environment of Hawai‘i and the Pacific. The museum was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in memory of his wife Bernice Pauahi Bishop, a royal descendant of King Kamehameha I. Today, the museum thrives as an educational center for the community and is widely regarded as the world’s premier institution for Hawaiian and Pacific content. Its vast collections of more than 25 million objects and specimens represent nine disciplines and include more than 22 million biological specimens, over two million cultural objects, 115,000 historical publications, and one million photographs, films, works of art, audio recordings, and manuscripts. These collections tell the stories of the cultures and biodiversity of Hawai‘i and the Pacific as well as the proud legacy of scholarly research spanning 130 years. Bishop Museum proudly serves more than 200,000 visitors each year, including 20,000 children on school visits. To learn more about the museum’s research, collections, exhibits, and programs, visit www.bishopmuseum.org, follow @BishopMuseum on Twitter and Instagram, become a fan of Bishop Museum on Facebook, visit Bishop Museum’s YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/BishopMuseum, or call (808) 847-3511. Bishop Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.