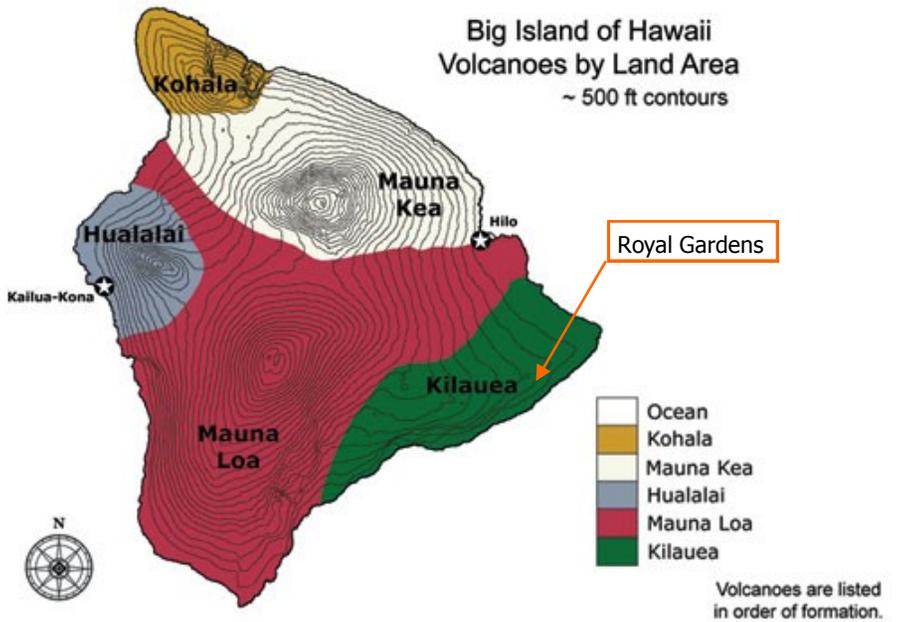


**2 March ~ Sunday, Helicopter, Volcanoes, Catamaran.**

We pile into a mini-bus for a short drive to the helicopter pad and are instructed to wear a personal flotation device, how reassuring, and to fasten our seat belts. Each given a number, we are told to walk in single file and wait to be inserted into the 'copter. "And stay away from the rear rotor!"

It seats six plus our pilot Steve, who has an interesting history. When Gen. Noriega was ousted from Panama in 1989, more than 100 US citizens residing at the Marriott Hotel were evacuated. Steve flew one of the helicopters.

344. Snow on Mauna Kea.



346. Steve.

I am seated next to the window. Very nice for taking pictures! Steve handles the helicopter smoothly; no wheelies.

Below us is one of several military "lives fire" ranges. The road has been re-routed so that live ammunition does not fly over vehicles. How considerate!



347. Diverted road, firing range to right.

We fly south east past snow capped Mauna Kea, a shield volcano, towards Kalapana, which is mostly abandoned, and over the sad Royal Gardens subdivision. Only two homes remain intact. There is no lava running into the sea, but below us is an amazing sight. Bright red lava is gushing at 2,200°F into a subduction. That is, it is disappearing back under ground. Later, March 9<sup>th</sup>, we learn that lava is again flowing through this subdivision.



Pu'u'Ō'ō Crater on Mount Kilauea, source of the present lava flow.



350. One of the last remaining homes in the Royal Gardens Subdivision.



355. A Subduction.



Royal Gardens Subdivision.

Now north to Hilo where we leave the helicopter briefly to re-fuel. Strange procedure. We sit on an oversized golf cart 75ft from the plane, then re-board. The flight along the coast is spectacular.



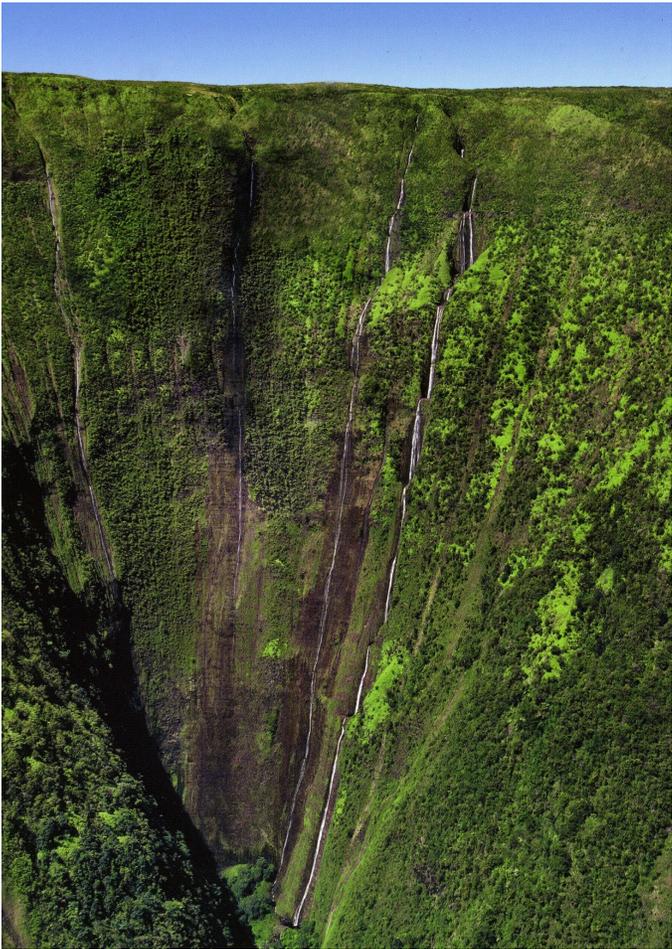
360. Refueling.



Waimanu Valley.

“Look, there’s a whale and her calf spouting.”

We hover at sea looking into an inhabited valley, the Waipi`o. “We can’t enter, for the residents, our rotor would be like a drum.” The next valley, Waimanu is not inhabited. Steve enters. We are far below the valley walls. The flat base is lush and green; again the red rocks contrast with the vegetation. At the foot of this waterfall is Key Hole cave where Kamehameha I reputedly married one of his several wives. We rise quickly over the rim. Keep your distance, Steve.



362.



364. Key Hole cave.



370. Bye Steve.



368. Parker Ranch.

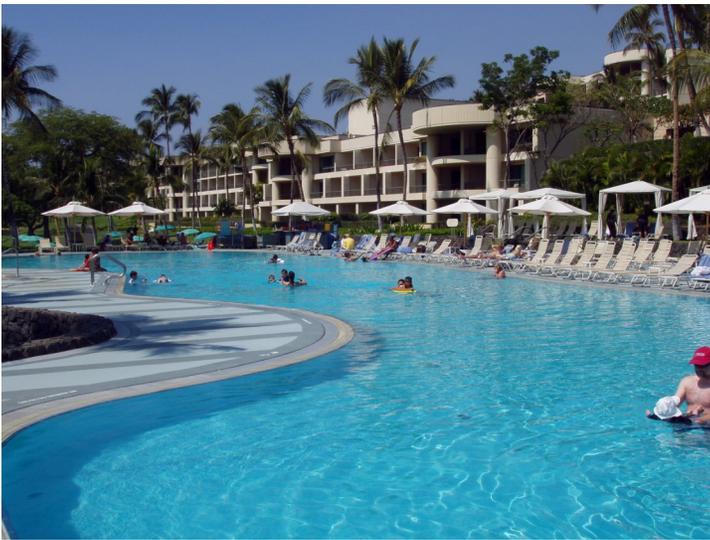
We sit in shade. Behind our lounge chairs is the infinity pool. The longest I have seen. In front, Papuan Beach, rated one of the best in America by Conde Naste Traveler. We share a sandwich at the beach bar.



371.



374. Papuan Beach.



380. Infinity.



378. Cheers.

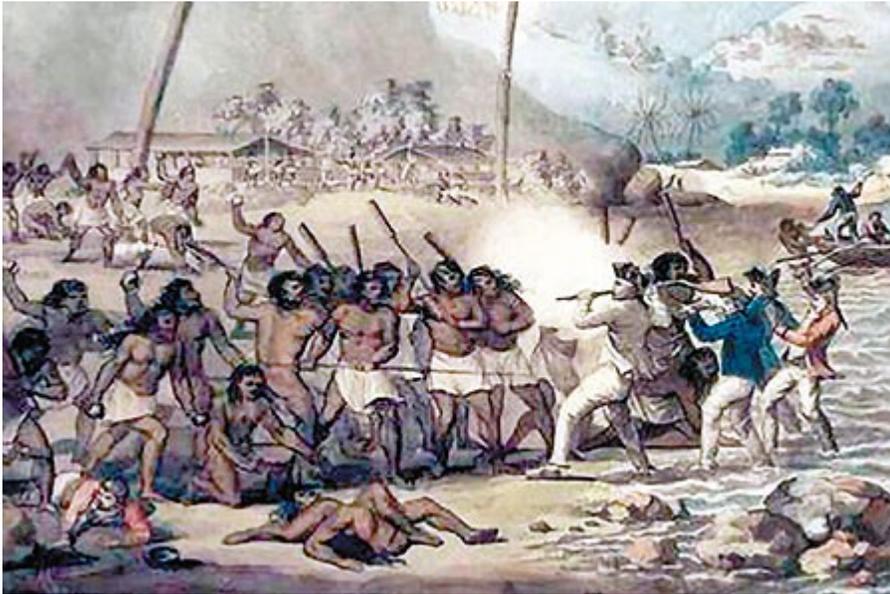


375.



372. Curious friend.

Mid-afternoon we drive about 30 miles south to Honokōhau Bay Marina for a sunset catamaran cruise. The road follows the seashore and crosses several recent lava flows, which have not yet grown vegetation. Visitors have used white stones to create graffiti, 'writing' names and dates, which stand out in sharp contrast against the black lava.



### Graffiti.

Just south of here is the town of Captain Cook. Many historians believe Hawaiians greeted Cook as Lono, a god of harvest and peace. Cook sailed away, but sprung a mast and returned. This was stressful to the Hawaiians who had given up much of their harvest to his crew, and led to an altercation in which Cook was killed at Kealahou Bay on 14 February 1779.

Several paintings depict Cook's death. Most seem to be based on an original by John Cleverly painted in 1784. Some present him as a violent man, others as a peace maker.

We have the 50ft catamaran to ourselves and cast off at 4:30pm. Up go the sails; the engine stops. The mountains of Mauna Loa are clouded in smog, but here at sea, the air is fresh and clear. Whales come south to Hawaii to breed in the shallow waters. Several break the surface and blow, but to capture a good photograph would require a high-speed camera and telephoto lens. Still, they are fun creatures to watch.



382. Honokōhau Bay Marina.

It is an open bar. The crew serves drinks snacks, fruit, vegetables and sandwiches. Meat and greens rolled up in soft pita bread. Now it is sunset.....



392. Whale watchers. Ugh! Who is looking for whales. Me? I am watching my drink.....



390. That's a whale....



400. Two whales and a sunset.