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Right now you are no smarter than an ancient Hawaiian. You know why? Because back then they had their own government and survived without any fancy technology. Kapu was sacred and the Hawaiians believed in it, but it caused problems. Kapu was powerful and ruled the people, but what created and controlled kapu was the chief.

Kapu were sacred rules that the Hawaiians believed in as a religion. It was a word they lived by. The penalty of breaking these rules was commonly death. One of the rules, and the most famous one, was the kapuhili restriction. The two things that make it up is kapu ku mamao and kapu noho. Kapu ku mamao means prohibited from place of the chief, while kapu noho means to assemble before the chief. Another kapu is aloha aina, a restriction of fishing in certain areas and certain times. There was also, ai'kapu, a rule that men and women could not eat together. There is a story to it in which I am going to tell you right now. So the reason for ai'kapu was that Wakea (father of the earth) wanted to have time with his daughter Ho'ohokulani (the earth) alone. To do this his kupuna advised him to establish the ai'kapu, which allowed him time away from his wife (eating time) to be alone with his daughter. Another thing that I'd like to tell you is that the meaning of kapu has changed over the years. Presently kapu means keep out or stay out. Also in New Zealand a similar word to kapu (tapu) means sacred. Overall, Hawaiians had very strict laws banning people from many things.

Chiefs were very important in ancient Hawaii. They were so important because previously as I have said people couldn't look or touch them cause he wanted to maintain power and so the people thought of them as a god or have spiritual power. It's like if you were raised and you couldn't even touch or look at your dad you would think he was special. The chiefs were in charge of enforcing kapu and creating them. In summary chiefs were like a god to the people also I just wanted to say that the chief was super important to the ancient Hawaiians.

Kapu was powerful. But it ended in 1819. One of the reasons why kapu ended was because Liholiho wanted better conditions for women. Liholiho was Kamehameha's son and when Kamehameha died Liholiho became king and was in control of everything, including kapu. Another reason why Liholiho ended kapu was because he was educated in the west so he didn't believe in the kapu system. He didn't make it a rule that kapu is illegal, he just gave forbidden food that women were not allowed to eat (according to the kapu system) to the women's table at a party. Liholiho also destroyed all related things to kapu. And since many people didn't believe in kapu he fired all the priests. Therefore kapu ended because some Hawaiians didn't believe in kapu anymore.

In conclusion kapu were rules that guided the Hawaiians in their way of life. So what kapu did was good and bad. For instance, it did good because it protected the people, like laws do. But it was bad because it had unfair laws against women like they couldn't eat some foods. Very few people believe in kapu today, do you?

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The Chief

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