

**MAUNAKEA**, “the thread of ancestral memory reminds us that the mountain, like our parents, is the well spring and provider of physical and spiritual nourishment.”

To the native Hawaiian, Maunakea is a kupuna or ancestor. The following is a short version of a birth chant of Maunakea which provides insight of its relationship to man and the greater environment.

‘O hānau ka mauna a Wākea	The mountain of Wākea is born
‘Opu‘u a‘e ka mauna a Kea	The mountain Kea is budding upward
Hānau ka mauna, he keiki mauna na Kea	The mountain is born, a mountain child for Kea
Kuamū ‘iā e Kāne, Kuawa ‘iā e Lono	Rained upon by Kāne, grooved by Lono
Moe Wākea moe ia Papa	Wākea sleeps with Papa
Hānau ka mauna he keiki kapu na Kea	The mountain is born, a sacred child of Kea
‘Ae ka mauna, hānau ka mauna	The mountain, the mountain is born

The chant provides a dichotomy of understanding for the erudite as well as the practical. The erudite or kahuna knew that Wākea is the atmospheric spaces above the earth and Papa is the earth. Therefore, this chant reveals that Mauna a Wākea is “budding upward” into the space of Wākea. The mountaintop extends outside of the earth’s atmosphere and into Wākea thereby becoming the “sacred child of Kea” or Wākea. The following chant explains the spaces above and the spaces below.

‘O Wākeakahikoluamea	Wākeakahikoluamea
‘O Papa, Papahānaumoku ka wahine	Papa who births entities, is the female
Hānau Kahikikū, Kahikimoe	Born is the upper horizon, the lower horizon
Hānau Keapapanu‘u	Born is the lower atmosphere
Hānau Keapapalani	Born is the upper atmosphere

Offerings to Mauakea are for: buried ancestral bones, continued water supply, its sacred status, and its stalwart protection.

The mountain is afforded dignity and a sense of family by being named in honor of Wākea or Sky Father as well as being born from Papahānaumoku or Earth Mother. When considered as a namesake for Wākea, the mountain takes on that spatial persona and, philosophically, acquires its deep genealogical roots.

The genealogy goes back to the “Wākea of Time” or the beginning. Therefore, the nomenclatures Ka Mauna a Kea, Mauna a Wākea and Maunakea allow the sacred and common names to assimilate with one another.

Lononuiakea was the original name for the island of Hawai‘i before it was changed. Lononuiakea is the sacred name of Lono, who is the god of weather, clouds, and rain. In other words, the earth’s atmosphere. Maunakea is the buffer for clouds to drop rainwater allowing descending and ascending water cycles to begin again.

The ‘āpana called Hamakua moves from the ocean on the east of Hawai‘i and includes the top of Maunakea and continues to Maunaloa. Ka‘ohe is the ahupua‘a within this ‘āpana which follows the same route. The word Ka‘ohe simply means “bamboo.” Bamboo was the vegetable manifestation of Kāne and was used to carry water. Sometimes rainwater was found trapped in the upright green bamboo and were considered sacred and used for medicine or offerings. The nomenclature Ka‘ohe was given to this ahupua‘a as a parallel to the bamboo because they knew it contained numerous basins of water.

Ka‘ohe water basin is being bombed at Pōhakuloa.

Digging into Maunakea from the top will cause unnatural erosion.

Maunakea is sacred because it exists in the space above earth’s atmosphere. It is a “hale kanaka‘ole,” a space where no man should dwell. It is an ancestor because we are the descendants of Wākea and Papa. Maunakea provides and stores water; it is a buffer for hurricanes. Maunakea is the backbone for Hawai‘i.