

Hawaiian Indigenous Faith and Practice

Kanenuiakea

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Kumu Glen Kila and Uncle Keoki

I. Introduction

Kanenuiakea is an ethnic, indigenous (or so-called “aboriginal”) religion of *Hawai‘i Nei*. It is a living faith and practice of perhaps two thousand years. One does not become a member of Kanenuiakea but is born into the ‘*ohana* (family, Hawaiian community) or is *hānai*-ed (adopted). One does not join but can opt out of one’s culture, language, practices and values. Because there has been a long period of persecution and contempt, those who kept the faith and practice continued its worship in secret (as *huna*). Many Hawaiians still practice the deep values of Kanenuiakea and feel the sacred in traditional places. This is a time of spiritual awakening.

Hawaiian religion is about *aloha*, a word so sacred and profound that it was one of the least used words in ancient times. That is not true in Tourist Hawai‘i, where everyone is taught to shout “Ah-low-HA.” (Queen Lili‘uokalani regretted composing the song, Aloha ‘Oe, because it became so popular that it encouraged people to misuse its sacred words.) However, the very heart of Hawaiian indigenous spirituality is about aloha: *aloha ‘āina* (love of the land, environment), *aloha ‘ohana* (of family, people), *aloha keiki* (of children, future genera-

tions), and a hundred more. It is about caring, *malāma* (caring for others including plants and all living and non-living beings) and about *ka‘ananiau*, a way of “managing” the community’s natural resources.

These principles can be called the “religion of the canoe”—derived from the long open-ocean voyages that required the maximum of cooperation, sharing, effort, peacefulness, conflict resolution, and expertise—an acquired appreciation and understanding of nature, and “native science and open-ocean navigation.” Kāne worship preceded the Polynesian voyages to Hawai‘i but its unique faith of love and peace was a result of the transformative experience of voyaging. For more on Kanenuiakea values see Chapter III.

Kanenuiakea as a Recognized Indigenous Religion

American religious institutions must meet certain requirements defined by U.S. courts and the IRS to qualify as a “religion.” For example, a genuine U.S.-recognized “religion” must be belief-centered with a creed and must worship in a man-made building (church, synagogue, temple) according to court and IRS determinations. Western concepts of “religion” derived from Western languages and implicitly privileged Judeo-Christian theism and practices. That allowed U.S. courts and agencies to ignore the First Amendment and due process as rights for indigenous worshipers and their religious institutions. When indigenous faith and practice is classified as only being cultural beliefs and practices, the guaran-

tees of Religious Freedom under the U.S. Constitution (as well as state constitutions and U.S. interpretation of International Conventions) can be ignored with seeming impunity.

Few protections have been given to Native American indigenous worship in their natural sacred sites. Native Americans have lost many “sacred site protection” cases all the way up to the Supreme Court. However, technically as wards of the conquering U.S. nation, they have a totally different status than the original people of Hawai‘i. Since the Hawaiian Kingdom was never conquered (its lands and sacred sites won by war), its lands are thus occupied, and the U.S. and its entities have no absolute – or even a simple – title to Hawaiian lands. Sacred sites – though seemingly abandoned because of persecution and fear and worship *huna* – are still collectively owned by its worshipers. International law and the U.S. Army Field Manual 27-10 clearly recognizes the legal rights of an occupied people to their sacred sites and access to them.

Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and major Asian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Taoism) have man-made churches, synagogues, temples and shrines. But there are sacred mountains like Fujiyama and rivers like the Ganges that could not be desecrated by an occupying army without violating international law and conventions to which the United State is signatory. Mauna Kea (*Mauna a Wākea*) is such a sacred site in

Hawai‘i. Its desecration is a violation of the First and Fourth Amendments as well as U.S. Army Field Manual.

In 2012 the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu [FUCH] partnered with Kanenuiakea and held joint worship services and conducted a series on Hawaiian Values for its members. More importantly, it repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery and the doctrine of Manifest Destiny which justified Euro-American colonialism and theft of First Peoples’ lands. Many other churches and denominations have done the same. Through their social justice committee FUCH wrote Governor Ige to stop, listen and learn of Hawaiian concerns and rights on Mauna Kea. See letter “Kanenuiakea Support Letter” on our website (kanenuiakea.org/support). Another letter of support was written from the International Association for Religious Freedom. Also see “15-05 Letter in support of Kanenuiakea.”

Kanenuiakea is recognized as a living indigenous religion by the International Association for Religious Freedom, headquartered in Osaka, Japan. It is now a member of the world’s oldest interfaith organization, IARF, which is an United Nations NGO.

Some Issues in Understanding Hawaiian Indigenous Faith

1. First, the concept of *Religion*. Until the last several decades, the term *religion* was about privileged belief-centered religions using European languages (Latin, German, French, English, et.al.) that implied a

Judeo-Christian theistic model. *Religio* is the Latin root that means “to bind” one to God, to church, to beliefs. There are also other types of religion; for example, practice-centered religions and ethnic religions like Judaism into which one is born. Kanenuiakea is ethnic and practice-centered like Shinto. However, indigenous religions do not have absolute beliefs, scriptures or creeds.

2. *Legal Protection.* United States legal principles concerning religion ignored indigenous religions (Native American, Alaskan, Hawaiian and African) and have given them little or no protections under the Bill of Rights and from various court rulings up to and including the United States Supreme Court.

[Current trends in international law and United Nations conventions – some of which the United States has not yet signed – have recognized *Indigenous Religion* and championed neglected religious and human rights.]

3. *Not a Dead Religion.* The first fact to recognize is that Hawaiian faith and practice survived and was not extinguished in 1819 when the state religion of Ku was disestablished. Kanenuiakea, its *kahuna*, its *kumu*, its worshipers, all hid from public view because of direct persecution and fear. It was defamed as pagan, heathen and idolatrous. Its language of prayer (Hawaiian) was outlawed as were its practices and its practitioners who were called sorcerers.

4. *No longer Hidden.* On February 29, 2012, for the first time in more than a century Kanenuiakea wor-

ship was witnessed by outsiders (non-‘ohana members) at the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu. Possibly for the first time in its history Kāne was worshipped indoors with another faith.

5. *Indigenous*. Kanenuiakea is the indigenous, earth or Gaia religion that has been practiced for centuries before the arrival of the Tahitian navigator-priest Pa‘ao in the twelfth century CE. Kanenuiakea has been in continuous practice as a religion since the first Polynesians came to the Hawaiian islands, probably from the Marquesas.

6. *Religious Types*. All of the religious types of experience are available in Kanenuiakea’s spiritual practices (devotional grace and gratitude, actional rituals and physical embodiment of the sacred, intellectual-cognitive conceptualization of principles and values, and mystical union with the interconnectedness of life and the cosmos).

7. *Imminent*. All indigenous religion is practical, as it nurtures survival with the best observational knowledge of its culture, and is imminent more than transcendent, focusing of the manifestations in and through the natural universe that are so beautiful, powerful, good, pure, et.al, through which one experiences something more, something sacred. Theologian Paul Tillich called this *panentheism* (all or everything is within the Divine). That is the opposite of *pantheism* (everything is God).

8. *Symbolic Logic*. The primary symbol of the Ka-

nenuiakea faith is the “sun” (Kāne) as a metaphor of the divine father and the “earth” (Papa) as divine or first mother. From Kāne comes life-giving rain and Papa gives birth to her children. But the metaphors of Kāne and Mauna Kea are not Absolutes. Mauna Kea may also be experienced as *Mauna a Wākea*, the Sacred Mountain of the First Parent.

In Hawaiian spirituality humanity’s place in the universe is understood in the complexity of the sacred or divine. There is something beyond, something yet unknown and unknowable which, if referred to at all, as I’O — a religious term in Kanenuiakea so sacred that it should be used as little as possible. Mystics in almost every religion – even theistic ones like Christianity, as well as atheistic ones like Zen and Theravada Buddhism – all fall into a silence that knows something of this Sacred Void, Emptiness, Nothingness, Ultimate Reality, this “God beyond God.”

9. *Universal Values.* Kanenuiakea is universal, affirming the values and truths found not only in other historic Hawaiian faiths (Ku, Kanaloa, Lono) but other faiths as well. Its kumu will share with others who wish to find their spiritual roots and develop spiritual practices. There are many paths and levels of understanding as persons of good will practice traditional spiritual values of Aloha, ‘Ohana, Aloha ‘Āina, Mālama, Pono, Kuleana, Kōkua, Mo‘olelo, Lōkahi, Mahalo, and so many more. (See Chapter III)

10. *Language Issues*. What is *Akua*? Take care not to use English in explaining key Hawaiian concepts. Beware of how capitalization privileges one “God” as true and others as idols. The Christian theologian Paul Tillich wrote about the “protestant principal” that recognizes any human conception of “God” is a form of idolatry – it is merely human knowledge. Another Christian theologian, Ludwig Feuerbach, said that all human notions of “God” are one’s own highest projection on the screen of the universe. If great Christian theologians warn against having beliefs without direct experience of divine presence in life, then everyone should be thankful for those who find *Akua* pointing to the good, beautiful and true.

Thus, Kanenuiakea is experience-centered, encouraging people to find *Akua* (God) in nature and its multiple signs and symbols that point beyond humanity to something more, something sacred. These manifestations have *mana* and can be experienced directly.

Immanental religions (which most indigenous religious are) understand the manifestations of the natural order as revealing something more that is divine and sacred. Thus, there are many manifestations, revelations, elements of the universe/life/consciousness/sacred. Mauna Kea has special *mana* that is experienced as powerful, unique and sacred.

As a universal religion, Kanenuiakea affirms the truths in other religions and encourages *Kanaka Maoli*

(Indigenous Hawaiians) never to deny other faiths' truths and values. In fact, many religions share the same values of love, compassion, commitment to truth and justice, etc. – values of all non-warrior religions around the planet. Early Hawaiians immediately recognized their values (see Chapter III) in the non-warrior religion of the Sermon on the Mount (Christian Bible, Matt. 5). Accordingly, one can have multiple religious identities that share like values and spirit.



Kumu Glen Kila with prominent members of the International Association of Religious Freedom (IARF) after his presentation on the “aboriginal” or indigenous faith and practice of Kanenuiakea in Birmingham, England, 2014. Kanenuiakea is the indigenous Hawaiian spiritual tradition of the Wai’anae Wahipana and is the second indigenous faith given membership in IARF which is the world's oldest extant interfaith organization.

II. About Kanenuiakea

A Statement of Faith

Kanenuiakea is an earth or *Gaia* religion, believing that all life is sacred, and naturalistic in our celebrations of the immanence of the sacred in all of life, seeing God in nature. Almost every Hawaiian word, place name, sign or symbol points us to and reminds us of the sacred. *Ua kapu ke ola na Kāne*. All manifestations of great power (*mana*), love (*aloha*) and righteousness (*pono*) are honored and revered. These manifestations can be thought of as the elements of the divine in its manifoldness. We call these sacred elements *akua*, God, for everything is from Kāne and within Kāne.

In Kanenuiakea, I‘O is the divine mystery that is absolutely transcendent – formless, beyond human description, "God beyond God." This term is so sacred in our tradition that it is seldom used, yet it arises from the spiritual experience of our *kūpuna* from the depths of silence. Scholars would call this *mysticism*. (And then, it was used to name a palace – Iolani Palace! – when Hawaiian sacred terms were no longer understood.)

We acknowledge others' worship, faith, and practice. And because we are inclusive of all truths, we see

no reason for one to have only one faith or religion. We are universalists in our faith and practice. In fact, there were four supreme symbols of the divine in the religious traditions of ancient Hawai‘i – Kāne, Kanaloa, Ku, Lono, each with worshippers who saw one manifestation or its symbol as supreme. The characteristics and values that distinguish Kanenuiakea are the peace and love learned in ocean voyaging, calling all other religions to abjure being used for aggression, exploitation and war.

We are also an oral tradition, without a sacred book of divine origin authored by or quoted from a deity in a human language. Our prayers and chants are of human origin, memorized and passed down for centuries, coming with us on our long, open-ocean journeys. In fact, that may be where our religion evolved in our double-hulled canoes. Kanenuiakea further developed in the *aloha* of long voyages on the open ocean where the practicality of sharing, cooperating, respecting, conserving the resources, and “managing the rolling beauty of time” (*ka‘ananiau*) all came together in our faith and practice. These values helped us turn this rock canoe into a garden paradise, our *‘āina* (land). Our *‘āina* was self-sustaining before Western contact as we preserved and shared our natural resources.

Kanenuiakea is a religious tradition with two thousand years of continuous practice and transmission, still preserved in the Wai‘anae Wahipana. As most religions, the majority of our worshippers are devotional, worship-

ping a personal, divine parent as Kāne – symbolized in many natural manifestations. However, the religion is more complex using symbolic and metapoetic language. Hawaiian is its sacred language and formal prayers and chants have been passed down in a spiritual tradition that pre-dates the first arrivals to the Hawaiian islands. Offerings were strictly vegetarian, and animal or blood sacrifice was and is a desecration of any *unu* (temple) or *ahu* (altar). Only offerings of fruits, vegetables, flowers and *koa* (coral) grace our altars.

Kanenuiakea has a formal priesthood, passed down by special selection and training. It had to go underground [*huna*] because of direct persecution as the Kingdom of Hawai‘i transitioned from an independent, neutral, sovereign nation (recognized by more than 40 nations in the “family of nations” including the United States) to an occupied territory and then [disputed] state of the United States of America.

From the time of a US-assisted puppet government of the Republic, the religions of Hawai‘i (with worshippers with at least four indigenous world views – of Kāne, Kanaloa, Ku, Lono) were outlawed as sorcery and prohibited until 1971, well into the period of U.S. statehood (which many *Kanaka Maoli* or Hawaiian Nationals view as an occupation of the still existent Kingdom of Hawai‘i).

Code of Practice: Values for Living

Ua kapu ke ola na Kāne. All life is sacred to Kāne. Kanenuiakea never involved blood sacrifice, which came with Ku worship from Kahiki [Tahiti] in the 12th century. All life is sacred; we are a religion of peace and peace-makers. *Kapu aloha* – Our practice is *aloha*.

The following values summarize the principles of Kanenuiakea: *aloha*, *‘ohana*, *‘āina*, *mālama*, *pono*, *kuleana*, *kōkua*, *mo‘olelo*, *lōkahi*, *mahalo*, *ho‘ola*, and *ho‘okupu*. These values translate superficially as love, family/community, land, care/relationship, righteous/balance/harmony, responsibility/privilege, mutual assistance, stories/beliefs/traditions, peace/harmony, gratitude/blessing/prayer, healing/giving life, and respect/giving/growth. (See Chapter III)

Literature

As previously stated, persecution drove Hawaiian indigenous religion underground, including Kanenuiakea. The genuine tradition has been oral and *huna*, and it is still a living oral tradition passed from generation to generation. There are numerous *oli* (chants) to Kāne, according to *Kumu* (teacher) Glen Kila, of which he was given only a portion to use and preserve. Other *kahuna* (priests) have responsibility to preserve their portion of the tradition. We are now hoping to archive and share our deeper culture and religious practice with the world.

Some of the oral tradition has been written down by others, usually those who have not been initiated to practice and preserve the chants in the traditional way.

(Kanenuiakea is not to be confused with religious and commercial misappropriations of Hawaiian indigenous religion.)

That being said, values, principles and practices of Kanenuiakea can be seen in these books:

He Kumulipo [The Kumulipo translated by Queen Lili-uokalani, 1897].

Ka Wai a Kane [The Water of Kane, unwritten Literature of Hawaii, by Nathaniel B. Emerson, 1909]

Mo'olelo o na Po Makole [Tales of the Night Rainbow]. A family story of Kane people on Moloka'i.

Malcolm Nâea Chun, *No Nâ Mamo: Traditional and Contemporary Hawaiian Beliefs and Practices* (Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2011).

John Charlot, *Classical Hawaiian Education: Generations of Hawaiian Culture* (The Pacific Institute, 2005)

John Charlot, *A Kumulipo of Hawai'i* (Academia Verlag, 2014)

Links

[Koa Ike \(www.koaike.org\)](http://www.koaike.org)

[Marae Ha'a Koa \(www.maraehaakoa.org\)](http://www.maraehaakoa.org)

[The International Association of Religious Freedom.](#)

IARF membership: (<https://iarf.net/members/north-america-2/>)

[First Unitarian Church of Honolulu \(http://www.unitariansofhi.org\)](http://www.unitariansofhi.org). Partnership: (<http://www.unitariansofhi.org/photos-kanenuiakea>)

Sharing Our Faith With Others of Good Will



Prof. Kaleo Paik, Kumu Glen Kila, Director Chris Oliveira



Koa Ike, its cultural center (Marae Ha'a Koa), and its spiritual tradition (Kanenuiakea) have become part of interfaith networks like the Hawaii Conference on Religion and Peace.

III. Eleven Hawaiian Values

Few of the religious, spiritual, or “deep cultural” meanings of Hawaiian words made it into Mary Pukui and Samuel Elbert’s *Hawaiian Dictionary*, simply because *kūpuna* still believed that one learned with a specialist and not from a book. They had already seen that anything shared could easily be misused. (There is now a United Nations Convention against theft and misuse of “indigenous knowledge.”) Here are just a few values of Kanenuiakea faith and practice.

ALOHA

Aloha is among the most sacred and powerful of all Hawaiian words - it has the power to transform and heal lives. As mentioned earlier, Queen Lili‘uokalani regretted composing the song, Aloha ‘Oe, because it became so popular that it encouraged people to misuse its sacred words.

Aloha comes from the compound of *alo* meaning presence, front and face, and *hā*, meaning breath, life. Aloha recognizes the sharing of life-giving breath, well-being, love, support, and compassion with others. It is the joyful (*oha*) sharing (*alo*) of life (*hā*) in this present moment (*alo*). This one word symbolizes all Hawaiian values: our way of living and treating ourselves and each

other with love and respect, being in harmony and balance with all of life (in ocean, land and air/heavens), reverencing (*aloha*) and caring for (*mālama*) our elders (*kūpuna*), our tradition (*mo‘olelo*) and our land (*‘āina*) as our sacred responsibility (*kuleana*).

Our prayers and chants are filled with compounds proving that *aloha* is the heart of Hawaiian and Kanenuiakea values and practice. One special usage has joined *kapu* (law, command, principle, sacred, holy, sanctify) with *aloha*. *Kapu Aloha* is the principle of love that we live by.

‘OHANA

Family (*‘ohana*) and the continuity of life’s relationships places us in the flow of ancestors toward future generations yet unborn. We remember and care for our past generations (*iwi kūpuna*). We are taught and nurtured by our parents (*mākuā*) and relatives in large extended families that is our primary community. Extending our care beyond our primary family creates a sharing community of communal resources that we once owned in common (ocean, fish ponds, forests, fresh water), all gifts of Kāne (our word for a symbol we could see and experience of divine presence). As the primary family of mother, father, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, ancestors extended to non-blood relatives, our experience of family (*‘ohana*) continued the practices and values of deep ocean voyages as Kanenuiakea faith and practice. Invasions and the “progress” of a market economy have

not yet erased our love of family and our attempt to include all who will live with us in peace and harmony.

‘ĀINA

‘ĀINA is about “our land.” In its different contexts, ‘*āina* refers to the land where our family grows its food and to our nation, as we came to know our sovereignty as recognized in the “Family of Nations” beginning around 1840.

The term ‘*āina* is comprised of the two words ‘*ai*, which means “to feed”, and the suffix “*na*”. Used together, they mean “that which feeds” or “the land that feeds [us].” Metaphorically, the land is our mother, *Papa*. It nourishes us and should be cared for. *Mālama ‘āina* means to care for the land so it can give back all we need to sustain life for ourselves and our future generations. Nothing expresses our relationship to our land more than the phrase: *Aloha ‘āina* meaning our love, care and respect for our land.

MĀLAMA

Mālama involves a reciprocal relationship and correct behavior; the *ali‘i* demonstrated care for their people and the people demonstrated care for their *ali‘i* in return. True *ali‘i* had the skills of leadership and accepted their responsibility (*kuleana*) to govern justly. It was a dual *mālama* that made service to the *ali‘i* a personal effort that came with an investment of love, skill, and proper practice.

Mālama involves the spirit of affection, respect,

trust, care, stewardship with guidance, and the reciprocal relationship of *mālama* from the ali‘i to the people and the people to the ali‘i.

From the concept of *aloha*, we all share *hā*, the breath of life, and this understanding guides *mālama*, our extended community of caring. Like other indigenous cultures, our concept of *mālama* has been difficult to practice in a profit-oriented world in which our land was taken and our burdens are great. Yet we *mālama* ‘*āina*; we *mālama* our *kūpuna* and our *iwi kūpuna*; we *mālama* our *mo‘olelo*; we *mālama* our ‘*ohana*.

PONO

Pono means that everything is right, correct, in balance. It is the standard for justice: righteousness, rightness, goodness, completeness, even purpose. *Pono* is a standard for truth: when something is correct, true, exact, excellent. It is a way of viewing relationships: losing *pono* loses harmony (*lōkahi*) with the ‘*āina*, with the ‘*ohana*, with our *kūpuna*, with our traditions (*mo‘olelo*), and with the sacred (*akua*, o‘i, *kapu aloha*).

KULEANA

Kuleana means recognizing the privileges we have because of what our ancestors and others have done for us, then considering the responsibility we have to ourselves, our community, and the world because of that. *Kuleana* extends from past to present and future generations, and includes the privilege and responsibility to take care of past generations, our ancestors, including *iwi*

kūpuna (our ancestral graves), and our cultural and historic sites.

When we know our *kuleana*, we know what we stand for. We can stand firm in a *pono* identity that makes us *kanaka* (human beings) and true *Kanaka Maoli* (Hawaiians), whether by birth or adopted (*hānai*-ed). We have welcomed all to our rock canoe hoping they would find their *kuleana* here adopting values of love and care.

KŌKUA

Kōkua embodies a communal spirit of mutual assistance, lending a hand and helping others without concern for your own personal gain. We still practice this way of giving and sharing, yet it becomes harder for each generation in a money economy. Visitors have come with plans to help and also to protect our sacred and historic sites; but more often they begin businesses for tourists who come in throngs. Then suddenly, the site is taken, and we cannot even worship there.

Kōkua involves building community, through right relations, working together, cooperation, and shared support. It is to unselfishly extend love and help to benefit others, to bring about harmony and balance in community and nature, but not for personal gain. Kōkua is at the core of how to live, how to achieve harmony with nature and each other, and with *akua*, the divine.

MO‘OLELO

Our traditions, *mo‘olelo*, were oral, passing wis-

dom from generation to generation in many forms: genealogies, histories, legends, significant events, values, customs, handicrafts, healing, sailing, and the occupations (farming, fishing, etc.). Then missionaries designed our first alphabet, and within a few decades we became the most literate people on the globe. But our language gave us pride in our history and culture – our deep culture of indigenous faith and practice. Cultural genocide almost erased our language, our memories, our heritage from the planet.

Gifted storytellers taught us aided by oli (chants), hula (dance), mo‘olelo (stories), pohaku ki‘i (petroglyphs) and so much more. A revival of Hawaiian depended on the century that our kūpuna preserved it from persecution by keeping it *huna* (secret, sacred).

LŌKAHI

Lōkahi is the harmony needed on the long voyages, combined with caring (*mālama*) and doing one’s part (*kuleana*). An older form of the word, *lo‘okahi*, calls forth the action of “making peace, harmony, oneness.” More practically, it is about not rocking the canoe, keeping one’s and the group’s balance. It applied to relationships and the way one deals with resources of fresh water, communal resources and nature. Indigenous people survived in their environment by harmonious living – in the extended ‘*ohana* (community), with nature, and with the universe (*ao holo ‘oko ‘a*).

MAHALO

Mahalo is an attitude of gratitude for life and its gifts. *Mahalo* and *Aloha* are the two most sacred and powerful words in the Hawaiian language. These concepts were found in “Sermon of the Mount Christianity” and were compatible with Kanenuiakea faith and practice.

Mahalo’s root components are *ma* (in) + *hā* (breath) + *alo* (presence, front, face). As a prayer it is gratitude for the presence or gift of divine breath – for life itself. It is this presence of gratitude that is found in all the world’s faiths that hold love and thanksgiving sacred.

Mahalo must be experienced on a spiritual level as a divine blessing, realized as life-enhancing and life-transforming. At this level, *aloha* is the divine gift (grace) and *mahalo* is the acknowledgment of life as sacred. *Ua kapu ke ola na Kāne*. (All life is sacred to Kāne.)

KA‘ANANIAU

Ka‘ananiau brings together all of the values of Kanenuiakea faith and practice. *Ka‘a* means rolling, managing; *nani* sees the beauty of nature and of life, and *au* means time (its cycles and epochs) and also the personal pronoun “I” or “me.”

Thus, *ka‘ananiau* reveals its breadth of meaning in “the rolling beauty of time” (sometimes called its feminine perspective) and “managing the beauty of time” (its masculine perspective about how we are caretakers of

Kāne's gifts). It is a value learned on the great open ocean voyages – creating harmony (*lōkahi*) in “the canoe,” a brotherhood and sisterhood with *aloha* and a family spirit (*‘ohana*). The more personal context comes from understanding *au* as “I” and one’s own learning and responsibility in the *‘ohana*, the community.

Ka‘ananiau is the foundation that guides our projects, activities and lives. It is the ancient system of the *Wai‘anae Wahipana* that governed the management of the community’s natural and shared resources. This system of governance preceded the *Ahupua‘a* system imposed with the unification of the islands under King Kamehameha the Great. The early Hawaiian newspapers record the various contextual uses of this terms as a social, ecological and political value – *huna* no longer.

With these values we practice *kapu aloha* to protect

- our Sacred Sites (koaike.org/acting)
- our Spiritual Heritage (kanenuiakea.org)
- our Iwi Kūpuna – our gravesites (koaike.org/Burials)
- our Cultural Heritage through teaching and preservation (maraehaahoa.org)
- and practice our Kanenuiakea Faith, trying to live the deepest cultural values of Hawai‘i Nei.

IV. Mauna Kea

What Makes a Mountain Sacred or Divine?

One needs to think in the language of the Hawaiian cultural experience. The Hawaiian language does not privilege belief- and rule-centered religion. Those religions are based on authority, hierarchy and power, most often adopted by warrior states, nations, and empires. They can be authoritarian.

Humans have their place in the universe. Kanaka Maoli are understood as the offspring of parents (Wākea and Papa), just as the “birth metaphor” explains the origin of everything in the sky, land and ocean. Nothing is without a parent, and all are somehow related by birth. There is no creator, no absolute king or ruler over the universe who created everything from nothing, no revelation of commandments requiring frightful obedience, and no blind faith in things that cannot be experienced with human senses.

Kanaka Maoli see processes like birth and perspectives which we symbolize in sacred stories that teach us our culture, our sacred practices, and our responsibilities as human beings.

This cosmology or worldview is this-worldly (immanent), experiential, naturalistic, and meta-poetic.

Wisdom is passed down as values that have worked in a community (‘*ohana*) that is caring and sharing. We have a special reverence (*aloha*) for *kahuna* (specialists, masters of the 90 plus Hawaiian educational fields, each with its practioner-priest), *kūpuna* (elders), *iwikupuna* (ancestors, remains), *ike* (knowledge), *mo’olelo* (wisdom in all its forms), etc. The beacon of the Pacific, *Mauna a Wākea* (Mauna Kea), is revered in a thousand ways, for it symbolizes our parents (*māhua*), our “homeland” (‘*aina*), and everything that is sacred in the Hawaiian soul. To occupy Mauna Kea violates the spirit and values of *Hawai‘i Nei*.

Hawai‘i’s Most Sacred Mountain

This manifestation of Kāne as *Mauna a Wākea* is not only the tallest mountain in Hawai‘i, but also the tallest mountain on the planet from base to summit.

Kanenuiakea has experienced this natural manifestation of Kāne (*pōhaku o Kāne*) as one of the divine parents because of its special and unusual *mana*. It is a place for worship and prayer (reverence, *aloha*) – like a church or temple for those who worship inside manmade buildings. Hawaiians had, and still have, a strong preference for worshipping outside. But indigenous religions are often discriminated against, because they worship outside in nature at their sacred sites, which are often desired for commercial and military purposes. This is now true of Mauna Kea; it has been taken – literally, it has been stolen.

No indigenous or ethnic culture has escaped discrimination under the United States legal and political system. Black churches and graveyards, indigenous Americans' (Native Americans', First Peoples') natural temples and graves, Chinese and Japanese immigrants' temples and graveyards, and indigenous Hawaiians's sacred sites and burial grounds – all have seen their churches, sacred sites and their graves desecrated illegally or in the name of law. Property rights and the ability to use eminent domain have been used to the degree that many historians and United Nations special rapporteurs for religious freedom have found that the United States has attempted cultural genocide in the name of a “melting pot” that blends all cultures into one. [Even the use of “blood quantum” in Hawai‘i is an artifact of slavery and racism used to eliminate Hawaiians as an ethnic group in their own land.]

Fallacy of Framing: Religion vs. Science

It is wrong to frame the problem of the desecration of Mauna Kea as religion versus science. Hawaiian culture and education have always been open to new and provable knowledge. When the first Christian missionaries gave the Hawaiian language an alphabet, the Hawaiian Kingdom became the most literate people on the planet. No modern nation can claim that complete a level of literacy.

Hawaiian language and values were found in the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matt. 5). Its teachings were the

same as Hawai'i's core values (see Chapter III). Kanaka Maoli may have both Hawaiian and Christian spiritual identities. Only in the first decades of the 20th century when plantation and territorial elites wanted a subservient population were cultural and religious genocide practiced with a vengeance. For example, newborns could not even be given Hawaiian first names.

Science came wrapped in a contempt for Hawaiian values. Hawaiians were stigmatized as always being against progress and using excuses like cultural remains and graveyards to inhibit scientific advance, development and progress. Statehood in 1959 did not change things until Hawaiians themselves revived voyaging, hula and immersion in Hawaiian language.

Science is, supposedly, value free, open to new knowledge and discoveries. It is non-moral, cannot discover, and does not teach moral or cultural values. But, scientists are not innocent. They have used scientific methods to produce weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, etc.), worked for industries like tobacco, pesticides, fossil fuels, etc., and have sometimes gone against the public good for profit. Claiming that the TMT is about scientific progress does not prove that it is a public good, especially when it would be built on occupied land.

When individual scientists must work on stolen land, they are complicit in illegal and immoral activity. They are not innocent no matter how much pure science

they might be doing. Benefiting from a system of exploitation, oppression and cultural disruption takes away any simplistic argument about “the good of science.”

Scientists, who claim their very method is value free, yet not immoral, must take a moral stand. They must begin by rejecting using land that is stolen. They also need to prove it is to be used for a public good that will benefit humankind. If their “value measurement” is pure knowledge, or jobs, or profits, etc., then balance that with good social behavior toward the culture that their very presence is disrupting. Prove they can be valuable citizens for social good. Perhaps it is too early to say that ground-based telescopes are outdated science, since they still have some commercial value. However, ground-based telescopes are not cutting-edge science.

Scientists – and the world – must remember that the United States has officially acknowledged twice that the Hawaiian Kingdom was illegally occupied – and is still occupied. There have been two presidential apologies. Therefore, scientists should at least support the return of all Crown Land to collective Indigenous Hawaiians (*Kanaka Maoli*) and to a new, unoccupied public.

There should be a return of all sacred and historic sites (*heiau, unu, ahu, iwikipuna*) including Mauna Kea – just as there was in New Zealand. It should begin by negotiating reparations for use of Hawaiian harbors, mountains, forests, water, etc. Further, state and federal use of land needs to address use without legal title. There

should be negotiations concerning land use leases.

Mauna Kea continues to be a most holy and sacred (*kapu, huna*) place of worship (*aloha*), and it is our religious and cultural right to continue our spiritual heritage as it has been practiced for perhaps two thousand years. To block access to our sacred mountain violates U.S. and International law. To desecrate our sacred place of prayer and worship is a violation of our Universal Rights both of religion but also of our land (*‘aina*). It is our property, and our property has been stolen.

Mauna Kea is as sacred to us as Fujiyama is to Shintoists and almost all Japanese. Mauna Kea is the sacred manifestation of Wākea, our divine parent, who is an aspect of Kanenuiakea. Mauna Kea is *akua* (divine), a manifestation of the *‘ohana* relationship of all existence, the interconnectedness of all of life. All life is sacred to Kāne. *Ua kapu ke ola na Kāne.*

Mauna Kea is a church, a cathedral, a natural manifestation of the sacred. It was protected by the Hawaiian Kingdom and as Crown Land. When Crown Land was confiscated by the puppet government of the “Republic” and then passed on to become a U.S. territory and finally to the State of Hawaii, sacred land was confiscated without title (absolute or otherwise). Mauna Kea remains stolen land, without title, occupied and administered for a system that rules over Kanaka Maoli, providing stolen land and resources to entities that cannot claim innocence and do not face their complicity in continuing this harm.

Imagine any massive facility forcibly built on Fujiyama, Sinai, Jerusalem's Temple Mount, Mecca, or even at the Alamo. Sacred sites of indigenous peoples of North America provide few examples of their being respected and seen as property that cannot be taken, owned, managed or exploited by others. Mauna Kea is such a sacred place.



Kumu Glen Kila leading a celebration of a solstice at Kane'ilio

V. Persecution and Discrimination against Indigenous Religion

To repeat, Kanenuiakea is an ethnic, indigenous or original religion of *Hawai'i Nei*. It is a living faith and practice of almost two thousand years. One does not become a member of Kanenuiakea but is born into the 'ohana (family, Hawaiian community) or is *hānai*-ed (adopted). One does not join but can opt out of one's culture, language, practices and values. Because there has been a long period of persecution and contempt, those who kept the faith and practice continued its worship in secret (as *huna*). Many Hawaiians are not aware that they still practice Hawaiian values of Kanenuiakea and feel the sacred in traditional places.

Western Contact and Cultural Survival

As Prof. Charles Long famously said, Western contact was not innocent (*Significations, 1986*). It brought negative consequences of Western colonizers: diseases, religion, economics, governance, attempted cultural genocide – plus alcohol and modern weapons – and lust for land.

To pay for this progress, sandalwood forests were clear-cut, less valuable wood was turned into coke for

steam ships, an abundant food supply for a Hawaiian population of at least 400,000 was supplied to whalers, traders and navies, and finally arable land was turned into foreign-owned plantations. Death for 9 out of 10 Hawaiians reduced the population to approximately 40,000 in five decades.

Western arms aided a minor chief, Kamehameha the Great, to “unify by conquest” seven of the eight major islands (Kauai would be acquired by treaty) and install his war god, Ku, as the state religion, subordinating other Hawaiian religions and “consecrating” their temples with blood sacrifices to Ku. (This form of Ku religion came from Tahiti in the 12th century CE and brought with it a hierarchy of rulers (*ali‘i*), a modified form of patriarchy, and constant war with blood sacrifice to its war gods until unification.) Then, even Kamehameha the Great needed pacification, which blood sacrifices to Ku could not provide. A warrior religion and its rituals would not bring permanent peace.

When Kamehameha I died, Kamehameha II was convinced to end state establishment of the Ku religion in 1819. Christian missionaries arrived a year later and would eventually bring about the establishment of Christianity as the state religion. As a Christian Kingdom indigenous religions, language and culture began to be discouraged. However, under the United States its language was intentionally kept from being used, children had to be given a “christian” name, and the supposed

nonexistent indigenous religion was persecuted as sorcery and superstitious healing practices until the 1970s. Collective cultural property was taken.

Surviving Persecution

Some indigenous religions have survived by hiding themselves inside of the conquering religion as was done so often in South and Central America. Their symbols and manifestations of the sacred (often called gods) were merged into the Catholic saints and angels. Many of the local faiths of Africa survived in sacred music and dance – and even in secret societies practiced by communicants of a conquering religion.

While other Hawaiian indigenous religions may have been extinguished by persecution and shaming during the remaining 19th and 20th centuries (and there is evidence that some did survive), Kanenuiakea survived, hidden (*huna*) on the Wai‘anae coast of Oahu island, its *wahipana* (sacred homeland). Although Kanenuiakea was taught and practiced traditionally in Wai‘anae by *kūpuna* (elders), unconsciously Hawaiians continued living the values and concepts of Kanenuiakea such as *aloha*, *malāma ‘aina* and respect for *‘aumakua* (often symbols of ancestors).

Religious discrimination and prevention of the access to worship occurs even today in the Wai‘anae *wahipana* in numerous ways. Here are some examples. Not one of the thirty plus *heiau*, *unu* or *ahu* (temples and altars) on the Wai‘anae coast is owned by Kanekuiakea

worshippers. Access is denied or inhibited at some *unu*, now only known as *heiau*. In the Kanekuiakea faith, blood sacrifice or flesh offerings were never permitted to Kāne at its *unu*.

Currently Hawaiians are prevented from entering and praying at the Kane‘aki *unu/heiau* by a homeowners association. Further, the entire Makua valley, the garden of Eden in Kanenuiakea origin stories, was confiscated by the U.S. military in the 1930s, and entrance and worship there are regulated by the military. The entire valley and its more than a thousand historic sites have been used as an active live fire range until recently without regard to its cultural and religious value. The Army is currently trying to rectify this destruction.

And Mauna Kea on the Big Island, Hawai‘i’s highest volcano, which is as sacred to all Hawaiians as Fujiyama is to Shintoists and almost all Japanese, rises to Kāne, heavenly symbol of the divine, the sun. Mauna Kea is *akua* (mistranslated in English as “God”), a manifestation of the ‘*ohana* relationship of all existence, the interconnectedness of all of life.

The use of Mauna Kea for outdated-scientific (land-based astronomy), commercial and military purposes is a desecration of its sacredness and a violation of Hawaiian values of *aloha* and *lōkahi*. Worshippers are asserting their right to pray on Mauna Kea with the recognition of Hawaiian religion’s existence.

Will that right last?

A Little History

Kamehameha the Great established his worship of Ku as the state religion when he conquered the islands. The Ku religion with its blood sacrifices was imposed by the unifier and conqueror of the Hawaiian islands until it was abolished in 1819 by his successor. A self-serving myth taught that Hawai‘i was the first nation to be without a religion. This misinformation served those who stole or desecrated indigenous religious properties, even as Americans professed belief in the freedom of religion’s clause in the U.S. Bill of Rights and were a signatory to the Universal Bills of Rights.

Silenced, but Speaking Again

Modern academic disciplines have “discovered” many voices that were ignored or silenced, especially those of women. Conquered or oppressed people, especially indigenous groups around the planet, have similar histories to ours in Hawai‘i. Although the facts of occupation might have bred hatred, Kanenuiakea’s values derived from the cooperation needed for long, open-ocean voyages have made us among the most peaceful—and religious—of cultures. Queen Lili‘oukalani resisted the United States occupation of her kingdom in 1893 with *kapu aloha* from her belief in the Sermon on the Mount, in Hawaiian values and in the values of the American Constitution. She was a Gandhian before Gandhi.

According to Prof. John Charlot (*Classical Hawai-*

ian Education, 2005), ancient Hawaiians had more than ninety different kinds of *heiau* (learning-center temples that were also healing centers, craft guilds, etc.). Hawaiians found nature “alive” with manifestations of the holy (*akua*), and that brought the false charge of animism. “Paganism” was also a popular derogatory term.

Hawai‘i changed after its “discovery” and christianization. After Kamehameha the Great lost almost his entire invasion fleet when attempting to conquer Kauai, he seemed to have lost faith in Ku, his war God, and sought a less bloody deity. He declared “*Ua kapu ke ola na Kāne.*” (All life is sacred to Kane.) After his death Queen Ka‘ahumanu ended the Big Island tradition of men worshipping and eating alone; men and women could eat together and the food *kapu* were broken. The old warrior religion of Ku as the state religion was nearly dead by 1819. The Hawaiian Kingdom joined the Family of Nations as a Christian Kingdom, and then it became the first nation in history to declare itself as peaceful and forever neutral. No ships of war or their supplies would be provided a harbor in the Hawaiian Kingdom. However, the United States wanted to extend Manifest Destiny into the Pacific and sought to annex Hawai‘i, especially as a naval station. It took two attempts to acquire Pearl Harbor, but annexation was never completed. Two presidents, Cleveland and Clinton, would apologize for these illegal actions and for the imprisonment of Queen Lili‘uokalani.

Hawai‘i’s Last Monarch

Queen Lili‘uokalani was the last Christian monarch of the first nation to declare itself a Neutral Nation, having seven treaties with the United States recognizing its sovereignty – and forty other nations in the Family of Nations. Yet, in 1893 Marines from the USS Boston aided proxies to take the “pearl of the Pacific.” The Queen’s protest to Pres. Grover Cleveland blended two traditions of non-violence: “Sermon on the Mount” Christianity (Christian Bible, Matthew 5) and Hawai‘i’s indigenous “open-ocean canoe ethics” of Kanenuiakea. (This is almost the same combination of values that Gandhi utilized as he developed *satyagraha* nearly three decades later—his second part being indigenous Hindu values.) Although Cleveland apologized and Hawai‘i was never annexed, the war party in Washington won out, and the Hawaiian Kingdom would be occupied as a territory until after World War II when it “became” a state in 1959.

Hawaiians still wait for a just resolution to what they believe is an illegal occupation. (In December 2015, Hawaiians faced a vote to become “tribal citizens” under the U.S. Department of Interior with the privileges of Native Americans if they would finally renounce the rights of a sovereign and neutral nation. It is not surprising that “native” Hawaiian rejected “the deal.”)

Even peaceful cultures usually revert to violence when violence and injustice are inflicted on them. Queen

Lili‘uokalani believed completely that “All life is sacred to Kāne” (*Ua kapu ke ola na Kāne*). She worked until the end of her life for justice and an end to the American occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom, whose treaties of non-belligerence with as many as eighty nations including the USA could have been an example for peaceful co-existence before the World Wars.

The *kūpuna* (elders) in Wai‘anae remembered Queen Lili‘uokalani coming to a specific Kāne *unu* [a temple that did not allow blood sacrifice] to pray near the end of her life. (*Heiau* is correctly used for temples where there can be blood sacrifice. However, *unu* is used for temples of Kāne on the Wai‘anae coast of O‘ahu where there should never be blood sacrifice or offerings.) Queen Lili‘uokalani had seen her kingdom destroyed and none of the treaties of non-aggression honored. Yet, she still believed in the indigenous values of her ancestors whose skills at solving conflict had survived on this isolated and lonely coast—the values of *aloha* and *lōkahi* (peaceful co-existence).

Shaming Hawaiian Religion and Culture

Indigenous religions often do not have the word “religion” in their native languages as they are inclusive of all aspects of life. They have many local traditions and are most often ethnic, with the axis of the world centered in their land. (Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 1961) Thus, “first peoples” care for their home and maintain community resources, usually owning them

collectively. Most indigenous religions are erroneously called pantheistic (Greek: all or everything is God), because they experience manifestations of the sacred in every aspect of the natural universe. And that leads to the notion that they are either polytheistic or animistic, although the manifold nature of reality, its polarities, its paradoxes, its mysteries, are only simplified in stories or myths for children for their earliest understanding of indigenous wisdom. Adults found depth in these myths and complexities that interpret natural experience of “the unknown” or unknowable as cultural wisdom rather than revealed truth. Wisdom had to be confirmed by personal experience of nature as rote learning became knowledge.

Some scholars have been writing that the Hawaiian religions were primitive, animistic, polytheistic, and even dead. They did not study the living tradition but worked with myths and a few chants as Hawaiian spirituality became more and more secretive (*huna*). As said before, Kanenuiakea is a *huna* term, so sacred that it has not been used in public for at least a century. It is alive in the Wai‘anae Wahipana (a “sacred place” designation which includes all of the Wai‘anae coast of Oahu, Hawai‘i). Kanenuiakea is the indigenous, earth or Gaia religion that had been practiced for centuries before the arrival in the twelfth century CE of the cruel Tahitian navigator and warrior priest of Ku, Pa‘ao. Kanenuiakea has been in continuous practice as a religion since the first arrivals, probably from the Marquesas, variously dated from the

first to the eighth centuries CE. Archaeologists confirm that there has been continuous habitation of the Wai‘anae coast [Wai‘anae wahipana] for almost 2000 years.

As oral Hawaiian was converted into a written language, few of the deeper meaning of words were recorded because they were not shared as dictionaries were made. Hawaiian is a contextual language with organizing concepts situated in processes of nature—in the air, on land, at sea, among plants, etc. So the same word *koa/ko’a* means coral in the sea, a special hardwood tree among plants, a protector among humans, etc.—each a shelter or guardian from harm or aggression, connected by some similarity. (See more in Chapter VI.)

Lexicographers have trouble with languages of oral traditions and special difficulties with contextual languages. How many meanings ancient Hawaiians knew indicated their level of education, understanding, and mastery of cultural values. As Hawaiian culture has been reconstructed from myths and stories that represent a child’s level of understanding, the depth of its spiritualities has not been seen or appreciated.

One difficulty of discussing Hawaiian religion and culture arises because Western languages and concepts about “religion” and “God” are privileged. Note that a capital “G” means that this deity is the one true God and a small “g” means that this god is false. This binary logic applies both to religion and God—either they are true or false. There is nothing like that in ancient Hawaiian.

There are nuances and aspects and levels of understanding in human knowledge and wisdom.

Western ideas of God/god do not adequately find an equivalence in Hawaiian indigenous religion as the manifestations are immanent, in this world, and not transcendent, in a heavenly realm (with an exception for Hawaiian mystical experience of that which should not be symbolized). Naturalistic and indigenous religion can function spiritually both with and without any theistic or polytheistic conception of what is sacred and meaningful. *Akua* is experienced in the natural order; it is seen or heard as a symbol or manifestation of the sacred. *Akua* is both singular (Kāne) and plural (the thousands of divine manifestations). (Hawaiian nouns are not declined and are, thus, singular or plural depending on an article or number.)

What were experienced as natural manifestations of the holy, the sacred (*akua*, both singular and plural)? First, rocks, animals, fish, lizards, mountains might be *akua* if they are “experienceable” as such. That is, if they are unusual, extraordinary! Second, they must be experienced as *akua* by *kahuna* (religious specialists, masters) and more importantly by the worshipping community. It is a social, communal and cultural experience. Third, the experience of *akua* is accompanied by a phenomenon called *mana* (usually translated power, but inadequately).

Akua as the awesome experience of nature’s powers came to be called Kāne, Kanaloa, Ku and/or Lono. In the

Wai‘anae tradition, the symbols of Kāne (the sun), the rain, and the 400,000 elements in nature were understood metaphorically as manifestations of divinity’s highest earthly expression. The concept of Kāne contained both an affirmation and a denial. It is said by the *kūpuna*: “God (Kāne) needs man (*kane*); man (*kane*) needs God (Kāne).” There is another word in Hawaiian for the “God beyond God” that is known but not said (*I‘O*). It is solid evidence that ancient Hawaiian spirituality had its mystics. (Paul Tillich was not the first to coin the phrase “the God beyond God.”)

‘Aumakua is another notion among the reminders of the sacred. Kumu Glen Kila recalls: “My ancestors still live in me (*kūpuna* as *‘aumakua*). Plants, fish (sharks), birds, even insects are able to symbolize them; they too are *‘aumakua*. I do not worry about or fear death because I trust life. We have no developed idea of an after-life so we focus on living better and doing our *kuleana* (task, responsibility) in this lifetime. We are all-encompassing. Consciousness doesn’t die.”

“Our worldview demands careful observation. In a sense, nature talks to us. We listen to plants and winds; we observe subtle colors of the ocean and the motion of waves, tides, clouds, stars. We can smell the seasons and see beyond the islands. Nature is our home. We love it and care for it (*malama ‘āina*). Nature is our bible that records our history, beliefs, and values. We see ourselves as nature, not nature by our image. That is, we describe

our children as baby chicks, as baby banana stalks or taro shoots—not the other way around.”

“Our cultural consciousness understands nature and its powers, even troubling one, as *akua*, representing them in the wisdom stories of Kanenuiakea. These powers are also within each human and must be harmonized. Consciousness is changed as one encounters such natural phenomena.”

***Ka’ananiau* – But Living in an Acquisitive Society**

During traditional times, the concept of *ka’ananiau* emphasized the significance of the cycles and relationships of nature. When humans were in harmony (*lōkahi*) with nature’s movements, the rolling beauty of the seasons, then life was right (*pono*). It entailed all the “values of the canoe.” Properly managing and sharing all the natural resources of the air, land, and sea ensured prosperity.

Most indigenous people, and especially island cultures, tend to evolve a sustainable use of resources. This was especially true on the “rock canoe” of Hawai‘i where both common resources like fresh water, forest products and a common fish pond made life almost a paradise. Consequently, there was no notion of hell and just a vague notion of an afterlife.

Recently teachers of Hawaiian language have complained that *ka’ananiau* is found in few Hawaiian dictionaries and only as a land or boundary marker. That meaning was but a tiny fragment of its multiple mean-

ings. (See more in Chapter VI.)

Kanenuiakea—Sharing Our Religion

Kanenuiakea's faith and practice was shared publicly for the first time in 2012 at the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu and internationally at the Birmingham IARF Congress in 2014.

Kanenuiakea's island values have been kept alive and are now being shared with anyone interested in learning about how indigenous peoples sustained their part of the planet. Reviving indigenous spiritualities that stress love, sharing and harmony with others and nature might just help humanity survive.



Kanenuiakea faith being shared at the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu with Chris Oliveira, Kumu Glen Kila and Prof. George Williams. Minister Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kwong welcomed the historic service.

VI. Religious Freedom in Hawai‘i

Words from our Kupuna

Kumu Glen Kila was trained by our *kāhuna*, priests and priestesses of Kanenuiakea, to know the teachings, values and worship of the divine as manifested in all its forms, *akua*, in one of our four major Hawaiian religious traditions and spiritual heritages. We have continued to teach and to worship in the ancient ways of Kanenuiakea, which go back unbroken for nearly two thousand years.

In the Hawaiian Islands, following the occupation of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i in 1893, traditional cultural practices and languages were banned and driven underground until as late as 1971. While other Hawaiian religions were possibly extinguished by persecution and fear (although they may still be practicing in secret), Kanenuiakea continued hidden, *huna*, in the Wai‘anae *wahipana* until 2012.

Then Kanenuiakea was recognized as an indigenous religion by and has become a member of the International Association of Religious Freedom (IARF), the oldest interfaith organization in the world with members from all branches of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shinto, various regional faiths and one

other indigenous faith from the Philippines. IARF has NGO status at the United Nations and is particularly concerned with religious discrimination and the denial of religious freedom, particularly worship and protection of sacred sites.

Religious discrimination and prevention of the right of worship occurs today in the Wai‘anae *wahipana* in numerous ways. Here are some examples. Not one of the thirty plus *unu* and *heiau* is owned, or even administered, by our worshippers. No one who has occupied our temples has absolute title to them. Our worshippers are prevented or discouraged from worshipping at some *unu* [or *heiau*]. Makua, our garden of Eden, was confiscated by the U.S. military in the 1930s, and our entrance and worship is regulated by them. Also it is a burial place of many *kūpuna* and some of the last warriors of the Oahu Kingdom who perished in the war of unification led by Kamehameha the Great.

Mauna Kea is as sacred to us as Fujiyama is to Shintoists and almost all Japanese. Mauna Kea is the sacred manifestation of Wākea, our divine father, who is an aspect of Kanenuiakea. Mauna Kea is *akua*, a manifestation of the ‘*ohana* relationship of all existence, the interconnectedness of all of life. All life is sacred to Kāne. Mauna Kea is a church, a cathedral, a natural manifestation of the sacred. It was protected by the Hawaiian Kingdom and as Crown Land. When Crown Land was confiscated by the puppet government of the

“Republic” and the passed on to become a U.S. territory and finally to the State of Hawaii, sacred land was confiscated without title (absolute or otherwise). Mauna Kea remains stolen land, without title, occupied and administered for a system that rules over *Kanaka Maoli*, providing stolen land and resources to entities that cannot claim innocence and do not face their complicity in continuing this harm.

Imagine any massive facility forcibly built on Fujiyama, Sinai, Jerusalem’s Temple Mount, Mecca, or even at the Alamo. Sacred sites of indigenous peoples of North America provide few examples of their being respected and seen as property that cannot be taken, owned, managed or exploited by others. Mauna Kea is such a sacred place. (See the Chapter II on Mauna Kea for a more complete understanding.)

Hawaiian Places of Worship

No Kanenuiakea place of worship is known to be owned and operated by our worshipers and practitioners. No entity (public or private) can show “absolute title” to any Sacred Site (commonly called *heiau*, *unu*, or *ahu*) that they possess or occupy.

A myth (actually, a lie) that Hawaiian religion(s) suddenly ended in 1819 has been taught. That lie has become a justification for confiscation of religious property – temples, altars, graves (*iwi*), and even our stones of historic sites.

Hawaiian (aboriginal, native, indigenous) religions

were outlawed as sorcery until the 1970s and our places of worship have not been protected under the 1st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Army Field Manual (rules for governing an occupation), or by the U.N. obligations for all U. N. members. (See the Universal Declaration of Basic Human Rights.)

Religious Persecution in Hawai'i

Hawaiian religions were and are varied; they were and are panentheistic [*everything is within the divine*], non-dogmatic, inclusive allowing participation in other religions and practices, naturalistic, immanent [the divine manifests in nature, in the world, and in culture] and is language specific (wipe out our language and culture, you wipe out our religion) and experienced through the senses. Our religion is known, experienced, felt. It is compatible with all other religions and philosophies of peace and caring.

Hawaiian religions should be protected by the Universal Declaration of Basic Human Rights. Several years ago at the United Nations' review of Human Rights violations, Pakistan asked the United States about its violations of the religious rights of Native Americans and of Hawaiians — and about the irregularities (or falsehoods) in its claim to the territory of Hawai'i. The U.S. has not yet answered.

The U.S. House of Representatives told the Republic of Turkey in 2011 that it could not confiscate Christian religious sites and must return them. So it must follow that First Amendment rights must apply to freedom of worship and protection against confiscation of sacred sites in American territories, states and occupied lands. Thus, the sacred sites of Hawaiian worshippers and practitioners must be respected, preserved and returned.

Principles Of Religious Freedom

- Religious Freedom to worship (or not) is an inalienable human right.

- Public health, social order, and safety bring other rights into the picture and must be adjudicated.

- Places of worship cannot be taken, desecrated or destroyed without just cause and due process.

- Places of worship are protected by property rights laws and must be returned.

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right shall include freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching.

2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom

- Annual Report on International Religious Freedom (2010) lists status of nations' compliance with religious freedom and civil rights. U.S.A. is not included.

- Condemnation of Turkey of Religious Freedom violations against Armenian Christians and the destruction, desecration, and confiscation of Christian churches, monasteries and sacred sites.

- Previously the U.S. has criticized communist countries in general, China, Burma, Cyprus, Cambodia, etc. and reports on all other nations' conduct—except the U.S.

- Condemnation of China's treatment of Tibet, Buddhism and the Dalai Lama

The U.S. and the State of Hawaii has committed similar acts against indigenous peoples including Hawaiian practitioners and worshippers.

VII. Our Temples and Graveyards

All indigenous peoples have special places that are manifestations of the sacred, of their values and of their love of their home. Ours include special mountains, unusual places, and where we bury our ancestors. We also have *heiau* or *unu* (temples) and *ahu* (altars) where we worship and pray but also where we study or go for healing. Just on our small 16 mile leeward coast of O‘ahu, our Wai‘anae Wahipana, there are more than 30 such sacred sites that have not been destroyed and are still in use as Kāne places of worship. These are supposed to be protected by United States federal and state law, as well as the guarantees of the United Nations' Conventions on Religious Freedom. These protections are sadly neglected or deliberately violated in modern-day Hawai‘i. Even worse, our burial grounds are constantly disturbed, pillaged and desecrated — in spite of all the so-called protections of U.S. law. When others have the power to desecrate worship sites and burial grounds, it is a form of cultural genocide.

Even after it was outlawed as sorcery, Kanenuiakea practice and worship continued uninterrupted at its sacred sites (*heiau*, *unu* and *ahu*). While more than 30 of these sacred sites have been preserved and some remain in use, all are occupied by military, federal and state agencies, corporations, and individuals. None are

“owned” and managed by “aboriginal” Hawaiians. There is no “absolute title” to these religious properties. (Note a recent US Supreme Court ruling against the claims of the State of Hawaii concerning title to Crown Lands of Hawai’i.) Occupiers of several sacred sites allow limited access and restoration, while others, like the “owners” of Kane‘aki Heiau in Makaha valley, deny public access and try to prevent Hawaiian worship.

Kāne Temples [Kāne *Unu*]

Anthropologists have been shamed at international meetings by the blistering attacks from “native anthropologist,” about their grave-robbing, theft of indigenous knowledge, misinterpretations of cultural values and traditions, lack of mastery of “native languages,” etc. Hawai’i has seen more than its share of the misuse of this Western science of classical anthropology. Since these wrongs have not yet been corrected, locations of Kāne temples and sacred sites, plus many more altars and burial grounds that have survived along the Wai‘anae coast (Wai‘anae Wahipana) will not be given. *A complete list and descriptions are withheld for their preservation.* Only thirty of these *unu/heiau/ahu* and manifestations of Kāne have survived in the land of Wai‘anae *Moku*. Sacred sites are now called Traditional Cultural Properties, TCPs, and are administered under United States, State of Hawaii, and U.S. military law.

A Summary about Kanenuiakea Religion

Kanenuiakea [a *huna* term, so sacred that is has not

been used in public for at least a century] faith and practice of the Wai‘anae Wahipana [a “sacred-place” designation which includes all of the Wai‘anae coast of Oahu, Hawai‘i] is the indigenous, earth or Gaia religion that has been practiced for centuries before the arrival of the Tahitian navigator-priest Pa‘ao in the tenth century CE. Kanenuiakea has been in continuous practice as a religion since the first arrivals, probably from the Marquesas, variously dated from the fourth through eighth centuries CE. Archaeologists confirm that there has been habitation on the Wai‘anae coast [*wahipana*] for almost 2000 years.

Kamehameha the Great established his worship of Ku as the state religion when he unified the islands. That was dis-established in 1819, so it was taught that Hawai‘i was the first nation to be without a religion. This misinformation is self-serving for those who stole or desecrated indigenous religious properties, since property of a “dead religion” can be taken.

Even after the state religion of Ku that was imposed by the unifier and conqueror of the Hawaiian islands had been abolished in 1819, Kanenuiakea practice and worship continued uninterrupted at its sacred sites (*unu* and *ahu*). Just in the Wai‘anae Wahipana more than 30 of these sacred sites have been preserved and remain in use. Yet, our sites are occupied by military, federal and state agencies, corporations, and individuals. There is no “absolute title” to these religious properties. (Note the

most recent US Supreme Court ruling against the claims of the State of Hawaii concerning title.) Several properties allow access and restoration, but most do not.

Kanenuiakea has a formal priesthood, passed down by special adoption and training. It had to go underground [huna] because of direct persecution as the Kingdom of Hawai'i transitioned from an independent, neutral, sovereign nation (recognized by more than 40 nations in the "family of nations") to a territory and then to a [disputed] state of the United States of America. During the US-assisted overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, the religions of Hawai'i (worshippers of at least four indigenous world views – of Kāne, Ku, Kaneloa, Lono) were outlawed as sorcery and prohibited until 1971, well into the period of US statehood (which many *Kanaka Maoli* or Hawaiian Nationals still view as occupation of their Kingdom).

Kanenuiakea is an oral religious tradition with almost two thousand years of continuous practice and transmission, still preserved in the Wai'anae Wahipana. As most religions, its majority of worshippers are devotional, worshipping a personal, divine parent as Kāne – symbolized in many manifestations. Hawaiian is the sacred language, and formal prayers and chants have been passed down in a sacred tradition that pre-dates the first arrivals. Sacrifices were strictly vegetarian, and animal or blood-sacrifice is a desecration of a Kāne unu (temple) or ahu (altar). Only offerings of fruits, vegeta-

bles and flowers grace the altars.

Rituals are either traditional (practiced by strict memorization of sacred ceremonies according to time, place, and occasion) or spontaneous. There are also intellectual and mystical dimensions of Kanenuiakea which are now completely *huna* (taught only to 'ohana [family] because of past persecution and fear).

Just as the US House of Representatives told the Republic of Turkey in 2011 that it cannot confiscate Christian religious sites and must return them, so also First Amendment rights apply to freedom of worship and protection against confiscation of sacred sites in American states, territories, and occupied lands. The sacred sites of Hawaiian worshippers and practitioners are occupied or taken and must be returned.

About the Authors

Kumu Glen Kila was selected from birth to carry on the Hawaiian religion, Kanenuiakea. For his religious training to preserve a centuries-old faith and practice, he was taught its beliefs and values which were passed from generation to generation away from public view. After retiring as a school principal, Glen re-instituted the 500-year-old traditional Hawaiian Learning Center, Marae Ha‘a Koa, as the principal public means for preservation of Hawaiian faith and practice. He now devotes his efforts to building community and preserving Hawaiian faith and culture.

George Williams is a Professor Emeritus of California State University, Chico, Department of Religious Studies. He taught history of religions at California State University for thirty years. He has written extensively about Indian and Japanese religions, focusing on liberating faiths and practices. He received two honorary doctorates for his work for interfaith understanding. He retired to work with Hawaiians for the restoration of their faith and nation. Uncle Keoki, as he is known locally, is hanai-ed (adopted) and accepted as an elder. He is a board member of the Koa Ike Foundation which serves the Wai‘anae community.