

Aloha kākou. My name is Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua. He Kanaka 'Ōiwi Hawai'i au. I was born and raised on O'ahu, but my Kanaka Maoli and Chinese great-grandparents lived on Hawai'i island before relocating their families to Kalihi. On the Hawaiian side, my genealogy is deeply rooted in ka Moku o Keawe for dozens of generations, as far back as we can trace our lineage.

I earned my BA magna cum laude at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, as a double major in Hawaiian Studies and Political Science. I received my PhD at the University of California, Santa Cruz, having completed a dissertation titled, *Kū i ka Māna: Building Community and Nation Through Hawaiian Schooling*, in 2005.

Since 2007, I have worked at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where I am currently an Associate Professor of Political Science, specializing in Native Hawaiian and Indigenous politics. I have also served as interim chair of the Political Science department and have helped to create the Nā Ko'oko'o Native Hawaiian leadership cohort and Native Hawaiian Initiative of the College of Social Sciences. My research has focused on Hawaiian and Indigenous social movements, including land struggles; on Indigenous governance; on the politics of education; and on the ways that Indigenous peoples perpetuate cultural knowledge and practice even while living under conditions of settler colonialism. As an educator, I teach and mentor undergraduate, MA and PhD students. In addition to my Political Science students, I often sit on the dissertation and MA thesis committees of students in the College of Education, as well as Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Studies, because of my extensive work in these fields.

My first book, [*The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School*](#) (University of Minnesota Press, 2013) focuses on the development of Hālau Kū Māna, a Hawaiian culture-based public charter school, which I co-founded and with which I continue to be involved as a parent. This text is relevant to the questions at hand in this case because it discusses challenges that educators face when attempting to design and practice Hawaiian land-based educational initiatives within state system that often misunderstands, directly attacks and/or attempts to coercively assimilate such efforts. The proposed construction of the Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT) is such an attack and would substantially harm Hawaiian cultural practitioners and educators.

The Kānaka who are standing against the construction of the Thirty-Meter Telescope at the summit of Mauna a Wākea are Hawaiians who recognize their genealogies; are carrying their ancestral kuleana; and are trying to preserve the opportunity for future generations to maintain the kinds of relationships that their kūpuna have had with this mauna from time immemorial. In accessing and conducting ceremonies and deepening their cultural knowledge through practice and presence on Mauna a Wākea, they are exercising traditional and customary rights to practice their culture and religion. These rights are protected by the State

of Hawai'i constitution, by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, and by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Perhaps more importantly, they are continuing kuleana relationships between kanaka and 'āina, relationships and practices that have been passed on from generation to generation since long before the existence of the US, United Nations, or even the Hawaiian Kingdom. I refer to them here as po'e aloha 'āina, because this is one of the ways they explicitly describe their relationships with the Mauna and particular its summit.

Pukui and Elbert, in *Place Names of Hawai'i*, describe aloha 'āina as "a very old concept, to judge from the many sayings (perhaps thousands) illustrating deep love for the land." They further explain that such sayings reinforce familial ties, links to the past, and connections to the land and sea as sources of life. The concept of aloha 'āina expresses an unswerving dedication to the health of the natural world and to political autonomy.

The "aloha" part of this phrase is an active verb, not just a sentiment. As such, it is important to understand aloha 'āina as a practice rather than as only a belief. Aloha 'āina has been a practice of Kanaka Maoli survivance for generations, and it is based on the understanding that our lands, including Mauna a Wākea, are our familial kin. Hawai'i island-born scholar, Leon No'eau Peralto, in his chapter "Hānau ka Mauna: Reconnecting to the Piko of our Ea" has deftly shown the ways Mauna a Wākea has been (and continues to be) recognized and honored in genealogical chants and mo'olelo, such as "Kānaenae no ka Hānau 'ana o Kauikeaouli," and "A Maunakea 'o Kalani." Moreover as the text of "A Maunakea 'o Kalani" makes clear, the practice of "'ike maka"—to be in a place and to see it with one's own eyes—is an essential part of Hawaiian learning and spiritual practice.

An aloha 'āina perspective recognizes that kānaka are not just related to the land but are indeed part of it. That is, we produce ourselves, our cultural identities, and our future generations through the nurturing of relationships with specific places. It is through action, through practicing aloha 'āina—which includes ceremonies, observation and contemplation—that Kānaka transmit our collective understandings of who we are from one generation to the next. When you modify a place such as the summit of the highest mountain, which Kānaka practitioners recognize as sacred, through the construction of a massive structure such as the TMT, you harm the ability of kānaka to fully be kānaka. You harm their ability to transmit knowledge about who they are in relation to this place to future generations. In permitting construction of the TMT at the summit of Mauna a Wākea, or by allowing Kānaka only a limited number of days to engage in cultural practices there, the state would be denying Hawaiian practitioners the right to be themselves and to transmit emplaced knowledge in place to future generations. For instance, critical viewplanes would be forever altered by the construction of the TMT.

From a Hawaiian educational perspective, aloha 'āina can be thought of as a multiplicity of land-based literacies. Here, the plural term literacies includes a range

of observational, interpretive, and expressive skills that encompass but are not limited to human linguistic and social practices. In other words, aloha 'āina land-centered literacies are about more than reading and writing printed text. Land-centered literacies include the ways Kānaka 'Ōiwi have developed practices of reading the winds; offering chants in our own human language and then observing and finding meaning in the responses of rains, birds, waves, stones, etc. We write ourselves in the landscape through our mele and hula, and this requires us to practice or offer those mele and hula in places undisturbed. Aloha 'āina land-based literacies recognize that humans do not have a monopoly on language. They encourage people to recognize and discover patterns, transmissions of information, attempts to commune, and acknowledgements of kinship from our nonhuman relatives. Construction of the TMT should not be allowed because it would radically alter such educational practices. It would harm the ability of Hawaiian practitioners to fully practice aloha 'āina in this place because it would place significant limitations on the time and location of their interactions with this place.

As I stated above the Native Hawaiians who are opposing the permitting and construction of the TMT have rights protected by state, federal and international instruments. I would like to briefly remind you of them here:

- The State of Hawai'i constitution, in Article 12, section 7 protects "all rights traditionally and customarily exercised for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes." The state courts have affirmed that these rights are not limited to ahupua'a tenants within the ahupua'a of their residence.
- The American Indian Religious Freedom Act, "protects and preserves the inherent right of freedom of belief, expression, and exercise of traditional religions...including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession or sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites."
- The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (to which the United States is a signatory) includes numerous articles that are directly relevant to this case, including:
 - Article 8: "Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture."
 - Article 11: "Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.
 - Article 12: Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

- Article 13: Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
- Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

These latter three articles cited here are particularly when we think about Indigenous or Hawaiian education, which is ultimately place-based. If the TMT were permitted to be built, the desecration and destruction of a significant area of the summit of Mauna a Wākea would significantly harm Kanaka Maoli, present and future. It would foreclose possibilities for youth and future generations who should be able to see and access this mountain summit for cultural and religious purposes, free from the proposed restrictions.

I have only been to the summit of Mauna a Wākea once in my life. I traveled there with my hālau hula, Hālau Kupukupu ke Aloha under Kumu Hula Leilani Basham (who is also a professor of Hawaiian language and studies at UHWO) in 2011. We participated in ceremony with a handful of kupa'āina of Hawai'i island, and we offered mele, hula and other ho'okupu at various places on the Mauna. At the summit, we saw with our own eyes across the expanses over to Mauna Loa and to Maui. As breathing became more difficult, I understood one of the reasons the summit is sacred: the line between life and death becomes more porous. Vulnerabilities are exposed, and in those moments of vulnerability Kānaka can delve more deeply into sacred and profound insights and reflection.

It can be difficult to explain these experiences and ways of knowing to people from other cultures who carry different understandings of reality. But the point is that you do not need to understand the realities of these kānaka aloha 'āina. You do, however, need to protect their right to maintain their relationships with Mauna a Wākea as it is, for it is these relationships are essential to their realities, their health and their identities of Kānaka Maoli and as po'e aloha 'āina.