



# STANDING ABOVE THE CLOUDS

ACTION & DISCUSSION GUIDE





## OVERVIEW

Mauna Kea is an inactive volcano on the Island of Hawai'i. Its peak is 13,803 ft above sea level, making it the highest point in Hawai'i and the highest mountain in the world from its base on the seafloor. Mauna Kea is a deeply sacred place that plays a central role in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander creation stories. This majestic mountain also encompasses a significant water aquifer for the island and shields it from hurricanes and other drastic weather conditions.

As far back as 1968, the Hawai'i State Land Board began issuing permits to construct astronomy facilities including telescopes on the summit of Mauna Kea. The University of Hawai'i was issued a lease and was tasked with the management of these conservation lands of Mauna Kea. In 2010, the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) was proposed to be built on Mauna Kea. Eighteen stories high and covering a surface area of 5 acres, the TMT would be one of the largest proposed telescopes in the world. The telescope is a \$3.6 billion project with partners from Caltech, the University of California, Japan, India, and Canada.

In 2014 the TMT project attempted to break ground. **Instead, they were met by a grassroots resistance of hundreds of protectors led by Native Hawaiian leaders.** The highly televised incidents have sparked a cultural resurgence and now tens of thousands are mobilized worldwide - similar to what was seen at Standing Rock. The protectors sustained a frontline camp physically preventing construction for 9 months until they left the mountain in March 2020.

Mauna Kea Education and Awareness (MKEA) and the movement to protect Mauna Kea continue to stand to protect Mauna Kea from the threat of TMT. Alliances have been made to stop the desecration and destruction of this sacred mountain as well as land bases, cultural practices, and traditional lifeways in Hawai'i and around the world.

# TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT MAUNA KEA

Find all of these and more at [standingabovetheclouds.com](https://standingabovetheclouds.com)

- ▶ **SIGN MKEA'S PETITION** demanding there be no construction on Mauna Kea
- ▶ **FOLLOW MKEA ON INSTA** for up to date information and actions
- ▶ **HOST A SCREENING OF** *of Standing Above the Clouds* to bring the movement for Mauna Kea to your community
- ▶ **DONATE TO MKEA** to resource the movement

## HEALING RESOURCES

### **Grounding exercise to bring you out of anxiety or panic attack:**

*Sit up straight with both feet on the floor.*

Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds

Breathe out through your mouth for 7 seconds

Do this 3 times

As you continue breathing, identify and say out loud:

5 things you can see

4 things you can touch

3 things you can hear

2 things you can smell

1 thing you can taste

Continue breathing deeply, and take in your surroundings, reminding yourself that you are in a safe space.

## NEED TO TALK?

### Find a Warmline:

<https://www.warmline.org/>

Warmlines are staffed with peer counselors who you can talk to about your struggles and can provide you with hope, strength, and first-hand knowledge of living with mental health issues. If you are in a crisis they can help you find the appropriate help.



## ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE EXPERIENCING A CRISIS?

### Don't Call The Police:

<https://dontcallthepolice.com/>

Police are not always equipped to offer mental health support, and often pose danger to People of Color, Mentally Ill, Neurodivergent, and Disabled People. If you or someone you know is in crisis, consider community-based solutions. Check [\*\*Don't Call the Police\*\*](#) for specific resources and organizations that can help.

# MORE HEALING RESOURCES

## ► MEDITATIONS / SOMATIC PRACTICES

- [Centering](#)
- [Breath is a reciprocal relationship with the Earth](#)
- [Choice in our Bodies](#)
- [Gratitude](#)
- [Resilience & Imagination](#)

## ► INDIGENOUS-LED RESOURCES & SUPPORT

- [Mental Health tips from Native Aunties](#)
- [We R Native mental health support for Native youth](#)
- [Kū Ānuenue](#): A community of care for māhū and LGBTQIA2s+
- [Reroot: Remembering the Wisdom of our Kūpuna](#) webinar with [Anuheia St. Laurent- Native Hawaiian Mental Health Education](#)
- [Kū Project](#) and [walking meditation](#): Hawaiian values and practices to live a purposeful life

# OLELO HAWAI'I GLOSSARY

<b>Ahu</b>	Altar, shrine, cairn
<b>Aloha 'Āina</b>	Deep love and commitment to the land
<b>Eō</b>	Call; to call, answer
<b>Huli</b>	To turn, to change
<b>Kia'i</b>	Protectors, guardians, activists, advocates
<b>Kapu Aloha</b>	Elevated mode of conduct that represents the collectives' will to protect wahi pana (storied places) and wahi kapu (sacred spaces).
<b>Kanaka</b>	Human being, person, individual, Hawaiian
<b>Ki'i</b>	Image, statue, carving
<b>Kū</b>	To stand, rise, become, transform
<b>Kuleana</b>	Responsibility or duty
<b>Kupuna</b>	Elders, ancestors
<b>Lāhui</b>	Nation, race, tribe, people, nationality
<b>Mālama</b>	To take care of, tend, attend, care for, preserve, protect, beware, save, maintain; to keep or observe
<b>Mana Wahine</b>	The power of women, powerful women
<b>Moku</b>	District, island, islet, section, forest, grove
<b>Na'au</b>	Gut; mind, heart, affections; of the heart or mind; mood, feelings
<b>Pāhoehoe</b>	Smooth, unbroken type of lava, contrasting with 'a'ā; to turn into pāhoehoe lava
<b>Piko</b>	Center, navel, navel string, umbilical cord, summit or top of a hill or mountain; crest; crown of the head
<b>Pū</b>	Large triton conch or helmet shell wind instrument
<b>Wao Akua</b>	A distant mountain region, believed inhabited only by spirits (akua), realm of the gods/goddesses

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Mauna Kea is an ancestor to the Hawaiian people. Who are your ancestors? Where do they come from?
- Mauna Kea is a deeply sacred place in Hawai'i. What is sacred in your community? What would you do if that place was threatened?
- The mana wahine in *Standing Above the Clouds* practice “heart-forward” organizing. How did you see them do that? How would you do it in your own life and community?
- Hāwane speaks of her mother, Pua Case, saying “She is the call, I am the response.” Who are you the response to?
- The movement to protect Mauna Kea takes place on multiple fronts: in courtrooms, boardrooms, the side of the road, and on the mountain itself. What does that tell you about movement organizing?
- Hāwane gathers her power each day by singing and putting on her makeup. How do you gather your power?
- Some kia'i (protectors) experienced emotional trauma from the actions of the police and others working on behalf of the telescope. What paths have you seen mana wāhine use to heal from trauma? What healing practices do you use?
- LaDonna Brave Bull Allard says in the film “It is not about fighting something. It's about loving something.” What does that mean to you? What do you love so deeply that you would protect? How do you incorporate love into your protection?



## LESSON PLAN

### Exploring “He aha lā he kūkulu? What is Your Foundation?”

#### Objective

Participants will explore the concept of foundations (kūkulu) in both the chant “He aha lā he kūkulu?” and their own lives. They will discuss the significance of foundations in social-emotional learning and indigenous cultures, reflecting on how these foundations manifest in their experiences and how they relate to current global and personal uncertainties.

**\*For educators in Hawaii:** This lesson plan is in accordance with [Nā Hopena A’o](#)

*The film does include themes including emotional trauma, arrests, and self-harm and is appropriate for upper elementary, middle, and high school students. We encourage that teachers follow up at school with discussions around those topics.*

#### Materials

*He aha lā he kūkulu?*

*He mauna!*

*He aha lā he kūkulu?*

*He ‘ahu!*

*He aha lā he kūkulu?*

*He pōhaku!*

*He aha lā he kūkulu?*

*He kanaka!*

#### Translation:

*What is a pillar, a mountain*

*What is a pillar, an altar*

*What is a pillar, a rock*

*What is a pillar, a person*

- “He aha lā he kūkulu?” Chant
- Whiteboard and markers
- Paper and pencils
- Chart paper and markers
- Audio recording of the chant (optional)
  - [Instructional video](#)
  - [Audio recording](#)

## Preparation

- Prepare copies of the chant for each participant.
- Set up the audio recording for playback (optional).
- Arrange the space for group discussion.

## Introduction (10 minutes)

### Greeting and Warm-up:

- Emphasize starting with aloha, a spirit of love, peace, and compassion that underpins Hawaiian culture and this lesson.
- Begin with a warm welcome, acknowledging the people featured in and those who made the film *“Standing Above the Clouds”* possible. Express gratitude for their efforts in highlighting the importance of foundations, both physical and metaphorical, in our lives.
- Introduce the concept of kūkulu (foundations) and explain that today’s lesson will focus on understanding and discussing what foundations are important in their lives.

### Reading the Chant:

- Distribute copies of the chant “He aha lā he kūkulu?” to each participant.
- Read the chant together as a group. If possible, play an audio recording of the chant to help participants hear the correct pronunciation and rhythm.



## Discussion (15 minutes)

### Understanding the Chant:

- Discuss the meaning of each line in the chant. Ask participants to reflect on what each foundation represents in Hawaiian culture or their own culture:
  - He mauna! A mountain!
  - He 'ahu! A temple!
  - He pōhaku! A rock!
  - He kanaka! A person!
- Explain that a kūkulu (foundation) can be a person, place, or thing that you aloha (love), care for, and respect deeply. When you have your worst day, where do you go? Who do you search for? What do you listen to?
- Highlight that in today's world, there are many uncertainties, but finding and grounding yourself in your foundations will make you resilient.
- Refer to the closing scene of the film "*Standing Above the Clouds*," where the chant begins slowly with a few voices and gradually grows louder and faster as more people join in.
- Discuss participants' reflections on that scene. How did it make them feel? What did they notice about the power and unity of the chant as more people participated? How does this reflect the idea of kūkulu (foundations) in both individual and communal contexts?
- Ask participants to think about the foundations in their own lives. What are their mountains, temples, rocks, and people?





### Activity (20 minutes)

#### Group Discussion:

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Provide each group with chart paper and markers.
- Have each group discuss and write down their answers to the following questions:
  - Who are the important people (kanaka) that form their foundation?
  - What activities or places (mauna, 'ahu, pōhaku) are important in their lives?
  - When do they feel most connected to these foundations?
  - Where do they feel their foundations are strongest?
  - How do these foundations support them emotionally and socially?

#### Group Sharing:

- After 15 minutes, ask each group to share their findings with the class.
- Discuss common themes and differences among the groups.

### Reflection (10 minutes)

#### Individual Reflection:

- Ask participants to take a few minutes to write down their personal reflections on what they learned about their foundations.
- Encourage them to think about how they can strengthen these foundations in their daily lives.

#### Group Discussion:

- Bring the group back together for a final discussion.
- Ask participants to share any insights or thoughts they have about the importance of foundations in their social and emotional well-being.

## Closing (5 minutes)

### Review and Summary:

- Summarize the key points discussed during the lesson.
- Reinforce the idea that understanding and acknowledging our foundations is crucial for personal growth and emotional health.

### Closing Chant:

- End the lesson by reading the chant “He aha lā he kūkulu?” together once more.
- Thank the participants for their participation: “Mahalo nui loa!”

### Assessment:

- Participation in group discussions and activities.
- Individual reflection writings.

### Extensions:

- Ask participants to create a visual representation of their foundations through drawing or collage.
- Have participants research and present on another Hawaiian chant or cultural practice related to foundations and social-emotional learning.
- Show the film [Standing Above the Clouds](#). Request a screening [here](#).
  - If you watched the film, please have the participants [fill out this audience survey](#).

