

About Lanakila Mangauil and Protection of Mauna Kea Mountain



Group Picture of the Mauna Kea protest in Orem 2019

On October 10, 2019, Utah Valley University (UVU) and its Multicultural Center's Pacific Islander Initiative hosted Lanakila Mangauil, a key member in the movement to protect Mauna Kea and perpetuate Hawaiian culture. This event captured my attention because I have been following the Mauna Kea movement since 2015 and have gone to the mountain to protest several times when I lived in Hawaii.

As a native Hawaiian and someone who was raised on the island of Oahu I felt a deep connection with the chants and hawaiian hulas that were taught. Lanakila talked about the situation

in Hawaii concerning Mauna Kea. The United States government illegally overthrew the Hawaii monarchy and occupied a sovereign nation. Since this injustice the U.S. government has attempted to colonize the islands and exploited the land. In this event Mauna Kea's history was thoroughly explained. This mountain has been held sacred in hawaiian culture as a place of worship, a place



*Picture of my family -
Hawaii State Flag*

to commune with the gods, a place of holiness that hawaiians who wished to go to had extensive rituals and cleansing processes needed before climbing to commune with the gods.

Mauna Kea was exploited by private companies leasing the land to build telescopes in order to observe the night sky and its mysteries. Because of Mauna Kea's location, the mountain is said to be a prime spot for astronomical research. There are currently 13 telescopes already built with the current TMT project as another addition. The 13 telescopes have already negatively affected the environment and there are no plans by any of the private companies to restore the land or deconstruct the telescopes. The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) is estimated to be larger than a football field and dig into the mountain over 3 miles in order to support its structure. There are many laws that this TMT project violates but the construction has still moved forward despite multiple lawsuits. This has caused the Hawaiian people to physically go to the Mauna in order to protect the land and their culture.

My husband and I are native hawaiian and we have a 1 year old son that we are raising currently here in utah, away from our home. It is important for us to be aware of current issues and do our part to promote awareness and teach not only our family but others about the injustices

that are being done and what we can do to stop it. It is important to recognize corruption and injustice and try and fight against such things. I have gone to several protests here in Utah and in Hawaii to bring awareness and protect my culture. There are places where you can donate money to those living on the roads and getting arrested for trying to protect the land and their culture from being exploited. I am grateful for events like these that bring people like Lanakila who is a key member in the movement to show us that although we might not be living in Hawaii right now there is still a lot that we can and must do to protect and fight against injustice.



Picture of Aji jr. holding the Hawaii State Flag

Sariah Gomez, UVU student