

Illuminating Our Ancestral Connections: Marae Taputapuātea

What is
*Marae
Taputapuātea?*

Why is *Marae
Taputapuātea*
important?

Where can I
learn more
about this topic?



Wa'a Honua

What is
Marae Taputapuātea?

***Marae Taputapuātea* is one of the most sacred religious sites in Polynesia. It is a complex of temple structures on the island of Ra'iātea that was first constructed around 1000 A.D.**

A *marae* is a religious site. The term *taputapuātea* means "broad far-reaching sacredness."

Click on one of the spotlights to learn more.

Ra'iātea

Dedication

Designation



Hauviri



Taputapuātea



Oputeina



Ra'iātea

Also known by its traditional name, Havai'i, Ra'iātea is part of the "Leeward Islands" in the Society Archipelago (of which the main island is Tahiti).

It shares the same lagoon as neighboring Taha'a, also known as 'Uporu. The names Havai'i, 'Uporu and Tahiti are found throughout greater Polynesia and are remembered in ancestral stories of migration and chiefly genealogies.



Leeward Islands



Dedication

Originally dedicated to Ta'aroa, god of the sea (Kanaloa in Hawaiian), Marae Taputapuātea was later re-dedicated to his son, Oro, and it played a pivotal role in politics and chiefly governance throughout the region.



Marae ceremony



Offerings at Taputapuātea

Designation

Due to its importance within the Society Islands and its significant influence on migratory, two-way voyaging to distant Polynesian archipelagos such as Hawai'i and Aotearoa, Marae Taputapuātea was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2017.



UNESCO ceremony, 2017

**Why is *Marae Taputapuātea*
important?**

The significance of Marae Taputapuātea is acknowledged in several ways.

Click on one of the spotlights to learn more.

Source of Ancestral Heritage

Fe'e

Fa'atau Aroha

Ceremonies and Protocols

Teavamo'a Pass

Pōhaku

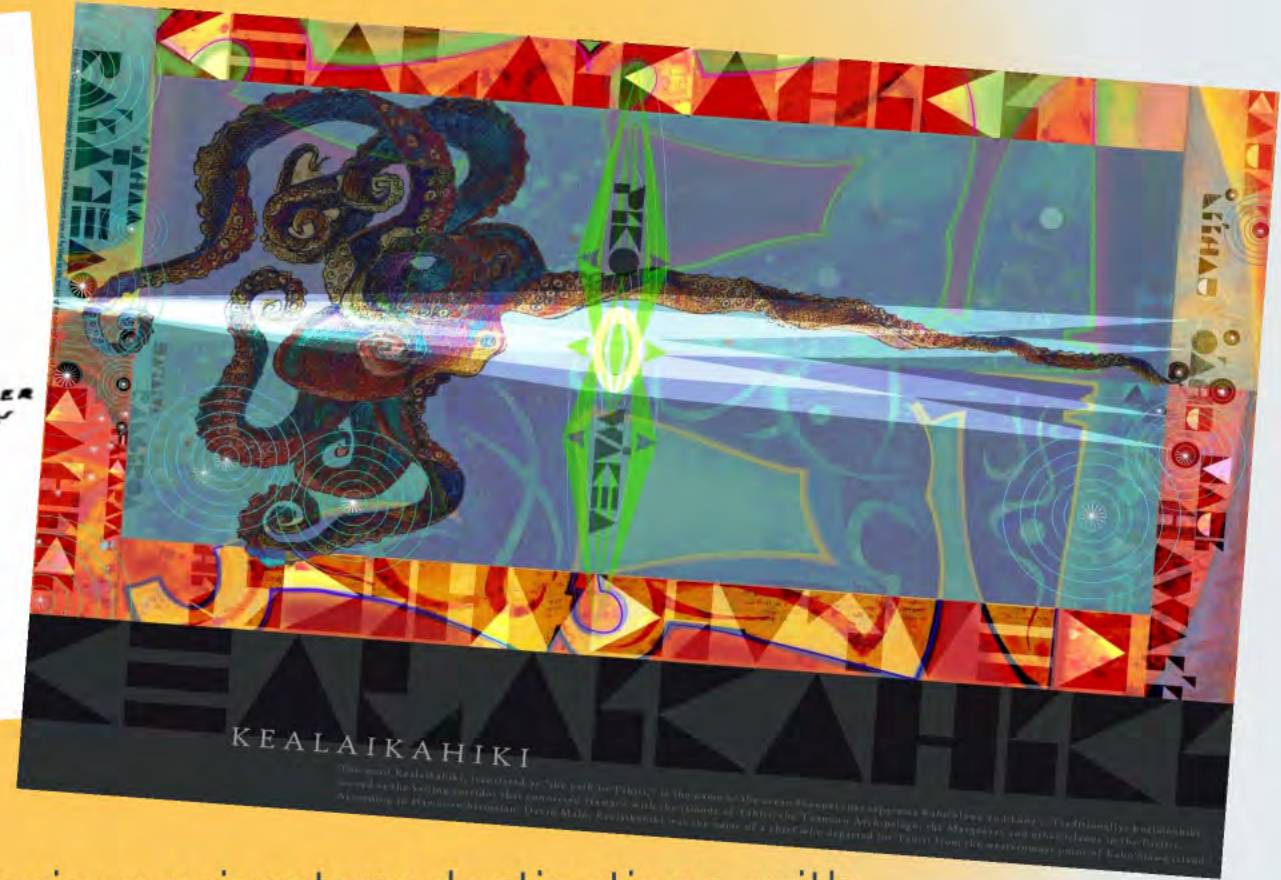
Alliances Today

Declaration



Stone walls at Taputapuātea

The metaphor of a *fe'e nui*, a large octopus named Tumu Ra'i Fenua, features Ra'iātea (also known as Hawai'i) as the head, the place of origin.



Writhing tentacles radiate out to various migratory destinations, with the northern tentacle representing the ancestral sea road to Hawai'i, Kealaikahiki.

***Fa'atau Aroha* refers to an ancient alliance of voyaging chiefs who would pilgrimage back along their respective sea roads to the mecca of ancestral navigational knowledge, Marae Taputapuātea.**



After many centuries of dormancy, Hōkūle'a was instrumental in the revival of this tradition, which is now in practice today.

Strict protocol requires that visiting canoes approach from outside the lagoon and enter only through the sacred pass of Teavamo'a.



Once marae priests and elders lift the temple restrictions, or tapu, visiting canoes can move to the shore and disembark for a series of arrival rituals and ceremonies.





Stones from Marae Taputapuātea were used to establish new temples of the same name throughout Polynesia. There are Taputapuātea in Tahiti, Tuamotu, Cook Islands, Hawai'i, etc.

Giftng stones, or pōhaku, upon arrival, as well as receiving stones upon departure, is still practiced today.

In 2019, the 'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium (Kamehameha Schools, Polynesian Voyaging Society, Bishop Museum, and University of Hawai'i) signed a joint declaration with the council of elders and the mayor of Taputapuātea.

The declaration commits to cultural and educational exchange and declares Marae Taputapuātea as a Hawaiian Heritage Site.

See the declaration in:

- **Tahitian and Hawaiian:** https://kaiwakiloumoku.ksbe.edu/assets/img/content/moananuiakea/Moananuiakea-Declaration_Marae_Taputapuatea_TahHaw-pdf_download.pdf
- **French and English:** https://kaiwakiloumoku.ksbe.edu/assets/img/content/moananuiakea/Moananuiakea-Declaration_Marae_Taputapuatea_FreEng-pdf_download.pdf



Declaration signing



'Awa ceremony



**Where can I learn more about
this topic?**

**Ka'iwakīloumoku
Pacific
Indigenous
Institute**

Videos

**Continue exploring Marae
Taputapuātea with these
resources:**

**UNESCO World
Heritage Site**

MOANANUIĀKEA

The vast Pacific Ocean is the largest feature on earth named by humans other than the earth itself.

[BACK TO MOANANUIĀKEA](#)



'AHA MOANANUIĀKEA EDUCATION VISION

The Pacific, the ancestral home of the Hawaiian people, is a strategic oceanic region of influence and impact that serves as a global educational canvas for the highest levels of learning to generate real-world solutions guided by indigenous wisdom.

To realize this vision, the 'Aha Moananuiākea consortium has established ten cultural partnerships that connect Hawai'i and the following Pacific regions: French Polynesia, Aotearoa, Alaska, and Taiwan.



[Consortium Overview](#)

[Partnership Details](#)

[Guiding Elders](#)

The 'Aha Moananuiākea Pacific Consortium encompasses Kamehameha Schools, Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS), Bishop Museum, and the University of Hawaii System, and is led and organized by Kamehameha Schools' Ho'okahua Cultural Vibrancy Group, based at the Ka'iwakiloumoku Hawaiian Cultural Center.

The consortium's purpose is to honor the ancestral oceanic home of Native Hawaiians – Moananuiākea – where profound human achievements have taken place for millennia.



FRENCH POLYNESIA

Learn more about the cultural partnerships of French Polynesia



Explore diverse cultural perspectives from contemporary voices around the Pacific

<https://kaiwakiloumoku.ksbe.edu/moananuiakea>



Taputapuātea - The Cradle of the Polynesian People

<https://youtu.be/wXbJXHR8-3g>

Coordinated by the F.P. Ministry of Culture



Hōkūle'a, Hikianalia Ceremonial Return To Taputapuātea

https://youtu.be/mvoCfnyra_E

April 2017 video, Big Island News



Click on Vimeo link to play video

Tahiti-Raiātea-Pomare Partnerships

<https://vimeo.com/397327458>

Video includes the historic declaration signed in 2019 on site at Marae Taputapuātea (minute 4:00-7:40)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, science, and culture. UNESCO designates places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity to the World Heritage List to be protected for future generations.

Learn more about Taputapuātea's designation as a World Heritage site:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1529/>

The screenshot shows the UNESCO World Heritage Convention website page for Taputapuātea. The page features a blue header with the UNESCO logo and navigation links. Below the header is a search bar and a filter button. The main content area includes a title 'Taputapuātea' and a description of the site. A sidebar on the right provides key information about the site, including its date of inscription, criteria, property size, buffer zone, and dossier number. Below the text is a large image of the site, a map, and a gallery of smaller images.

unesco
World Heritage Convention

Help preserve sites now! Explore UNESCO English Login

Our expertise The List Activities Partnerships Publications

Search the List Filter

The List > Taputapuātea

Taputapuātea

Description Maps Documents Gallery Indicators

Taputapuātea
Taputapuātea on Ra'ūitea Island is at the centre of the 'Polynesian Triangle', a vast portion of the Pacific Ocean, dotted with islands, and the last part of the globe to be settled by humans. The property includes two forested valleys, a portion of lagoon and coral reef and a strip of open ocean. At the heart of the property is the Taputapuātea marae complex, a political, ceremonial and funerary centre. It is characterized by several marae, with different functions. Widespread in Polynesia, the marae were places where the world of the living intersected the world of the ancestors and the gods. Taputapuātea is an exceptional testimony to 1,000 years of mā'ohi civilization.
Description is available under license CC-BY-SA-IGO 3.0

France
Date of Inscription: 2017
Criteria: (iii)(iv)(vi)
Property: 2,124 ha
Buffer zone: 3,363 ha
Dossier: 1529
S16 50 29.04 W151 22 20.56

English French Spanish Dutch

Taputapuātea © SCP

Illuminating Our Ancestral Connections: Marae Taputapuātea

What is
*Marae
Taputapuātea?*

Why is *Marae
Taputapuātea*
important?

Where can I
learn more
about this topic?



Wa'a Honua