

The Cult of Pele in Traditional Hawai'i

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to reconstruct the cult of Pele, volcano goddess of Hawai'i, as it existed in pre-European Hawai'i. It is based on English language sources, including translations from Hawaiian and various European languages, and is intended to be a compilation of the earliest descriptions of the Pele cult. Primarily descriptive with minimal interpretation and analysis, the discussion includes (1) Pele within the context of Hawaiian religion; (2) the mythology of Pele; (3) traditional beliefs about Pele; (4) the ritual leaders or priesthood of Pele; (5) ceremonies for Pele; (6) offerings to Pele; and (7) the role of Pele in sorcery. The conclusion presents a summary of the major features of the traditional cult and a brief discussion of the continuing belief in Pele in contemporary Hawai'i.

INTRODUCTION

The volcano goddess Pele was the central deity of an important religious cult in pre-European Hawai'i.² The cult attracted worshippers from the districts of Hawai'i Island, most frequently inundated by volcanic eruptions, and had its own temples, priests, rituals, and mythology. Although Pele was the most important of the volcano deities, other members of her family, such as her sister Hi'iaka-i-ka-poli-o-Pele and her brother Ka-moho-ali'i, also received ritual attention in the traditional cult.³

Present knowledge of the Pele cult, and of traditional Hawaiian religion in general, is based on a few written records of what was once a complex, elaborate religious system. This sparse and scattered literature includes the writings of the earliest explorers, the first missionaries, the first literate Hawaiians, and various other observers who passed through the islands before traditional Hawaiian culture was dramatically altered by Western contact. These sources must be used with caution, however. By the time most of the early descriptions were written, the culture had already been significantly altered by Western contact (Kelly 1967:401). The writings of early Hawaiians (e.g., Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau and David Malo) are invaluable sources for the study of traditional Hawaiian religion but they, too, must be used cautiously since these men were Christianized and frequently critical of the traditional religion. Also, for the most part, they were writing from memory of a religion once practiced, rather than from intimate knowledge of one still functioning. Equally important, they were not themselves religious specialists, and their writings represent a very limited view of the complex, diverse

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2. Unless otherwise stated, orthography of Hawaiian words and deities follows *Hawaiian Dictionary* (Pukui & Elbert 1971). Orthography of place names is from *Place Names of Hawaii* (Pukui, Elbert, & Mookini 1974). Spellings of words not found in either of these books are based on the accounts in which they appear.

3. *Pele* is used in Hawaiian not only as the name of the volcano goddess, but also to mean "lava flow, volcano, eruption" (Pukui & Elbert 1971:298). According to Kamakau, *pele* is also the name for a volcanic manifestation or spirit (1964:64, 89).

religion of traditional Hawai'i. Many of the other early observers remained in the islands only briefly, and their observations are often based on hearsay and are extremely superficial.

Thus, the details of Hawaiian religion and, more specifically, of the cult of Pele within that religion will probably never be known. This paper presents a compilation of the earliest descriptions of the Pele cult in an attempt to describe the general outlines of the Pele religion. It is based on English language sources, which include translations from Hawaiian as well as various European languages. The most important sources for data on the traditional cult of Pele are the writings of William Ellis (1979 [1827]), Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau (1964), and Mary Kawena Pukui (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]; Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972). William Ellis, an English missionary, visited the island of Hawai'i in 1823, and his journal has the earliest published references to Pele. Although his observations are biased by his Christian religious fervor and he was observing Hawaiian culture some 40 years after Western contact, he nonetheless left some of the earliest and most important documentations of the Pele cult. Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau wrote a series of articles in Hawaiian newspapers on various aspects of Hawaiian culture during the mid-19th century. The most important of his works were translated by Mary Kawena Pukui and published by Bishop Museum (Valeri 1985:xxv). Kamakau's accounts of Pele worship are perhaps the most important sources on the traditional worship of Pele. The writings of Mary Kawena Pukui herself are much later than the other sources used in this paper, but are relevant because they are based on data from Ka'u district of Hawai'i, where the Pele cult was very important and where Pukui conducted considerable field research. Pukui's family believed itself descended from Pele and continued to worship the goddess long after the Christianization of the islands. Thus her writings, although late, provide important insights into the traditional cult. In addition to these major sources, dozens of other early observers have contributed bits and pieces of information about the Pele cult. The resulting mosaic provides a general picture of the cult, albeit one filled with tantalizing lacunae.

This paper, then, is an attempt to reconstruct the cult of Pele as it existed in traditional Hawai'i. It is primarily descriptive and offers minimal interpretation and analysis. The following text includes discussions of (1) Pele within the context of Hawaiian religion; (2) the mythology of Pele; (3) traditional attitudes toward Pele; (4) ritual leaders or the priesthood of Pele; (5) ceremonies for Pele; (6) offerings to Pele; and (7) the role of Pele in sorcery. The conclusion presents a summary of the major features of the traditional cult and a brief discussion of the continuing belief in Pele in contemporary Hawai'i.

THE PELE CULT WITHIN HAWAIIAN RELIGION

Hawaiian religion, like most Polynesian religions, was an Olympian-type religious system with shamanistic elements. Hierarchical gods dominated the various realms of human concern and were the objects of religious ritual. Kū and the goddess Hina were the male-female godhead who presided over all the male and female gods (Beckwith 1970 [1940]:13). Kū, Lono, Kāne, and Kanaloa are usually regarded as the 4 major gods (Beckwith 1970 [1940]:3-4), although local and ancestral gods (*aumakua*) were probably more important to the majority of the people. Kū is perhaps best known as the god of war. Associated with agriculture, rain, and peace, Lono was the central god in the *Makahiki* harvest festival. Kāne "represented the god of procreation and was worshipped as ancestor of chiefs and commoners" (Beckwith 1970 [1940]:42). Kanaloa, an important deity in other parts of Polynesia but less important in Hawai'i, was almost always found in association with Kāne. The rank and importance of these gods doubtless varied by region within an island as well as from island to island throughout the archipelago. These individual gods had various manifestations (e.g., Kamakau lists 36 for Kāne [1964:57-58]) that reflected their control over different domains of Hawaiian concern,

and each was associated with different colors, directions, days of the month, periods of the day, natural phenomena, plants, animals, and seasons (Valeri 1985:15). Some were also ancestral gods (*'aumakua*) to those Hawaiians who could trace their ancestry directly to them. All had priests learned in the proper ritual for their appeasement, which was performed in special *heiau* (temples).

Beneath these major gods were literally hundreds of other gods who included the children of the major gods, such as Pele and other members of her family. Pele had a special relationship with the god Lono, who is associated both with rain in the Ka'ū district of active vulcanism on the island of Hawai'i, and with agriculture, especially in the celebration of the *Makahiki* harvest festival. Handy and Handy suggest this association may be due to the tradition of Pele and Lono coming from the south and the fact that rain clouds and rain often accompany volcanic eruptions (1972:333). Ka'ū traditions claim Lono is the uncle of Pele (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:31). All the traditional myths relate Pele in one way or another to the highest gods. Thus, the chiefly families who traced their genealogy to Pele could trace their relationship to the highest gods and ultimately to the very beginning of the cosmos.

The genealogical relationships of these different gods are confusing and conflicting in the mythology that has survived. Probably this was also the case in traditional Hawai'i because of regional variations, marriages that brought different families (and thereby different gods) together, the political ups and downs of chiefs and their gods, and the genealogical juggling occasionally done to enhance family pedigrees. Consequently, the genealogies of related families may conflict with each other; nonetheless, the individual genealogies provided a coherent statement of the family's position within the cosmogony as well as within Hawaiian society.

Pele and members of her family are frequently described as *'aumakua*, or ancestral deities (Kamakau 1964:28; Kihe n.d.:566; Poepoe Collection n.d.:37). These *'aumakua* tended to be regional and were the most important objects of ritual concern for the majority of the population. Some *'aumakua* became *akua*, or major gods, in some areas. Such seems to be the case with Pele. Pukui claims Pele was worshipped both as an *akua* by some people who were not directly descended from her, and as an *'aumakua* by her descendants (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:1:24,36). Ellis (1979 [1827]:216) and Bingham (1981 [1847]:255) also refer to Pele as an *akua*. Kamakau reports that "she [Pele] was consecrated and made a god . . . by persons not related by blood descent; and that is how Pele became an *akua* for this race" (1964:69). Emerson claims that the 4 great gods, Kū, Kāne, Kanaloa, and Lono, were occasionally dependent on or intimidated by Pele (1915:40,201).

Most Hawaiians living in the volcano areas of Hawai'i, the districts of Ka'ū, Puna, and Kona, at the time of European contact traced their ancestry to Pele. Kamakau elaborates:

The persons who have a *kuleana* [a right or privilege because of a blood relationship] in *Ka lua o Pele* are the direct descendants . . . of Haumea, Kanehekili, Kaho'ali'i, Kanewawahilani, Kauilanuimakehaikalani, Nakoloilani, Kamoho-ali'i, Pele, Hi'iaka, and Namakaokaha'i. If one of these *'aumakua* is in the family of a person, they are all in his family. . . . Only through the blood lineage . . . of the ancestors does the *kuleana* come. The god recognizes that blood kinship and clings forever to his descendants in the living world. Persons who can claim such birth, even those who live on Oahu or Kauai, or those who have sailed away to foreign lands, have a *kuleana* in *Ka lua o Pele*. (1964:66)

Kamakau further claims that upon the death of a person believed to be descended from Pele, a volcanic spirit came to lead the deceased's spirit to the volcano (1964:50). He adds: "Only her [Pele's] actual relatives . . . commemorated her and observed the *kapu* of their ancestress" (1964:69). In discussing the *kapu* associated with the *'aumakua*, Kamakau states:

The kapu of the third division, those with volcanic *'aumakua* . . . and those who had been changed into *pele* [a volcanic spirit], had to be combined with the kapu of another *'aumakua*. A volcanic spirit, a *pele*, as I have said, had no kapu thing of its own; only a gift of a bit of salt was required. But if the *pele* was combined with Puna'aikoa'e, then the *koa'e* bird became kapu; if combined with the kapu of the *mo'o* Kalamainu'u, then the kapu was a very strict one, and several articles of food were forbidden. (1964:89)

There is no evidence that Pele was worshipped extensively beyond the volcano area of Hawai'i, although her mythology was apparently widespread throughout the Hawaiian Islands and members of her family were important in ritual throughout the archipelago. For example, Laka, described as both her daughter and her sister in the myths, and Hi'iaka-i-ka-poli-o-Pele, her youngest sister, were objects of ritual concern during aspects of hula training (Emerson 1965 [1909]:23–25). Another sister, Kapo, as well as other family members, assisted the malevolent ends of sorcery (Emerson 1892:7). Her brother, Kanehekili, a thunder god, was the center of a cult on Maui (Thrum 1908:48–49).

Pakele writes of specific chiefs and the gods they worshipped (1864:3196–98). Not surprisingly, he mentions "Pele-wahine" and "Hi'iaka-akua" as gods of a chief from Hawai'i. Other members of Pele's family are mentioned as gods of chiefs from other islands, specifically "Kapo-wahine" (Pele's sister) for a Moloka'i chief, "Haumea-akua" (Pele's mother) for an O'ahu chief, and "Lono-pele" (Pele's uncle) for a Ni'ihau chief. Chiefs who traced their ancestry directly to Pele were most likely from Hawai'i Island, more specifically the volcano districts. However, because of the web of kinship that related all the gods, most chiefs could probably trace a kinship tie to the Pele family. Kamakau notes that "from Kauai to Hawaii come visitors with their bones and their gifts and their offerings vowed to Pele" (1964:67), suggesting that people from throughout the Hawaiian archipelago felt closely enough related to Pele to want their bones deposited in the volcano with the goddess. This is 1 of 2 references in the early literature I encountered of people coming from other islands to worship Pele.

A variety of epithets were used to refer to Pele indirectly since the direct use of her name was not always considered proper. Among those found in the literature are: "Pele-ke-ahi-'a-loa" (Pele-of-the-lasting-fire) (Manu 1899:38); "the Woman" (Emerson 1915:10), "the Woman who dwells in the Pit" (25), "God of the Pit" (77), "Woman of Kilauea" (95), and "the Goddess" (167); "Pele-honua-mea (Pele-the-sacred-earth-person)" (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:28); "Honuamea" (Kamakau 1964:14); "mountain dweller," "earth devourer," and *wahine kapu* (sacred woman) (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:1:200); "Akua lehe 'oi. *Sharp-lipped goddess*" (Pukui 1983:13), "Ka wahine 'ai honua. *The earth-eating woman*" (177), "Ka wahine 'ai pōhaku. *The stone-eating woman*" (177), "Ka wahine 'ai la'au o Puna. *The tree-eating woman of Puna*" (177), "Ke kua a kāmāwai. *The back guarded by law*" (188), and "Luahine moe nonō. *Old woman who sleeps and snores*" (218).

THE MYTHOLOGY OF PELE

Although the actual worship of Pele was most important in the districts of Hawai'i that experienced active vulcanism, the mythology of the goddess was widespread throughout the Hawaiian Islands. The body of Pele myths is a major myth cycle of Hawai'i and is, in fact, one of the most elaborate found throughout Polynesia. The collection of myths constitutes a biography of the goddess with the individual myths relating: (1) her birth and genealogy in a mythical homeland; (2) her migration to Hawai'i with family members; (3) her search for a suitable home in the Hawaiian Islands; (4) her love affair with Lohi'au, as related in the well-known Pele and Hi'iaka cycle (Emerson 1915); (5) her tempestuous encounter with

Kamapua'a, the hog-man demigod from O'ahu; and (6) numerous minor accounts of her role in shaping geological formations and her encounters with various real and mythical characters. Discussions and/or summaries of the major myths occur in Kalakaua (1972 [1888]:137–54), Emerson (1915), Beckwith (1970 [1940]:167–200), Anderson (1967 [1928]:267–87), Westervelt (1963 [1916]), Charlot (1987:41–47), and Nimmo (1987).

As with many Hawaiian gods, the myths are contradictory regarding Pele's genealogy. Most agree that her parents were among the major gods, with Kū as her father and Haumea, or Hina, as her mother. As noted, Kū and Hina were believed to preside over all gods, while Haumea was considered one of the original gods and "ancestress of the Hawaiian people" (Beckwith 1970 [1940]:276). Although the myths provide a variety of other names for Pele's parentage, they generally agree that she was the child of the highest gods. She was not an only child; in fact, an examination of the mythology reveals she had dozens of sisters and brothers (Nimmo 1987:12–16). Some of the siblings, like Pele, had both human and spirit forms, but most had only spirit forms (Kamakau 1964:67). The siblings who play significant roles in the mythology include: Ka-moho-ali'i, a brother who steered the canoe that brought Pele to Hawai'i and later became important as a shark-god; Nā-maka-o-kaha'i, an older sister whose jealousy of Pele resulted in Pele's expulsion from her homeland; Hi'iaka-i-ka-poli-o-Pele, Pele's youngest sister, best known in Hawaiian mythology for her adventures in seeking Pele's lover, Lohi'au, as recounted in the Pele-Hi'iaka cycle (Emerson 1915);⁴ Laka, sometimes a sister and sometimes a daughter of Pele, associated with the hula; and Pele's sister, Kapo, also associated with the hula, but equally important in traditional Hawai'i as a sorcery goddess.

Pele was born in a mythical land, usually Kahiki, a place of origin that occurs frequently in Hawaiian religious literature. Because of a conflict, usually with her older sister, Nā-maka-o-kaha'i, she is forced to emigrate to Hawai'i with some of her relatives. The entourage visits various mythical places en route, but eventually lands in the Hawaiian Islands, usually at Ni'ihau, or one of the nearby islets. Upon arriving at Ni'ihau, Pele digs into the earth to build a home, but she soon encounters water, or her sister Nā-maka-o-kaha'i, sometimes described as a sea goddess, and she must look elsewhere. She moves from island to island in a northwest to southeast direction, seeking a home, always encountering water or Nā-maka-o-kaha'i, and having various adventures along the way, until she arrives at Kī-lau-ēa Volcano on Hawai'i Island where she finally finds a home suitable for her extensive family. Kī-lau-ēa becomes her permanent home, and from there she has the various adventures recounted in Hawaiian mythology.

Many traditional stories and chants of Pele reflect a duality in the nature of the goddess. For example, sometimes she is presented as a beautiful young woman and at other times as an ugly old hag. She may be benevolent or malevolent. She is a creator of new lands as well as a destroyer of old lands. This duality may be partly explained, perhaps, by the unpredictable and multifaceted nature of the volcanoes she personifies, but it is also a characteristic of Hawaiian, as well as Polynesian, world view.

Pele is regarded as a newcomer in some Hawaiian traditions—that is, she arrived in the islands after they had become inhabited by gods and humans. In fact, she is frequently referred to as "*akua malihini* (foreign deity)" in traditional stories and chants (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:123). Some have interpreted this to mean she was introduced to Hawai'i by later Polynesian immigrants who arrived after the initial colonization of the islands. Fornander believed she was a historical person who arrived in Hawai'i after the islands were settled and was apotheosized at the volcanoes (1969 [1878]:44). The cycle of Pele myths, an indigenous

4. Brigham claims that *Hi'iaka* was a general name used for all the gods of the volcano (n.d.:31). Kepelino uses the name similarly (Kirtley and Mookini 1977:46).

Hawaiian development, probably began after the early period of colonization as Hawaiians moved into the volcano regions. This may partly explain the tradition of recency. It is certainly apparent both that the body of myth evolved in the volcano area of Hawai'i and that it shares many themes and motifs from Hawaiian and Polynesian myth in general. The name "Pele" appears in the mythologies of other Polynesian peoples, but always as a very minor deity (Nimmo 1987:34-35). It is unclear whether she was introduced to these areas after European contact (Beckwith 1970 [1940]:178), or whether she represents an ancient, albeit minor, deity in the Polynesian pantheon.

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS ABOUT PELE

In addition to the myths, various other beliefs were associated with Pele. The earliest accounts consistently report that Pele was a deity to be feared. Some of the accounts may be biased by the Christian ethnocentrism of the observers, and what was interpreted as fear in some cases may have been awe and respect. Nonetheless, the consistency of the descriptions of Pele as inspiring fear, by a wide variety of writers, suggests that such was the view of many early Hawaiians. Such descriptions appear throughout Ellis's book:

Excepting the deities supposed to preside over volcanoes, no god was so much dreaded by the people. (Ellis 1979 [1827]:54)

Whenever the natives speak of them [i.e., the volcano gods], it is as dreadful beings. (172)

They [the volcano gods] never journeyed on errands of mercy; to receive offerings, or execute vengeance, were the only objects for which they left their place. . . . Great indeed is the number of men slain by them; . . . (173)

[If proper respect were not paid the volcanic deities] they filled Kilauea [Kī-lau-ea] with lava, and spouted it out, or, taking a subterranean passage, marched to some one of their houses (craters) in the neighbourhood where the offending parties dwelt, and from thence came down upon the delinquents with all their dreadful scourges. . . . They would go down, with fire kill the fish, fill up with pahoehoe (lava) the shallow places, and destroy all the fishing grounds. (173)

. . . for Pele was a dreadful being. (185)

They . . . answered, that . . . [Pele] was very powerful, and capable of devouring their land, and destroying the people. (251)

Menzies similarly "found that the natives regarded volcanoes as the habitations of evil spirits who, when anywise engaged [*sic*], vomit up fire and hot stones" (1920:160).

The missionary Richards writes: "The volcanoes had, moreover, a superintending power, the goddess Pele, who was much dreaded" (1825:48).

Kamakau notes that "in the old days men feared the volcano; they did not descend into Kilauea as they pleased" (1964:67).

Stewart writes that "under the name of Pele, this volcano was one of the most distinguished and most feared of the former gods of Hawaii" (1970 [1830]:388). Charles de Varigny claims that "a god was born of each of their terrors. Pele, the volcano goddess, swallowed up villages, devoured crops, sowed across her path seeds of sterility and of death" (1981:13). Joseph Emerson provides one of the most fearful portraits of Pele:

She could at times . . . assume the appearance of a handsome young woman.

. . . At other times the innate character of the fury showed itself, and she

appeared in her usual form as an ugly and hateful old hag, with tattered and fire burnt garment, scarcely concealing the filth of her person.

Her blood-shot eyes and fiendish countenance paralyzed the beholder, and her touch turned him to stone. She was a jealous and vindictive monster, delighting in cruelty and at the slightest provocation overwhelming the unoffending victims of her rage in wide spread ruin. (1892:7)

Emerson further claims that the “deformity of the eyelids, especially of the lower eyelid, called *makahelai*, is charged to the malice of this goddess, who is herself represented as suffering with the most aggravated ophthalmia” (1892:7).

Elsewhere, Emerson says Pele was “represented as a hideous, ill-dressed hag, continually shifting her dwelling-place, tearing down and building up as suited her ever changeful mood” (n.d.a:606).

David Malo writes: “From the fact that people had with their own eyes seen . . . solid rocks, houses and human beings melted and consumed in the fires of Pele, the terror inspired by this class of deities [i.e., the volcano gods] was much greater than that caused by other deities” (1951 [1903]:116).

Judd translates and interprets 2 Hawaiian proverbs that associate Pele with fear: “*Weliweli ino Puna i ke akua wahine*: Puna is fearful of the goddess. Puna is afraid of Pele” (1930: 61); “*Makau i ka hana, i ka uka o Puna*: Afraid to do evil in the uplands of Puna. Afraid of disobeying the laws of Pele” (62).

Although elsewhere Kamakau describes Pele as fearful (1964:67), he also reveals a benevolent side of the goddess: “She, Pele, had built this place [Halema‘uma‘u] to warm strangers who came to the mountain through icy mists” (1964:65).

Handy and Pukui also depart from the general view of Pele as a dreadful goddess who is to be feared. In writing of the district of Ka‘ū, they report:

It is profoundly significant that the Hawaiians of Ka-‘u did not fear or cringe before, or hate, the power and destructive violence of Mauna Loa. They took unto them this huge Mother mountain, measured their personal dignity and powers in terms of its majesty and drama. They named their land “The Breast” (*Ka-‘u*). They loved Pele, whose home was their land: they endured her furies, and celebrated the drama of creation with which they lived so intimately in the songs and dances of the sacred *hula*. (1972 [1958]:22)

Two possibilities account for this departure from other observers. First, they were writing of Hawaiian beliefs a century after Ka‘ū was Christianized. As noted elsewhere, in more recent years, Pele has come to be regarded as a protectress of all Hawaiian people (Nimmo 1986:164), and perhaps this view reflects this trend in contemporary Hawai‘i. Second, Handy and Pukui were describing attitudes of the people who lived in Ka‘ū, the district most frequently visited by volcanic activity and where Pele, consequently, was central to the lives of the inhabitants. In writing of the people of Ka‘ū, Handy and Handy state: “They believed themselves to be of ‘The clan of Pele’; many bore the names of the volcano goddess herself or of her sisters, the *Hi‘iakas*. . . . [They] . . . both loved and feared Pele and her family” (1972:615). Since the Ka‘ū people felt a greater kinship to Pele, worshipped her as their central *‘aumakua*, and believed many of their deceased kinsmen lived in the volcano with her, it is likely they regarded her more warmly than did more distantly related Hawaiians. It is noteworthy that elsewhere, Pukui refers to Pele as “the dreaded fire goddess” (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:153), reflecting perhaps an ambivalence of the Ka‘ū people toward Pele.

Although eruptions were generally considered the result of Pele’s anger, Kamakau claims

Hawaiians had no fear of the lava if they believed the spirits of their deceased were in the flames:

Should Hawaii be overrun by lava, if they saw the *ho'ailona* [sign] of their own volcanic spirit (*pele*) in the fountains of fire the people had no fear of death—it was their own *kama'aina* who surrounded them with fire. If they were within the blazing fires, they would come to no harm; they had their guide, and they could go forward victoriously . . . and without harm. Such was the belief of some people about volcanic spirits in the old days. (1964:65)

The Hawaiians regarded Hale-ma'uma'u as the home of the volcano family who, except during the periodic eruptions, lived lives there similar to those of the Hawaiians. Ellis writes:

They [i.e., Hawaiians] considered it [Hale-ma'uma'u] the primeval abode of their volcanic deities. The conical craters, they said, were their houses, where they frequently amused themselves by playing at Konane (the game resembling drafts . . .; the roaring of the furnaces and the crackling of the flames were the kani of their hura (music of their dance,) and the red flaming surge was the surf wherein they played, sportively swimming on the rolling wave. (Ellis 1979 [1827]:171)

Joseph Emerson writes that Hale-ma'uma'u, the fire pit at Kī-lau-ea where Pele was believed to reside, was the name used by Hawaiians for a temporary “small, rude house, or rather hut, thatched with the leaves of the ama'u fern. . . . The imaginative Hawaiians saw a fancied resemblance to these huts in the lava cones with their jutting peaks and rude unfinished apertures for the escape of smoke. On this view, Hale-ma'uma'u became a fitting name for the place where Pele was wont to build these temporary structures” (1913:729).

Hawaiians, however, approached the volcano area with great trepidation, fearful they might offend the volcano gods by intruding into their domains. Ellis's description of his visit to the volcanoes is filled with illustrations of such fears. When Ellis's guide learned of his intention to visit the volcano area, he refused to accompany him:

He objected strongly to our going thither, as we should most likely be mischievous, and offend Pele or Nahoarii [Ka-moho-ali'i?], gods of the volcano, by plucking the ohelo, (sacred berries,) digging up the sand, or throwing stones into the crater, and then they would either rise out of the crater in volumes of smoke, send up large stones to fall upon us and kill us, or cause darkness and rain to overtake us, so that we should never find our way back. (Ellis 1979 [1827]:141)

As we drew near one of the apertures that emitted smoke and vapour, our guide stopped and tried to dissuade us from proceeding any further, assuring us he durst not venture nearer for fear of Pele, the deity of the volcanoes. (150)

As soon as the natives perceived us eating them [*ohelo* berries], they called out aloud, and begged us to desist, saying we were now within the precincts of Pele's dominions, to whom they belonged, and by whom they were rahuiia (prohibited), until some had been offered to her, and permission to eat them asked. (162)

Ellis's Hawaiian guides warned him not to “strike, scratch, or dig the sand, assuring us it would displease Pele, and be followed by an irruption of lava, or other expression of vengeance from this goddess of the volcano, of whose power and displeasure they had manifested the greatest apprehensions ever since our approach to Kirauea [Kī-lau-ea]” (1979 [1827]:166).

Dibble reports that the devastating eruption that destroyed part of Keoua's army was believed to be caused by Pele because stones were rolled into her crater (1909 [1843]:51). Ellis's party was unhappy with the spot "at the north-east end of the crater, on a pile of rocks over-hanging the abyss below, and actually within four feet of the precipice" (1979 [1827]:168) chosen by the Hawaiian guides as a sleeping place at Kī-lau-ea. "When we expressed our disapprobation, they said it was the only place where we might expect to pass the night undisturbed by Pele, and secure from earthquake and other calamity, being the place in which alone Pele allowed travellers to build a hut" (168).

When they [the Hawaiians] learned that we had been to Kirauea, they were unwilling to believe we had broken the sulphur banks, eaten the ohelo berries, descended to the craters, or broken any fragments of lava from them, as they said Pele ma, Pele and her associates, would certainly have avenged the insult. However, when our boys shewed them the ohelo berries, with the specimens of sulphur and lava that we had brought away, they were convinced that we had been there, but said we had escaped only because we were haore [*haole*], foreigners. No Hawaiian, they added, would have done so with impunity, for Pele was a dreadful being. (Ellis 1979 [1827]:185)

The violations of her sacred abode, and the insults to her power, of which we had been guilty, appeared to them, and to the natives in general, acts of temerity and sacrilege; and notwithstanding the fact of our being foreigners, we were subsequently threatened with the vengeance of the volcanic deity. (186)

They [i.e., the Hawaiians] could not believe that we had descended into the crater, or broken off pieces of Pele's houses, as they called the small craters, until the specimens of lava, &c. were produced, when some of them looked very significantly, and none of them cared much to handle them. (194)

The missionary Elisha Loomis visited Kī-lau-ea in 1824 and wrote: "I ate plentifully of these [*ohelo* berries], notwithstanding the scruples of the [Hawaiian] boys who cautioned me against touching them, as they were sacred to Pele, the volcano" (Westervelt 1937:20).

Lady Franklin visited the volcanoes with David Kalakaua in 1861. He told her that Pele "did not like anyone to pluck flowers by the way: something was sure to happen if this was done" (Korn 1958:53).

Pukui reports that "the 'lava stones of *Pele*' were so filled with the power of the volcano goddess that they could be dangerous" (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:2:179). Anyone who had to walk on volcanic land should say, "Forgive me, *Pele*, for walking on your domain" (246). A Hawaiian proverb in Pukui's compilation translates as, "*Wrongdoing is feared in the upland of Puna*," which she interprets as, "Wrongdoing in the upland of Puna brings the wrath of Pele" (1983:228).

The Hawaiian guides who accompanied Ellis told him that sometimes Pele and other volcanic deities were visible at the volcano. They said that when part of Chief Keoua's army died from poisonous volcanic gases, Pele appeared "in a column of smoke as it rose from the crater" (Ellis 1979 [1827]:175). When Ellis was camping at the volcano:

Frequently during the night the natives thought they saw someone or other of the deities, but immediately afterwards they doubted. At these times, if we asked them where they saw Pele, they would sometimes point to the red lava, at others to the variegated flame; and on our saying we could not

perceive any distinct form, they generally answered by assuring us, that during the night some one or other of them would certainly be seen. (175)

According to Pukui, when Pele appears, the colors of her clothes are significant: "Pele in white has traditionally been interpreted as a warning of sickness; Pele in red as a coming volcanic eruption" (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:1:13).

Pele was believed to be very temperamental and easily offended, and to eject lava when she was affronted. Kamakau writes of an eruption:

The people believed that this earth-consuming flame came because of Pele's desire for *awa* fish from the fish ponds of Kiholo and Ka'upulehu and *aku* fish from Ka'elehuluhulu; or because of her jealousy of Kamehameha's assuming wealth and honor for himself and giving her only those things which were worthless; or because of his refusing her the tabu breadfruit of Kameha'ikana which grew in the uplands of Hu'ehu'e where the flow started. (1961:184-85)

Ewaliko claimed that a Hawaiian man received a burn on his leg because "he had failed to keep a promise to Pele" (1863:2716).

Joseph Emerson reports that one of the most fearful oaths a Hawaiian can take involved Pele: "David's wife is greatly stirred up with jealousy of her husband and continually is making him take the oath Pau Pele Pau Mano that he has not been false to her. This oath, the most fearful a native can take, invokes the death by the dread fire goddess Pele and the mighty shark. 'If I run toward the land may Pele destroy me; If I run to the sea may the shark devour me' is another form of the same oath" (n.d.a:605).

Pukui presents a variant interpretation of the oath:

Pau Pele, pau manō.

[*May I be devoured by Pele,*

[*May I be devoured by a shark.*

An oath, meaning "If I fail . . ." It was believed that if such an oath were not kept, the one who uttered it would indeed die by fire or be eaten by a shark. (1983:287)

Earthquakes were believed to be caused by Pele: "The superstitions of the natives lead them to believe they [earthquakes] are produced by the power of Pele, or some of the volcanic deities, and consider them as requisitions for offerings, or threatenings of still greater calamities" (Ellis 1979 [1827]:196). De Varigny observed Hawaiians "singing hymns to Pele to appease her anger" (1981:230) during a series of destructive earthquakes on Hawai'i. Westervelt writes that "earthquakes came when Pele stamped the floor of the fire-pit in anger" (1963 [1916]:13).

Collegiates, a Christianized Hawaiian of the mid-19th century, reports on the association of thunder and lightning with the volcano family:

I have often heard them [i.e., the old Hawaiians] say that people were killed to cursing thunder and lightning. The thunder becomes angry when it is exclaimed at or when anything bad was done to it. They said that the thunder was the voice of the worthless gods of Hawaii nei, that is, Pele, Hiiaka, Kapo and so on. When the thunder pealed our grandfolks would say to us, "That is Hiiaka, for there are eight peals," or "that is Kapo for there are so many peals, those are her thunder peals". . . They were used to the kinds of sounds of the thunder. When the thunder pealed, they made a guess that it was

so-and-so and then began to chant some of the chants composed in honor of Hiiaka and Kapo.

If anyone whispered during a thunder storm he was warned by an old person lest the thunder grew louder. If he exclaimed at the flash of lightning, he was warned again lest he be burnt. Pele was likely to turn him to stone. The old folks claim that Pele was in the lightning and so it was kapu to do any mischief. It was kapu to smack the lips in eating during a thunder storm; it was also wrong to whistle during a thunder storm; it was wrong to sleep face up lest the breath be stopped. If there were many people sleeping together in the house, they laid together on one side and in turning, all turn together to the other side. It would be well with them then and thunder would not be angry. Many people had been killed by thunder or lightning because of their mischief. If one drew down his eye lid, he would be burned. (1866:l-2)

Green and Beckwith, in a discussion of Hawaiian household beliefs, note that rainbows are considered signs of the approach of chiefs: "The predominating color in the rainbow is also important in determining the family of the chief to whom the sign belongs. If the dominant color is red, he claims the favor of Pe-le. The pure white rainbow belongs to Ka-moho-alii, king of the sharks and brother of Pe-le" (1928:14).

According to Pukui, menstruating women were offensive to Pele, and if they had to approach her domain, *ti* leaves were used to protect them: "*Ti* was [also] important in fire walking. No one was able to walk on lava beds cooled just enough to bear one's weight without carrying *ti* leaves. My great-great grandmother used to walk across hot lava this way and never got burned. Our family line is from the Pele priesthood and Pele is the volcano goddess. So the *ti* leaves invoked Pele's protection" (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:1:191).

Pukui reports that people related to Pele were believed to be physically distinguishable: "Some Hawaiians believed that members of the Pele family were *'ehu* people, with lighter skin, brown eyes and curly brown hair, unlike the darker-skinned Hawaiians" (Pukui & Korn 1973:56).

The fine filaments of volcanic glass, formed from wind-blown lava, were called the "hair of Pele" by the Hawaiians (Ellis 1979 [1827]:178), while the occasional deposits of sulfur around the volcano area were known as "Pele's excrement" (Summers 1988:46).

Nathaniel Emerson reports that *opihi* is one of Pele's favorite foods: "There is an old saying. *He akua ai opihi o Pele*—'Pele is a goddess who eats the opihi.' In proof of this statement they [i.e., Hawaiians] point to the huge pile of opihi shells that may be found along the coast of Puna, the middens, no doubt, of the old-time people" (1965 [1909]:213).

RITUAL LEADERS

Kahuna is used in Hawaiian to signify one who is an expert in ritual knowledge. This knowledge may range from approaching the highest gods on the most important ceremonial occasions to knowing the proper chant to ensure the success of fishing. The religious specialists who contacted the gods reflected the hierarchy of the gods as well as that of Hawaiian society. The highest of the *kahuna* were the priests who officiated at the important ceremonies honoring the highest gods for the highest chiefs. At the lower end of the religious-social scale were *haka*, or mediums, who communicated with family spirits through trance and possession. Between these extremes were all the other religious intermediaries who dealt with the many religious needs of traditional Hawaiian society. Thus, the term *kahuna* is used for many kinds of ritual specialists. In reviewing the literature on *kahuna*, Valeri has suggested that the many different kinds of *kahuna* in traditional Hawai'i may be placed in 3 categories, namely: (1) *kahuna pule*,

the *kahuna* who officiated in the temples of the *ali'i*; (2) "professional" *kahuna*, a large category that includes "specialists in different ritualized activities . . . and medical priests"; and (3) the *kāula*, or prophets (1985:135–40). The *kahuna* for Pele worship appear to fall into all 3 categories, although references in the literature are not always clear.

Most observers of traditional Hawai'i referred to the ritual leaders of the Pele cult simply as "priestesses" or "priests," terms that are used indiscriminately for several types of ritual leaders. The literature on Pele suggests that 4 types of ritual leaders were important in her worship. (1) The terms *priestess* and *priest* frequently refer to individuals, probably *kahuna pule*, who perform formal ceremonies, either in a *heiau* or at Hale-ma'uma'u. Their distinction from other ritual leaders is probably the greater formality of their ceremonies and their greater use of chants. (2) *Kāula*, translated as "prophet, seer" (Pukui & Elbert 1971:126), conducted ceremonies at Hale-ma'uma'u, and probably elsewhere. Their relationship to the goddess was apparently more direct with less of the formal ritual that characterized the *kahuna pule*. (3) *Kahu* assisted the ritual leaders by providing and offering the appropriate sacrifices for the ceremonies. Sometimes they also performed ceremonies. They apparently lived near Hale-ma'uma'u and seemingly served as caretakers of the premises. (4) *Haka* ("recipient; medium, one possessed" [Pukui & Elbert 1971:46]) refers to persons who were possessed by Pele, or who served as mediums of communication between the goddess and the people.

Kamakau mentions "gifts for the *priests* and *prophets* and *guardians* of the volcano" (1964:64; emphasis added) in a discussion of a ceremony held to deposit body remains at Hale-ma'uma'u. The original Hawaiian text uses *kahuna*, *kāula*, and *kahu* for the 3 positions (Kamakau 1870:12), terms almost identical to the categories I arrived at from an examination of the literature. It must be cautioned, however, that these categories are not as clear in the literature as the preceding discussion suggests. The terms were apparently used indiscriminately by the Hawaiians and may have had regional variations in meaning. In addition to these formal leaders, virtually every Hawaiian who lived in the volcano area knew the appropriate chants and offerings for Pele when passing near her domain. Furthermore, the heads of families who traced their ancestry to Pele performed ritual on a regular basis, often daily, to appease the goddess.

Kawaikaumaiikamakaopua claims that Ailaau was the first priest of Pele and that women were excluded from becoming "priestesses":

Ailaau was the first priest of Pele and the Ai-laau (tree-eater) was given [*sic*] by Pele. There were many in the family, one boy and the rest girls. Pele did not want the girls to become priestesses of the volcano or to become Kaula-Pele, because women were said to be Opu-ukuuku [ōpū-'uku'uku] or Small clumps, lower (than the men).

Therefore the brother went up in rank and called [*sic*] according to the male side, "Ahi-lapalapa" or "Blazing fire." (1923:1)

The literature provides no evidence, however, to support Kawaikaumaiikamakaopua's claim that women were excluded from performing rituals to Pele. Quite possibly he was referring only to the *kāula* who were apparently always males, according to Pukui (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:2:269).

Numerous writers of the period under investigation simply refer to "priestesses" or "priests," with no elaboration of the nature of the positions. Ellis writes that when a luminous flame was seen in the sky above a village, "a priest of Pele and his family . . . immediately offered his prayer to the goddess, and told the inhabitants that no harm would befall them" (1979 [1827]:218). Ellis further notes that when the traditional religion was renounced by Hawaiian royalty in 1819 "several priests of Pele denounced the most awful threatenings, of earthquakes, eruptions, &c. from the gods of the volcanoes, in revenge for the insult and neglect then shewn

by the king and chiefs" (218) and that "there are . . . many who . . . pay the most submissive and unhesitating obedience to the requisitions of her [Pele's] priests" (218). Manu notes: "and the people knew that Pele was the goddess of fire, therefore, they worshipped her, and some people were set apart to serve as priests of Pele. The practice became widespread among the people throughout the entire archipelago of Hawaii" (1899:990–91). This is the only mention of priests beyond Hawai'i Island in the early literature except the priestesses encountered by Stewart (1831:106–7), Ellis (1979 [1827]:186), and Bingham (1981 [1847]:226–27) on Maui. Lady Franklin visited the volcanoes in 1861 and noted in her journal that one of her party "was an old man with grey hair and a peculiar countenance who is one of the very few professed heathens left, and a priest of the Goddess Pele" (Korn 1958:55). She further notes the man's name was "Pauahilani" (Korn 1958:316). While Lady Franklin was at Kī-lau-ea, she "observed a remarkable-looking man seated on the very edge of the cliff, who began a sort of monotonous recitation, and we were told that he was another of Pele's priests" (Korn 1958:56). Writing of Puna and Hilo, a missionary wife recorded that "we knew the names of very many of the people of both districts, and among them were the old priest and priestess of Pele, who never failed to visit us when here" (Martin 1970:196).

The "priestesses" or "priests" who officiated at the formal ceremonies for Pele at the temples and at Kī-lau-ea were probably *kahuna pule*; at any rate they appear to have been supported by some organized body, and the position was apparently inherited. Descriptions of such persons from the literature include the following:

On our return from the cascade of the Rainbow, Mr. Stribling and myself called at the mission house, and were, unexpectedly, gratified by an interview with the hereditary and last PRIESTESS OF PELE.

In speaking of the volcano, Mr. Goodrich incidentally remarked, that this individual was now residing in the immediate neighborhood; and, at our suggestion, sent a messenger to invite her over. She almost immediately came, attended by her household, consisting of eight or ten individuals, male and female. I should judge her to be forty or forty-five years of age; a tall, finely formed, majestic woman, wrapped in a large, black mantle of native cloth, falling in thick folds like the Roman toga, from the bust to the ground. We were much impressed with her appearance, as she entered at the head of her train, and, after receiving our salutations, became seated on a mat in the centre of the apartment, in the attitude of a Turkish female on a divan. The style of her face is remarkably noble and commanding—indicative of strong traits of character—with a full, piercing black eye, which I can readily imagine, might be fearfully intimidating to the superstitious, when flashing in the wildness of an imaginary inspiration. There was not only a deep seriousness, but a decided cast of melancholy in her whole aspect, which reminded me in connection with the strongly marked and superior contour of her features, of a fine print of the tragic muse, which I recollect to have seen. . . .

The priestess is now a firm believer in Christianity, and is one of the most attentive pupils of the station. . . .

At the time of sacrifice, the priestess herself descended into the depths of the volcano, and, approaching the place most accessible and most active with fire, cast upon it the gifts, with the exclamation "*Here Pele is food for you*"—specifying the article or articles—"and here is cloth," mentioning its name and varieties. In answer to the question, whether she was not afraid of the fire which she approached, she said no, for she then believed, that the goddess

would defend her from harm—but, that now, when she knew, that there was no such being as Pele, she should be afraid to go to places where she once did without apprehension, lest she might perish in her temerity. (Stewart 1831:105–10)

Titus Coan describes some of the Hawaiian converts to Christianity he encountered in Puna: “Among these converts was the High Priest of the volcano. He was more than six feet high and of lofty bearing. . . . His sister was more haughty and stubborn. She was High Priestess of the volcano. She, too, was tall and majestic in her bearing” (1882:44–45).

It is perhaps significant that in both accounts the *kahuna* are described as “majestic,” “noble,” or somehow set apart from other people, suggesting they were from the *kahuna pule* class, who were *aliʻi*.

The *kāula* were apparently always men (Kawaikaumāiikamakaopua 1923:1; Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:2:269) and wore their hair in deviant fashion. Pukui describes them:

“*Kaula* of *Pele* were always men. *Pele* selected them when they were very young. These boys were *kapu* [sacred]. They had to let their hair grow—their beards, too—as they grew older. The only way they could cut their hair was to go to the volcano. Go right to the brink, then cut the hair and throw it in. Give it to *Pele*.”

These young men were excused from ordinary work. Instead, they studied, prayed, and meditated. Some concentrated on the rituals and prayers of *Pele* and eventually became *kahuna*. (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:2:269)

Elsewhere, Pukui claims that ceremonies at the volcano were conducted by a “Prophet of *Pele* (*Kaula Pele*)” who lived at Kī-lau-ea (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:153). In discussing the same ceremonies elsewhere, she notes that “the priests of *Pele* presented an odd appearance as their hair and beard were never trimmed. Some, to keep their hair and beard out of the way, braided them into braids and knotted up the ends” (1945:3).

I-lālā-ole, born in Puna in 1873, describes his grandfather who was a *kāula* (prophet) of *Pele*: “My grandfather was a *kaula Pele*. He was *tabu*, never cut long hair or beard, but he braided the hair and beard. He wore a white robe, cover whole body, no head piece. Like a cloak. Wore a *malo*—a red *malo*. I saw him. He was very old” (n.d.:3).

Kamakau writes that Kamehameha sought “*Pele*’s seer (*kaula*), named Ka-maka-o-ke-akua,” to determine the proper sacrifices to offer *Pele* in order to stop a devastating lava flow (1961:185). The sex of the seer is not indicated. Elsewhere, Kamakau claims the *kāula* conducted the ceremonies at the volcano for disposing of the remains of the dead (1964:64–65).

Malo’s unflattering description of the *kahu* seems more in keeping with other descriptions of the *kāula*:

The *kahu* of the *Pele* deities also were in the habit of dressing their hair in such a way as to make it stand out in great length, then, having inflamed and reddened their eyes, they went about begging for any articles they took a fancy to, making the threat, “If you don’t grant this request *Pele* will devour you.” Many people were imposed upon in this manner, fearing that *Pele* might actually consume them. (1951 [1903]:116)

Less is known about the *kahu* of *Pele* than about the *kāula*. Valeri defines *kahu akua* as “keeper of a god,” or one who cares for a god (1985:135). The few mentions of such persons in the literature on *Pele* suggest the *kahu* were attendants who supplied offerings for ceremonies to *Pele* and maintained the grounds at Kī-lau-ea. Kamakau writes: “In the old days men feared

the volcano; they did not descend into Kilauea as they pleased. Neither did most of the *kahu Pele*, the attendants of the volcano. Not more than ten of them made the dedications and took care of *Ka lua o Pele*" (1964:67). Elsewhere, Kamakau writes that "persons who were inspired by her to prophesy, and others who wanted her as a god, became the *kahu*, the 'administrators,' of Pele" (1964:69).

In describing a "priestess" of Pele, Stewart writes of the *kahu*:

Her father was the hereditary *kahu*, or steward, as she was the priestess of Pele. The duty of the *kahu* was to provide the materials for the general sacrifices—the food and raiment of the supposititious deity: to grow the taro, potatoes, and sugar cane, and the cloth-plant, from which the garments for her were made; to provide the hogs and fowls, &c., and to have all things in readiness for the offerings, at the appointed seasons.

Of the plantations sacred to this use, one was on the seashore, and another within the precincts of the crater—in the broken ground, described as that upon which we first came, in descending from our hut, on our late visit. The *kahu* and his family resided part of the time, on the coast; and part, in the neighborhood of the crater. (1831:109)

This is the only reference to special lands being set aside for growing offerings for Pele.

Pogue claims that "if any live person wished to call upon any of these spirits in their new residence [i.e., "the Crater of Pele"], he communicated with an attendant [*kahu*] of Pele, who accompanied him to the Crater, and called forth an invocation" (1978 [1858]:56).

More information is available regarding the *haka*, persons who claimed to be possessed by the goddess and/or were able to directly communicate with her. Again we are indebted to Ellis for the earliest accounts of such persons. During his journey around the island of Hawai'i, near Hilo, he encountered a woman who claimed to be possessed by Pele:

As we arose to depart, an old woman, who during the discourse sat near the speaker, and had listened very attentively, all at once exclaimed, "Powerful are the gods of Hawaii, and great is Pele, the goddess of Hawaii, she shall save Maaro," (the sick chief who was present).

Another began to chant a song in praise of Pele, to which the people generally listened, though some began to laugh.

We supposed they were intoxicated, and therefore took no notice of them; but on our leaving the house, some of our people told us they were not on a *ka ruma* (intoxicated or poisoned with the rum), but inspired by the *akua* (goddess) of the volcano; or that one of them was Pele herself, in the form of one of her priestesses. . . .

I then asked if she thought Jehovah was good, and those happy who made him their God?

She answered, "He is your good God, (or best God), and it is right that you should worship him; but Pele is my deity, and the great goddess of Hawaii. Kirauea [Kī-lau-ea] is the place of her abode. Ohiaotelani (the northern peak of the volcano) is one corner of her house. From the land beyond the sky, in former times, she came."

She then went on with the song which she had thus begun, giving a long account of the deeds and honours of Pele. This she pronounced in such a rapid and vociferous manner, accompanied by such violent gestures, that only here and there a word could be understood. Indeed, towards the close,

she appeared to lose all command of herself. When she had done, I told her she was mistaken in supposing any supernatural being resided in the volcano; that Pele was a creature of their own invention . . . and . . . Jehovah . . . was the Creator and Supporter of heaven and earth, and every thing she beheld.

She replied, that it was not so. She did not dispute that Jehovah was a God, but that he was not the only God.

Pele was a goddess, and dwelt in her, and through her would heal the sick chief then present. She wished him restored, and therefore came to visit him. . . .

Assuming a haughty air, she said, "I am Pele; I shall never die; and those who follow me, when they die, if part of their bones be taken to Kirauea, (the name of the volcano), will live with me in the bright fires there."

I said, Are you Pele?

She replied, Yes: and was proceeding to state her powers, &c. when Makoa, who had till now stood silent, interrupted her, and said, "It is true you are Pele, or some of Pele's party; and it is you that have destroyed the king's land, devoured his people, and spoiled all the fishing grounds." . . .

However, the pretended Pele said, "Formerly we did overflow some of the land, but it was only the land of those that were rebels, or were very wicked people. (Broke the restrictions of the tabu, or brought no offerings). Now we abide quietly in Kirauea." . . .

She then added, "It cannot be said that in these days, we destroy the king's people." She mentioned the names of several chiefs, and then asked who destroyed these?

Not Pele, but the rum of the foreigners, whose God you are so fond of. Their diseases and their rum have destroyed more of the king's men, than all the volcanoes on the island. . . .

"I shall not die," she exclaimed, "but ora no," (live spontaneously). . . .

The name of the priestess we afterwards learned was Oani. (1979 [1827]:215-18)

Later, while visiting Lahaina, Ellis encountered another "priestess of Pele":

Some months after our visit to Kirauea, a priestess of Pele came to Lahaina, in Maui, where the principal chiefs of the islands then resided. The object of her visit was noised abroad among the people, and much public interest excited. One or two mornings after her arrival in the district, arrayed in her prophetic robes, having the edges of her garments burnt with fire, and holding a short staff or spear in her hand, preceded by her daughter, who was also a candidate for the office of priestess, and followed by thousands of the people, she came into the presence of the chiefs; and having told who she was, they asked what communication she had to make.

She replied, that, in a trance or vision, she had been with Pele, by whom she was charged to complain to them that a number of foreigners had visited Kirauea; eaten the sacred berries; broken her houses, the craters; thrown down large stones, &c. to request that the offenders might be sent away; and to assure them, that if these foreigners were not banished from the islands, Pele would certainly, in a given number of days, take vengeance by inundating the country with lava, and destroying the people. She also pretended to have received, in a supernatural manner, Rihorihō's approbation of the request of the goddess. (1979 [1827]:186)

Bingham also provides an account of the event:

A pseudo prophetess belonging to Hawaii visited Maui, and claiming authority from the god of the volcano, and even calling herself *Pele*, drew the attention of many to her vagaries. Her arrival in Lahaina caused an excitement among all classes; and some affirmed that she had been offended by the missionaries, who had rolled stones into her crater, and had plucked and eaten her prohibited *ohelos* without making offerings to her, and had dared to take away portions of her hair, and that she had come to induce the chiefs to dismiss the missionaries and suppress the *palapala*. Some seemed to think she would make some terrific display of her powers, unless the chiefs should yield to her demands. The day after she reached the village, she came to the chiefs with her insignia of office. Marching with haughty step, with long black, dishevelled hair, and countenance wild, with spear and *kahilis* in her hands, attended by her two daughters, bearing each a small flag, she attempted to make a display corresponding with her pretensions. As she approached, she was accompanied by an immense crowd, attracted some by curiosity, some by superstition, some with a desire to see her maintain her cause, and some to see her foiled by Kaahumanu and her coadjutors. Paying little attention to the throng, she drew near the chiefs and exclaimed, "I have come!" Kalakua . . . replied: "We are all here." "Good will to you all," said the prophetess. "Yes," said the chief, "good will perhaps." "I have come to speak to you," said the impostor. "Whence are you?" said Madam Hoapili. She replied: "From foreign lands, from England and America, whither I went to attend your king." Indignant at this falsehood, the chief rebuked her, saying, "Come not here to tell us your lies—what are these things in your hands?" "The spear and kahilis of Pele," she promptly replied. "*Lay them down,*" said the chief. Unwilling to lose her honor in the eyes of the world, she demurred, and put on the air of sullenness, as if insulted. "LAY THEM DOWN," was sternly repeated, and she complied. The chief continued with well sustained dignity, "Tell us not that you are *Pele*. There are other volcanoes than those on Hawaii. They are all under the control of the great God of Heaven. But you are a *woman*, like one of us. There is one God, who made you and us. We have one common Parent. Formerly we thought *Pele* a god, and gave our hogs, dogs, and cocoanuts. . . . Go back to Hawaii, plant potatoes, beat kapa, catch fish, feed swine, and eat of your own earnings; but demand not of the people this and that for Pele. . . . The impostor confessed, "I have been lying, but will lie no more." . . . She yielded, burned her mysterious flags, and was about to burn the spear which she had called Pele's; but one of the chiefs interposed, and claimed it to be used for tilling the ground. (1981 [1847]:226–27)

Stewart likewise reports an encounter with a "priestess" in Lahaina:

I unexpectedly met her in an evening walk, followed by a considerable company; some, evidently under the influence of a superstitious feeling in reference to her; and others, as evidently disposed to deride her pretensions. She was dressed in a fantastic manner, with dishevelled hair—her eyes flashing in a half-frenzy, from the degree of excitement to which she had wrought herself—and appeared altogether like a maniac: such as I supposed her in reality to be, till undeceived by the exclamations of the crowd, "*it is a goddess—it is a goddess!*"

As if to intimidate, she approached me with a fierce and daring look: and waving before her a small flag of tapa, appended to a light staff, supported the claim by the declaration, "*I am a goddess—a goddess indeed!—the palapala and the pule (letters and religion) are not good: they will destroy the people!*" (1831:106–7)

When the chiefess Ka-pi'o-lani visited Kī-lau-ea in 1824 to defy the power of Pele and exalt the Christian god, she was met by a "prophetess" of Pele:

In approaching the region of the volcano, she [Ka-pi'o-lani] was met by a prophetess claiming authority from the veritable deity. This haughty female warned her not to approach the sacred dominions of Pele, and predicted her death through the fury of the god, should she make an invasion with the feelings of hostility and contempt which she professed. "Who are you?" demanded Kapiolani. "One in whom *ke akua* [the god] dwells," she replied. . . . Refreshments were kindly offered her; but in the haughtiness of her assumed dignity as a supernatural being, she said, "I am a god: I will not eat." She held in her hand a piece of bark cloth. "This," said she, "is a *palapala* from the god Pele." "Read it to us," said Kapiolani. . . . The prophetess cunningly carrying out her device, and with unexpected presence of mind holding her cloth before her eyes, poured forth a torrent of unintelligible words or sounds which she would have them believe was in the dialect of the ancient Pele.

Kapiolani producing her Christian books . . . read several passages. . . . The haughty prophetess quailed; her head dropped, and her garrulity ceased. She confessed that *ke akua* [the god] had left her, and she could not therefore reply. (Bingham 1981 [1847]:254–55)

This account suggests that Pele spoke through mediums in a special language.

De Varigny encountered a male medium while visiting a village destroyed by earthquakes during an eruption:

Their [the villagers'] terror had risen to such a pitch that they were ready to believe anything, blindly obeying the notions of a native fanatic; in fact, one whose unbalanced mind already dated back several years, and who insisted that Pele, the goddess of the volcano, had appeared before him and had informed him that she wished to avenge her repudiated cult by displaying the very power that the missionaries had denied. (1981:216)

This is the only mention of a male *haka* in the literature.

Malo notes that "Pele and Hiiaka also were *akua noho* . . . deities that took possession of people and through them made utterances" (1951 [1898]:116).

Handy and Pukui's discussion of *haka* in Ka'ū claims that the *haka* was chosen by the god, ate a restricted diet, and dressed in colors suitable to the god. "White is Pele's colour, pink is Hi'iaka's, red is Kapo's. . . . A woman could become a *haka* only after menopause" (1972 [1958]:132–33). When a spirit was coming to dwell in a *haka* a sign was given to members of the household. Pukui elaborates:

When lightning flashes and the light darts into the house, the family observes whether it is red; if so, it is a Ka-uila-nui-makeha-i-ka-lani (. . . a brother of Pele); but if it is yellowish light, it was Hi'iaka. . . . There are many signs. If

Lono, the sign he sends is a sudden heavy downpour, which quickly clears. If it is Hi'iaka . . . who comes, no one must pass back and forth behind the back, because her back is *kapu*. Because the *kapu* belongs to her back, the back of her *haka* is also *kapu*, so no one must ever step across, or step on it. . . . Nor must anything unclean come in contact with it. The white dress and the pink were those that I have seen worn by her *haka* (Hi'iaka's). Little lumps of salt were another requirement, for her *haka* or in her *hula*. . . .

If it is Pele coming, she also has a *kapu* back, and it is so hot that it is impossible to go back and forth behind the *haka*—thus making it perfectly clear that the *akua noho* ["possessing god"] is the *Ali'i Wahine* of Kilauea. If any *akua noho* claims to be Pele and the back of the *haka* is not hot, then those in the house may question indeed. From times way back this hotness of the back has been the sign. Pele likes *lu'au* (young taro leaves) when she comes but not *lu'au* already cooked. Wrap the green *lu'au* in *la'i* (ti leaf). When the *akua wahine* sits on the *haka*, the body of the *haka* lies face down, and the package of *lu'au* is placed upon the back of the *haka* until the heat of her back has cooked it. When it is cooked, she (the *haka*) eats it all [See also Pukui 1983:188–89; Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:2:28]. . . .

If it is *Kapo-ula-o-Kina'u* (*Kapo-of-the-red-streak*) the *papa hana* [ceremony, offering] would be covered with red, and so it was with respect to the colour of the dress of her *haka*. . . . Similarly for *Ka-moho-ali'i* (*Lord-of-Sharks*) red also is called for, but not the same shade, one is a black red . . . the other is a clear red. . . . *Ka-moho-ali'i* is a pleasant *akua*, although he was very *kapu*, having a playful manner of speaking and of joking with the helper and with others in the house, thus setting aside their fear of him. (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:138–39)

Elsewhere, Pukui relates that "When *Hi'iaka-i-ka-pua-ena'ena* possessed one, the skin reddened.' The red skin denoted the special and sacred attention of the sister *Pele*, goddess of the fiery volcano" (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:2:291).

Handy writes of "seances" during which Pele visited mediums in Ka'u in relatively recent times. His data is probably from Pukui.

Until quite recently the cult of the volcano goddess and her sisters survived in mediumistic seances in which Pele and two of her sisters, *Kapo* and *Hi'iaka*, have "sat upon" or "dwelt in" (*noho*) a medium, who was referred to as the "perch" (*haka*). This aspect or phase of the cult is not reported at all in early literature, but this is in no way strange since it would have been concealed from missionaries and other whites.

The seances were by no means casual or informal; and they were strictly private, within a family who traced their ancestry to "the Pele clan." In every detail the seances were formally ritualistic, and the ritual was entirely in accord with Hawaiian religious practices. There is no reason to believe that this mediumistic phase of the cult was a result of any extraneous influence. The medium was dressed in a robe whose color denoted which sister was invoked (*Pele*, white; *Kapo*, red; *Hi'iaka*, pink). There was a special mat on which the medium sat, and there were offerings of food and drink. The medium had a helper who was responsible for all the arrangements, and this helper was also the chanter whose invocation invited the spirit to enter or "sit upon" the medium. (1964:227–28)

CEREMONIES

The literature on Pele reveals that ceremonies to the goddess and her family were held at numerous locations, including the household; the hula *hālau*; tree-felling sites for canoe building; paths, steam vents, and craters throughout Pele's domain; active lava flows; temples; and Hale-ma'uma'u. Additional ceremonies were doubtless held at other sites not mentioned in the literature.

Household Ceremonies

Although no actual descriptions are available of household ceremonies to Pele, indications of the importance and frequency of such ceremonies to 'aumakua are found throughout the literature. Most important in this context are the discussions by Pukui, since much of her data comes from the Ka'ū district and her own family members, who traced their ancestry to Pele. Handy and Pukui describe the traditional prayers and rituals held in the men's house at Ka'ū. Many of them probably involved Pele since she was one of the principal 'aumakua in that district:

The *Mua* was the men's eating and lounging house, and their sanctuary. At one end was an altar (*kuahu*) dedicated to the family 'aumakua whose effigies stood there. Here the head of the household prayed and performed necessary rites and sometimes without, sometimes with the aid of a *kahuna pule*, when came the time for the rites of the life cycle such as birth, cutting the foreskin, sickness and death. Here the family rites during the monthly days of *kapu* were performed. . . . The common daily worship would seem to have consisted in offering a bit of food . . . at the time of eating. (1972 [1958]:95-96)

Pukui reports that in the Ka'ū district of Hawai'i the following chant to Pele "was sometimes offered as a morning prayer, performed on the beach after midnight and before dawn, at about two o'clock, to celebrate the beginning of the Hawaiian day."

From Kahiki came the woman Pele,
 from the land of Polapola,
 from the rising reddish mist of Kane,
 from clouds blazing in the sky, horizon clouds.
 Restless desire for Hawai'i seized the woman Pele.
 Ready-carved was the canoe, Honua-i-Akea,
 your own canoe, O Ka-moho-ali'i,
 for sailing to distant lands.
 Well-lashed and equipped, the canoe of high gods,
 your canoe, Sacred-hewer-of-the-land,
 stood ready to sail with the ocean current.
 Pele-honua-mea embarked, the heavenly one
 stepped aboard to sail round Kahiki island.
 Multitudes of gods came aboard.
 O royal companions, who handled the steering paddle
 at the stern?
 Pele-the-redhead herself was helmswoman, ruler of
 the Menehune.
 Ku and Lono bailed out the bilge water,
 carried paddles, placed them in station.

Hi'iaka, the wise sister, next embarked,
 boarded the craft to dwell with Pele in her sailing
 quarters,
 close to Pele on the long voyage.
 Jets of lava gushed from Kahiki.
 Pele hurled her lightning,
 vomit of flame, outpouring of lava was the woman's
 farewell. (Pukui & Korn 1973:52-55)

Elsewhere, Pukui recalled fragments of chants which her grandmother had addressed to Pele at dawn and dusk:

From *Kahiki* came *Pele*,
 From the land of Borabora,
 From the smoky columns of *Kane*.

.

Pele is my goddess,
 A chiefess of sacred darkness.
 And of sacred light.

.

Pele is my goddess,
 Quiet reigns in the heavens,
 And reigns over the earth. (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:2:126)

Handy and Pukui report that "on occasions of crisis or festivity" when the gods' presence and assistance was needed, "calling prayers" were used to call them to the ceremony. The following is such a calling prayer to Pele:

Here is food, oh gods,
 Only a morsel of heavenly food,
 A gift from me, thy little child,
 Of the yellow-skinned 'awa of Ke-ahi-a-laka.
 (My prayer) has gone to meet Pele,
 Who is gathering *lehua* blossoms,
 Who is stringing them into wreaths by the sea of Hopoe,
 Here is 'awa for the men of heaven,
 Here is 'awa for the women of heaven,
 Here is 'awa for the men of the Pit,
 Here is 'awa for the women of the Pit,
 Hither and yon,
 Come, rinse out your mouths and wash your hands,
 This (rite) is sacred and profound, let the *kapu* be released,
 Freed that we may stand, that we may walk about,
 Freed by the decree of the gods. (1972 [1958]:140)

The ceremonies already described were held in the household; during these, Pele and members of her family would possess mediums (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:138-39).

Although included in a discussion of sorcery, the following prayer is said to be used to call upon the gods to grant health. The location of the ceremony is not mentioned, but it was probably held in the patient's home at the time of illness. It is called a "Prayer to the female

aumakuas" and Pele, her sister Hi'iaka, and her mother Haumea are among the gods called upon:

To you, O goddesses,
 From sunrise to sunset,
 From sunset to sunrise,
 From the firmament above to the earth below,
 From the zenith to the horizon (I pray),
 Come ye together.
 To thee, O Kahai, Haumea, Hiiaka,
 Pele, the goddess who devours the forests of Puna,
 And to thee, Kauhola, Kalahiki, Kauwila,
 Kaoaka, Kunaioha, Mochaune,
 The women whose faces are hidden in the sea,
 O Laea, goddess of canoe builders,
 O Kamalei, goddess of the west,
 Goddesses who are deaf, who listened not to my words,
 Listen to my plea.
 Here is the patient (so and so) sick with the papaku,
 A sickness said to be incurable,
 May your gift be health for him,
 Take away the soreness, the pains,
 The chills, the drowsiness, the heaviness of the head,
 May health and strength be given him by you,
 Amen, it is freed. (Poepoe Collection n.d.:37)

The notes of Theodore Kelsey describe a household altar used by an old Hawaiian man who died in 1922 at the age of 104: "Kia'aina had an *akua* [god] named Mauna-loa, 'which he had on a shelf covered with a towel. It was a quadrilateral pyramid a foot or two high, with dark markings on the sides, where Fire Goddess Pele sat in spirit form'" (Gutmanis 1983:119). Although this altar is unique in the literature, it may represent a domestic altar once common in Pele worship.

Hula Ceremonies

During stages of hula training, ceremonies were conducted for Hi'iaka, Laka, and Kapo, sisters of Pele, at the altar in the *hālau*, the dwelling constructed for hula training (Emerson 1965 [1909]:23–25). Hawaiian myth relates that Hi'iaka, the youngest and favorite sister of Pele, danced the first hula at the request of Pele (Emerson 1965 [1909]:8). Some myths claim Laka and Kapo were contrasting aspects of the same goddess, others claim they were distinct and different goddesses, and others say Laka was a daughter of Pele. Regardless of the relationship to Pele, they all figure in the hula and its accompanying ceremonies. The most complete discussions of the traditional hula are found in Nathaniel Emerson (1965 [1909]) and Barrère, Pukui & Kelly (1980). Barrère summarizes Emerson:

The *halau hula*, according to Emerson, was built on purified ground, and each stage of its building was accompanied by prayers. Within the *halau* was built a *kuahu* altar to Laka, the principal goddess of the *hula*. (The *kuahu* was usually a shelf or rack attached to the siding between wall posts.) Greenery from the forests was ritually gathered and the altar decorated, all with appro-

prate *pule* (literally, prayer chants), which Emerson happily defines as “song offerings.” (57)

Although the ritual prayers of the hula appear to have been directed to Laka or Hi‘iaka, some of the chants used in hula performances dealt with Pele. Emerson discusses “the hula Pele” and the ceremony that prefaced it:

The ancient Hawaiians naturally regarded the Pele hula with special reverence by reason of its mythological importance, and they selected it for performance on occasions of gravity as a means of honoring the kings and ali‘i of the land. They would have considered its presentation on common occasions, or in a spirit of levity, as a great impropriety.

In ancient times the performance of the hula Pele, like that of all other plays, was prefaced with prayer and sacrifice. The offering customarily used in the service of this hula consisted of salt crystals and of luau made from the delicate unrolled ti leaf. This was the gift demanded of every pupil seeking admission to the school of the hula, being looked upon as an offering specially acceptable to Pele, the patron of this hula. In the performance of the sacrifice teacher and pupil approached and stood reverently before the kuahu [altar] while the former recited a mele, which was a prayer to the goddess. The pupil ate the luau, the teacher placed the package of salt on the altar, and the service was complete. (1965 [1909]:187)

Emerson later presents the following prayer to Pele, “said to have been used at the time of awa-drinking. When given in the hula . . . its recitation was accompanied by the sound of the drum.” Other translations of this prayer are found in Titcomb (1948:129) and Gutmanis (1983:11–12).

Lo, Pele’s the god of my choice:
 Let heaven and earth in silence wait.
 Here is awa, potent, sacred,
 Bitter sea, great Hiiaka’s root;
 ’Twas cut at Maui-ola —
 Awa to the women forbidden,
 Let it tabu be!
 Exact be the rite of your awa,
 O Pele of the sacred land.
 Proclaim it, mother, Haumea,
 Of the goddess of Kilauea;
 She who dug the pit world-deep,
 And the Mau-wahine and Kupu-ena,
 Who prepare the awa for drink.
 A health to the stranger gods!

 Bedeck now the board for the feast;
 Fill up the last bowl to the brim;
 Then pour a draught in the sun-cave
 Shall flow to the mellow haze,
 That tints the land of the gods.
 All hail to the stranger gods!

This my offering, simply a voice,
 Only a welcoming voice,
 Turn in!
 Lo, the feast! (Emerson 1965 [1909]:198)

Pukui summarizes a series of dances performed on Kaua'i that reenact the arrival of Pele in the islands. She claims that on Kaua'i, red was associated with Pele and green with Hi'iaka during the hula (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:79). In Ka'ū on Hawai'i, white is associated with Pele and pink with Hi'iaka (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:138-39).

Hula Pele followed by the hula hoe or canoe paddling hula. That signifies "The goddess Pele comes on a canoe." The hula kii or dance of the wooden images that follows conveys the idea that the spirits represented by the images shall man Pele's canoe. The dog deity Ku-ilio-loa, welcomes Pele ashore and so the dog dance or hula ilio follows. Then comes a feast in which a hog is served, hence the hog dance or hula puaa. But the hog must be cooked and the house built to receive the royal guest and here we have the hula ka-laau or stick dance, laau meaning stick or wood. After the feast, the entertainment, a royal one befitting her rank, and the pahu or drum is brought forth to entertain her with the hula pahu. The guest is a beloved one, and the dance of all favorite sitting and gesturing hula. This is the pattern or inner meaning of the program itself. (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:79)

Pukui elaborates on the "hula Pele":

When Pele the volcano goddess came to these islands, her first home was on Kauai. Then going from island to island she found a permanent home on Hawaii. Pele herself did not dance, but her sister Hiiaka was numbered among the gods of the dance. Like all great rulers here in Hawaii, Pele had her particular dance. It was one in which no musical instruments were employed. The musicians sat in rows and kept the time by clapping their hands while one or two dancers stood up to dance. Kauai, her first home, had its version of the Pele dance and Hawaii, her present home, had another. Perhaps the other islands also had dances in honor of Pele. I have not heard of any. . . .

For the hula Pele, a big fire was always built because she is the goddess of fire, and its hula was danced around it. . . .

Mele for Hula Pele

The woman Pele burst forth at Puukapele,
 She flashed to the heavens, on and on.
 The woman Pele burst forth at Nomilu,
 She flashed to the heavens, on and on.
 The woman Pele burst forth at Kakakalua,
 She flashed to the heavens, on and on.
 It was awe-inspiring, it was awe-inspiring.
 She flashed to the heavens, on and on.
 Amama, the kapu is freed, the kapu is freed.
 She flashed to the heavens, on and on. (Barrère, Pukui & Kelly 1980:80)

Canoe-Building Ceremonies

When Archibald Menzies climbed the slopes of Mauna Loa in 1794, he encountered a small group of canoe-makers and noted that "here and there on the sides of the path they have little

maraes or spots consecrated to their deity, which none of them ever pass without leaving something, let it be ever so trifling, to obtain his good will" (1920:85). During a later climb up Mt Hualalai in 1794, he passed through an area where trees were cut

for canoes, planks and other purposes. . . . We observed here and there on the path little maraes [i.e., altars], pointed out by taboo sticks stuck in the ground round a bush or under a tree. In passing these places the natives always muttered a prayer or hymn, and made some offering, as they said, to their akua [god], by leaving a little piece of fruit, vegetable or something or other at these consecrated spots. Even in this solitary hut [built by the Hawaiian wood-workers], we found a corner of it consecrated by one of these taboo sticks which the natives earnestly requested us not to remove when we took possession of it, and we very strictly obeyed their injunction. (1920:156-57)

Pele is not mentioned by name, but since Mauna Loa and Hualalai are both associated with her in Hawaiian mythology, it is quite likely that at least some of the small altars were intended for her. When Menzies and his party descended Hualalai, they spent the night in a "cavern." "None of the women durst follow us into the cavern because of a small marae which happened to be in the centre of it, where a variety of fruits and vegetables that had been offered to the Akua were in a decayed and rotten state. The natives, however, repaired it and made fresh offerings" (1920:164). Again, no mention is made of Pele, but because of the location, it may have been an altar for her.

Based on data from the unpublished notebooks of N. B. Emerson, Gutmanis reports that canoe-builders included Pele in their prayers during the ritual preceding the trimming of a tree for canoe building. Most likely such prayers were included when the trees were taken from the domains of Pele.

Pele shakes the base of the mountains
Mountains of the *koa* trees that stand here.
Crookedly turn flat the tree tops.
May the lesser deity, the major deity, cause growth,
The long god, the short god
Cut off the branches, the tops that reach to the heavens.
Yours, to be sure, o heaven high one, is that canoe.
Protected is the tree, tabu its shadow
A little shadow, a long shadow.
Trim the canoe that has fallen.
It is free of tabu. (Gutmanis 1983:77-78)

Adze-making sites were sometimes located near craters (Kamakau 1961:240; Kirch 1985:179), and remains of shrines can still be found at them (Kirch 1985:180). Doubtless, some of the ceremonies at these sites were directed to Pele and her family. Byron observed that when sandalwood was cut and fern roots dug up, "locks of hair, and often more precious things" were offered to Pele (Byron 1826:186).

Apparently offerings were also made to Pele simply because it was believed she was in need of them. When Jules Remy drew a sketch of a very thin Pele which he told a group of Hawaiians he had seen, one of them said: "Pele is wasting away! Pele is suffering hunger! Beware lest she become angry and avenge herself! Let us make haste to offer her food and prayer" (Summers 1988:55).

Ceremonies in Pele's Domain

Descriptions abound of the small ceremonies and offerings made to Pele by Hawaiians when they approached her domain and craters. When Ellis visited the volcanoes, his Hawaiian guides refused to eat any *ohelo* berries until they offered some to Pele.

As we passed along, we observed the natives, who had hitherto refused to touch any of the *ohelo* berries, now gather several bunches, and, after offering a part to Pele, eat them very freely. They did not use much ceremony in their acknowledgement; but when they had plucked a branch, containing several clusters of berries, they turned their faces towards the place whence the greatest quantity of smoke and vapour issued, and, breaking the branch they held in their hand in two, they threw one part down the precipice, saying at the same time,

“E Pele, eia ka *ohelo* 'au; e taumaha aku wau ia oe, e ai hoi au tetahi.” “Pele, here are your *ohelos*; I offer some to you, some I also eat.”

Several of them told us, as they turned round from the crater, that after such acknowledgments they might eat the fruit with security. (1979 [1827]:163)

Elsewhere Ellis writes that “locks of human hair were among the offerings made to Pele. They were frequently presented to this goddess by those who passed by the crater of Kirauea, on which occasions they were thrown into the crater, a short address being made at the same time to the deity supposed to reside there” (250). Other early observers noted similar ceremonies:

In this visit to the crater we observed that none of the natives went empty-handed, but carried pieces of taro, yams, plantains, etc., to make offerings, which they threw down at the mouth of the crater among other rotten remains of such offerings where they earnestly requested us to leave something too, which we did, such as beads, nails, and pieces of tape, which highly pleased them, and they seemed to think that such offerings would be highly acceptable. (Menzies 1920:161)

In about three hours we reached the Okea tree, known as the boundary of the territory of Pele, or the goddess of the volcano. In bygone days no native dared venture beyond it without an offering to Pele, under penalty of her vengeance. (Wilkes 1852:145)

“Okea” is probably a misspelling of the *‘ōhi‘a* tree (*Metrosideros polymorpha*), one of the few trees that grows in lava areas and one traditionally associated with Pele. Probably this is the same tree described by Westervelt:

About half way between the city of Hilo and the volcano Kilauea, there stood for many, many years an old *ohia* tree. It was so old that it had become legendary and was known as “Ka laau o Pele” (The tree of Pele). Whenever a native came near this tree, he began to search for certain leaves or fruit which he could lay beneath the tree as an offering before he dared to try to pass beyond. These sacrifices were supposed to appease the wrath of the goddess and assure the traveller safe passage through Pele's dominions. (1963 [1916]:36)

De Varigny describes a ceremony at Hale-ma'uma'u: “At the moment we drew near the edge,

our Kanakas removed their shoes and bared their heads. After muttering several words in a low voice (the sense of which escaped us) they tied stones to a few small objects evidently carried for that purpose from Hilo—necklaces, glass beads, and so on—and threw these into the echoing abyss, as they called out three times this cry: ‘Aloha, Pele! I salute you, Pele!’ ” (1981:78). Byron observed:

Hence no ohelo berry was eaten on Peli [Kī-lau-ea] till some had been offered to the goddess of the same name: the sandal wood was not cut, nor the fern roots dug, without propitiating her by locks of hair, and often more precious things. Frequently, the hog and dog were sacrificed to procure her favour; and never was the ground disturbed or anything carried away from Kairaua [Kī-lau-ea]. (Byron 1826:186)

Kalakaua reports that “an offering was first made of everything eaten there [Kī-lau-ea]” (1974 [1888]:139).

A proverb in Pukui’s compilation is based on the belief that ‘*ōhelo* berries must be offered to Pele:

Mai hahaki ‘oi i ka ‘ōhelo o punia i ka ua noe.

Do not pluck the ‘ōhelo berries lest we be surrounded by rain and fog.

A warning not to do anything that would result in trouble. It is *kapu* to pluck ‘*ōhelo* berries on the way to the crater of Kilauea. To do so would cause the rain and fog to come and one would lose his way. It is permissible to pick them at the crater if the first ‘*ōhelo* is tossed into the fire of Pele. Then, on the homeward way, one may pick as he pleases. (1983:222)

Ceremonies at Lava Flows

The literature provides ample documentation of ceremonies held at lava flows, especially when the flows threatened human habitations. Perhaps the best known of such ceremonies is the one attended by Ka-mehameha I when a lava flow threatened valuable lands in Kona. Kamakau provides a description:

Kamehameha was in distress over the destruction of his land and the threatened wiping-out of his fish ponds. None of the kahunas, orators, or diviners were able to check the fire with all their skill. Everything they did was in vain. Kamehameha finally sent for Pele’s seer (*kaula*), named Ka-maka-o-ke-akua, and asked what he must do to appease her anger. “You must offer the proper sacrifices,” said the seer. “Take and offer them,” replied the chief. “Not so! Troubles and afflictions which befall the nation require that the ruling chief himself offer the propitiatory sacrifice, not a seer or a kahuna.” “But I am afraid lest Pele kill me.” “You will not be killed,” the seer promised. Kamehameha made ready the sacrifice and set sail for Kekaha in Mahai‘ula.

When Ka-‘ahu-manu and Ka-heihei-malie heard that the chief was going to appease Pele they resolved to accompany him and if necessary die with him. Ulu-lani also went with them. . . . Other chiefs also took the trip to see the flow extinguished. . . .

The flow had been destroying houses, toppling over coconut trees, filling fish ponds, and causing devastation everywhere. Upon the arrival of Kamehameha and the seer and their offering of sacrifices and gifts, the flow ceased; the goddess had accepted the offering. (1961:185–86)

During the course of the flow, a stream of lava "shot up the highest and . . . was the most brilliant in the bubbling mass" (Kamakau 1961:185). A chiefess attending the ceremony was told by a "seer" that the flame was her son, a common belief that deceased worshippers of Pele become flames (185). She responded by reciting the following chant composed in his honor:

The eyes of my son are like a burning torch,
 Glowing like the red-hot *kukui* nut,
 It is the first flame to be seen in the burning fire,
 It is there in the bubbling fire,
 The body of Kanaloa-mahe-walu stands forth,
 I suppress my cry of affection,
 It overpowers me, my love, like that of a lover. (Kamakau
 1961:185-86)

Kamakau continues: "It was said that Pele herself was seen in the body of a woman leading a procession composed of a multitude of goddesses in human form dancing the hula and chanting:

'Our husband has gone to carry the bigger load
 (Ka-heihei-malie)
 'While the lighter load (Ka'ahu-manu) is neglected.' (1961:186)

It was believed that part of the reason Pele was erupting was because she disapproved of Ka-mehameha ("our husband") giving so much attention to Ka-heihei-malie and neglecting Ka'ahu-manu. Kamakau offers another account of the event elsewhere:

The fishpond of Kiholo in North Kona, Hawaii, was constantly being threatened by lava flows while Kamehameha was ruler of the kingdom of Hawaii. A flow came down close to the pond of Kiholo; Kamehameha brought a pig and cast it in; the fires stopped. The flow had gone down as far as Ka'upulehu and Mahai'ula and had almost plunged into the sea. Kamehameha's bringing of a pig and offering it made the flow stop. There were eyes in the lava to see Kamehameha, and ears to hear his appeals and his words of prayer, and the great blazing lava flow died down. (1964:67)

Steen Bille provides another account of the same ceremony:

In vain the unfortunate inhabitants made innumerable sacrifices to Pele, live pigs by the hundred were thrown into the boiling lava, the pigs burned and the lava continued its course. It lasted for many days; prayers, sacrifices, the songs of the priests, and the wailing of the people—nothing availed, nothing could appease the wrath of Pele. Then Kamehameha the Great stood forth at the head of his warriors. He went straight towards the stream, took a lock of his hair which was tabu and threw it into the fire, and then the torrent of lava ceased. Pele was satisfied, the sacrifice of Kamehameha had gratified her. (1851:225)

In 1881, another member of the Hawaiian royal family, Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani, conducted ceremonies to halt a flow approaching Hilo. The following is an eyewitness account:

When we got to the flow it was advancing slowly but unmistakably. The Princess walked to the flow, and I heard her give a long prayer. I was about 20 feet away from her. Then she took off her own red silk handkerchief and threw it into the red hot lava. Pele likes red silk.

Then Ruth took other handkerchiefs and did the same thing.

After the handkerchiefs were all gone, she took the brandy bottle and broke it by smashing it on the hot lava. It blazed into fire right away. Then she prayed again to Pele.

We left the fire then and went to the tents where we spent the night.

Early the next morning all of us went to the lava flow and we couldn't believe our eyes. The flow had stopped right there. (Zambucka 1977:70)

By this date, 1881, it appears that red silk was sometimes substituted for *kapa* and brandy for *'awa*.

Entries from a missionary diary also describe Princess Ruth's attempts to stop the flow: "There is a constant stream of visitors to the flow, and last night, Luka [Ruth] the old governess of Hawaii camped with a large number of people on the 3d hill, and rumor was rife yesterday in regard to the incantations which were to be made in order to stop the flow. If she does not succeed, it will be 'because the lands of Waiakea have been sold to haoles (white settlers)'" (Martin 1970:167). The flow stopped before reaching Hilo and the missionary notes in her journal: "I think that very many have been singing the doxology in their hearts ever since, whilst some few of the superstitious ones attribute the cessation of the flow to the influence of the chiefs" (168).

Coan also describes activities at the 1881 flow that approached Hilo:

When the great eruption of 1881 was within a mile of the seashore, and threatened to destroy the town of Hilo, and seasons of fasting and prayer had proved of no avail, a deputation of pagan worshippers went quietly by night to the foot of the stream, made their sacrifices to the goddess Pele, the divinity of the volcano, and departed. The eruption, which had been flowing for nine months, stopped on the afternoon of the next day. (1889:156)

Coan describes the actions of a man who "belonged to the ancient class of native physicians or medicine-men" when a lava flow threatened his home: "When the burning flood struck the forest behind his house, he is said to have hoisted his flag in front of the slowly advancing lava, and to have forbidden it, in the name of the ancient gods of his race, to pass the flag" (1882:334).

Gutmanis provides 2 prayers from the Kelsey Collection that were recited to request Pele to desist from her destructive lava flows. She does not indicate where the prayers were recited, but seemingly the ceremony would have been held near the flows. The 1st is said "before eating," perhaps before giving offerings to Pele:

Pele, Pele, eater of trees
 Yours is the small fire, 'Ula'ula-ke-ahi
 Pu'u-lena is the wind, the 'awa is of Puna,
 That is joined by the *hala*, the *hala* of where?
 The *hala* the god continued
 For you deities, for us worshipers,
 Lest small be the land of the Pele worshipers
 Pele devoured the peace, the Pele worshipers
 Let the lightning flash, warm the earth.
 That we may live, your prophets
 Profoundly into tabu runs the prayer,
 Profound the lifting of the tabu.
 The tabu is lifted.

The 2nd prayer is recited "after eating," perhaps after offerings were made to Pele:

The land is free by the small attack, by the great attack,
 For the release from the eating (of tabu) of the *haku*.
 O depriver of bundles, o hinder who dwells in the pit
 turning a deaf ear,
 Till the worshipers of Pele run away,
 O Ku-wawa, o Ku ha'ili'ili-moe,
 O Ha'iha'i-lau-ahea,
 The women in the day, in the rain forest,
 The *kahuna* in the hot raging of the fire,
 O 'Imi'imi, o Nalo'wale, o Loa'a.
 When you get the wrong, pay the native son
 By love was the invitation given.
 She comes . . . comes . . .
 Profound the tabu; profound the freedom from tabu. (Gutmanis 1983:108)

Temple Ceremonies

Ceremonies to Pele and the other volcano gods were also conducted at formal *heiau*, or temples. Although Kamakau claims that "there were no formal prayer rituals for her [i.e., Pele], nor were heiaus erected for her where people bowed down; nor were people taught to worship her" (1964:69), other evidence in the literature refutes this.

Most references to *heiau* for Pele and her family are of a general nature. For example, Ellis says, "The whole island was considered as bound to pay them [i.e., the volcano gods] tribute, or support their heiaus" (1979 [1827]:173). When Ellis asked why Pele destroyed part of Keoua's army, he was told that "he had not sent sufficient offerings to the heiaus" (174). Kalakaua reports that "the temples of Pele were numerous, particularly in the neighborhood of old lava flows and their priests were always well sustained" (1974 [1888]:139).

Reference to a specifically named stone structure used in the worship of Pele is found in Ellis. While visiting Ki-lau-ea Iki, his Hawaiian companions "pointed out . . . the ruins of Oararauo, an old heiau, which crowned the summit of a lofty precipice on our left. It was formerly a temple of Pele" (1979 [1827]:179). Thrum describes the same temple: "Oalalauo—Kilauea Iki: on summit of precipice; temple of Pele, Kamakaakeakua its priest. In ruins in 1825" (1907:40). Reference to this *heiau* by Fornander (n.d.:265) appears to be from Ellis. Ellis provides a description of a *heiau* to Pele still used for ceremonies: "On descending to the bottom of the valley, we reached a heiau dedicated to Pele, with several rude stone idols, wrapped up in white and yellow cloth, standing in the midst of it. A number of wreaths of flowers, pieces of sugar-cane, and other presents, some of which were not yet faded, lay strewed around, and we were told that every passing traveler left a trifling offering before them" (1979 [1827]:250). Handy and Handy suggest this *heiau* that was in a "valley which marks the line between Hilo and Hamakua Districts . . . must have marked the point at which the domain of Pele ended and that of Kamapua'a commenced" (1972:335).

Ellis mentions "stone idols," but the only image from traditional Hawai'i identified as "Pele" is one currently in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris (Cox & Davenport 1974:132; Buck 1957:485). The authenticity of this identification is very doubtful (Rose 1978:270). Fornander claims that "tradition has it that image worship in the islands originated with her [Pele's] advent, though Pele was never represented by one" (1920:494).

Baker reports the remains of a *heiau* on Mauna Loa at 8,000 ft elevation that was associated with Pele-worship. He describes it as: "one large stone platform with long stones erected at the back, and further along a smaller stone platform. It has been learned from the Hawaiians

that these platforms were for the priests, and the upright stones were offerings erected whenever there was a flow in this especially Pele-ridden section of Mauna Loa, to avert disaster" (1920:85).

Archaeologist Kirch writes that "Oalalauo and Uwekahuna were two important temples (*heiau*) situated at Kilauea, where rituals were performed for the propitiation of Pele" (1985:33).

Heiau to other members of Pele's family existed. Two stone structures to Hi'iaka are mentioned in the literature. Brigham provides the following brief description: "Heiau of Hiiaka, land of Lanihau, North Kona; situated on the rising ground at the head of Kailua Bay, 100 feet north of Pa-o Umi. Its site is now occupied by a hotel. . . . The name of Hiiaka was supplied by the late J. K. Nahale, Sheriff of Kona, and the late Malanui, the latter adding that it had been built by Umi" (n.d.:513).

Few accounts of temple ceremonies are found in the literature. One is from Ellis, who visited "a heiau dedicated to Pele" in 1823 during his journey around Hawai'i. His description of it continues:

We were told that every passing traveller left a trifling offering before them [i.e., images].

Once in a year, we were also informed, the inhabitants of Hamakua brought large gifts of hogs, dogs, and fruit, when the priests and kahu of Pele assembled to perform certain rites, and partake of the feast.

The annual festival, we were told, was designed to propitiate the volcanic goddess, and secure the country from earthquakes, or inundations of lava. (1979 [1827]:250)

Although Ellis mentions an "annual festival" for Pele, he does not indicate the time of year it was held.

K. Kamakau writes of concluding ceremonies that were part of the elaborate "inauguration ritual of the *luakini* temple" (Valeri 1985:234) that involved Pele and her family:

Then came certain prophets [*kāula*] to worship their goddess. Some for Pele, others for Hiiaka, Kapo, Pua and Kamohoalii. There were many prophets who came this day before the king's goddess, where they, every one of them, offered sacrifices of goods, pigs, chickens, sashes, and all other things, saying: "Here are the pigs, the chickens, and the sashes, gifts from us to thee. Save thou thy offspring; let us be strong before thee, and let the chiefs sustain us before them; and wilt thou see that we are forgiven on the day that we seek pardon." They then ceased their petitions and went away. The priest of the House of Papa then arose, waved the fire stick, sat down and prayed to the goddesses. The fires were then started for broiling dogs and chickens; these were brought together in the presence of the goddesses. Then the king offered the broiled dogs and chickens. (Fornander 1919b:28)

Kepelino writes of a child's naming ceremony that was held in a *heiau*. The reference to Pele is probably because she was an 'aumakua of the participants.

The prophet [*kāula*] held a position that was promised to a human being who was the devil's [god's⁵] assistant. When a new infant was born, the child's father took him to the *heiau*, later he sent for the prophet, who came to him. Then he offered a prayer calling the devil to come and see his helper, and afterwards a high priest gave a name, a nickname to this child. When this was

5. The Christianized Kepelino refers to all Hawaiian gods as devils.

over, the baby was returned home. After two *anahulu* periods, (that is eight days), he took (the child) again to the *heiau*. There the child was circumcised, and a white tapa flag, a misty-white chicken, coconuts, bananas, red fish and other things were given as offerings. Afterwards, the real name of this child was announced, a name by which he was to be called and which was derived through prayer. That was how it was done. This ritual was associated always with the image-priests and the guardians of Pele. This child just mentioned then became a sacred child. All the knowledge and power of the devil were assumed entirely by this child. His name-chants were prayers addressed to the devil, and sacred, not to be chanted outside the *heiau*, only inside. When it was that period designed for prayers to the god-images, all the chants of this child were then performed. The priests chanted them in the *heiau*. When the fathered [sic] returned home, he chanted out the name-chants of his son, while the people in the house consequently were required to remain perfectly still and not walk about anywhere until the time of the prayer's final end. (Kirtley & Mookini 1977:60)

A ceremony described by an anonymous writer was held in the houses of the "keepers of the gods" (Anonymous 1860), seemingly a reference to the house within the *heiau* enclosure where images of the gods were kept, or to the *mua* (men's houses) where gods were sometimes kept (Kamakau 1976:132). References to the volcano suggest the ceremony was held in connection with Pele worship.

In the houses of all the keepers of the gods, it is kapu to step over anything, or to walk to and fro when the awa is being chewed. When the awa is strained, it is kapu to utter a sound except by the one voice that responds to the one uttering the prayer. If one wishes to go outside or to come in, then a ti leaf shield is put where the awa container (*kanoa*) stands. Then the kapu is freed so that one can go out or come in. When the awa is strained, and poured into a cup then the gods are called by name. . . .

"The rising smoke of the Pit breaks apart,
Rising like terraces to the beloved clouds.
Leaping upward, the cloud-like smoke arises from the Pit,
Rising as Puuonioni does on the heights of Uekahuna,
As Akanikolea does above Halemaumau,
It is a customary sight.
Here is your favorite food, O Kama,
Come, come back.
The back is protected, the face is shielded,
Greetings to you" (Anonymous 1860)

Ceremonies at Volcanic Craters

Various writers mention ceremonies held at the volcano craters, but only brief descriptions of such ceremonies are found in the literature. Jules Remy observed 2 groups of Hawaiians who came to Hale-ma'uma'u for a ceremony in 1853.

Two caravans, one of 26 people coming from Hilo, the other less numerous coming from Kau, arrived at almost the same time, and made a halt near our shelter. Three old men from the Hilo caravan descended into the crater with packets in their hands. "Are they, then, going fishing in the lake of fire?" I

laughingly said to a young man who was acting eager around me. "It's just the contrary," he responded, giving himself the airs of being strong-minded, "they're going to scatter fish, they are idolaters!" (Summers 1988:62)

Westervelt found a brief entry in the Volcano House Records for 1865 made by a visitor, which notes a ceremony held at the crater by 37 Hawaiians. "They have been down to the lake of fire and have thrown in shoes, knives, handkerchiefs, coins, etc." (1904:12). Elsewhere, Westervelt describes a trip made by Hawaiians after they recovered from illness, which included ceremonies at Hale-ma'uma'u:

When Hawaiians, who had been ill, recovered, they frequently vowed to make a "journey of health." This meant that they came to the place now known as Hilo Bay. There they bathed by the beautiful little Coconut Island, fished up by the demi-god Maui. There they swam around a stone known as Moku-ola (The-island-of-life). Then they walked along the seashore day after day until they were below the volcano of Kilauea. They went up to the pit of Pele, offered sacrifices, and then followed an overland path back to Hilo. It was an ill omen if for any reason they went back by the same path. They must make the "journey of health" with the face forward. (1963 [1916]:28)

Bosserant d'Anglade describes what he calls "pilgrimages" to Kī-lau-ea in the early 1890s:

As in earlier periods, the volcano is still the preferred place of pilgrimage for the Kanakas. Tradition holds that the goddess Pele had selected the volcano as her dwelling place, and so the Hawaiians journey there from all the other islands, displaying much the same robust faith as do the Mohammedans in their pilgrimages to Mecca. They bring with them offerings: the poorest of pilgrims come with a lei of rare flowers, the rich with a piglet or an exquisite kerchief destined to be thrown into the fire as a sacrifice. Throughout the visit they are sworn to keep in mind the fact that they are performing a religious act. They must not eat, nor can they even pluck a flower. Young men and girls do not even have the privilege of dreaming of their lovers. Instead, they chant their slow-measured sacred songs pausing from time to time only to celebrate their journey's progress, carefully placing some decorative leaves upon a wayside rock so as to compensate for a plant broken by the wind. (1987:138-39)

Handy and Pukui report that a betrothal on the island of Hawai'i "was sealed with a prayer and offering at Ka-lua-o-Pele (The pit of Pele, Halema'uma'u). Later the betrothal was broken and subsequent troubles are believed to have been due to disregard of the *kapu* laid before Pele" (1972 [1958]:105). It is not mentioned how frequently such ceremonies were held at the volcano. Pukui writes that Ka wai hūnā a ka pāo'o is "a pool not far from the crater of Kilauea. The priests of Pele who knew of its location obtained water from it to mix the 'awa drinks they offered to her. Like the pool on Lehua, a supernatural pāo'o fish guarded it. This pool was destroyed during the making of a road" (1983:178).

Funeral Ceremonies

The most commonly described ceremony held at the crater is the one that accompanied the disposal of human bones. Various writers report the widespread Hawaiian belief that souls of persons who were related to Pele dwelt with her in the volcano (e.g., Holokahiki 1865:2). Such

an eternal cohabitation seemed to be ensured if the bones of the deceased were deposited in the volcano crater. It was also believed that the presence of the spirits in the volcano would protect the living relatives from eruptions. Kamakau writes:

When persons become volcanic spirits . . . , their *ho'ailona* [sign] are flames, earthquakes, or tidal waves within these volcanic manifestations. . . . They become the "worker slaves" . . . of the earth-devouring spirits . . . of the volcano who direct these "fires" to wherever they want them to go. The "fires" heed their desires, and from that place to this they are directed by these spirits. When the spirits are angry, these appease their anger and chagrin . . . by ruining the land and causing death to man. The only way to make them stop is for the ruler himself to take a pig and offer it as a "burnt sacrifice" to the gods with his own hand. (Kamakau 1964:66)

When John Papa I'i visited Kī-lau-ea in 1852, he sensed the spirits of the dead in the crater: "When they went down into the hollows of the pit and came to the crater proper, which was active, it seemed to Ii that the child's mother and aunts and her cousin Nahienaena [all deceased] were also there, sitting together on the other side where the lava gathered. The lava seemed to be dancing, and from where they stood, the flames appeared to go up and down" (1983:169). I'i does not say so, but presumably the deceased were kinsmen to Pele. K. Kamakau writes:

Should a chief die, or any of his own men, or the servants of Pele, then their souls will go to the volcano, and the servants of Pele and other men will serve as they served in this world. And the servant of Pele will be his caretaker, who will lord it over his stewards or even over his own body servants. When the soul is living there, should some one wish to see it, then this is the process: go with a servant of Pele, and he will call by chanting one of the chants of that chief. (Fornander 1919a:572,574)

A "priestess" of Pele told Ellis: "I am Pele; I shall never die; and those who follow me, when they die, if part of their bones be taken to Kirauea, (the name of the volcano), will live with me in the bright fires there" (1979 [1827]:217). Kamakau writes that "if Pele and Hi'iaka were his *'aumakua*, then the pit of Pele would be the soul's resting place" (1961:200). Elsewhere, Ellis writes: "The worshippers of Pele threw a part of the bones of their dead into the volcano, under the impression that the spirits of the deceased would then be admitted to the society of the volcanic deities, and that their influence would preserve the survivors from the ravages of volcanic fire" (1979 [1827]:259). Pogue writes that "if the physical body of the Chief died, or those of his relatives, and the attendants (*kahu*) of Pele, their souls returned to the crater of Pele, where they were waited upon as in their earthly life" (1978 [1858]:56). Kirtley and Mookini translate an 1865 newspaper article, which reports: "Likewise, when corpses and bones are thrown into the crater at Ki-lau-ea, they become fire and lava, it is believed, and are worshipped" (1979:81).

Pukui describes a ceremony held at the crater to ensure that the spirit of the deceased would become an *'unihipili*, a spirit that could be called upon to assist a medium:

The *kaku'ai* method [of creating an *'unihipili*] was more elaborate. After the death of a person, his body was prepared with the proper sacrifices and taken to the dwelling place of his *akua* or *'aumakua*. Those who claimed Pele as their *akua* and wished to take their dead to her, took the bones of the deceased, wrapped in red and black tapa, to the priests of Pele. At the pit the *kahuna* chanted a long prayer, threw in prepared *'awa* and a cooked pig, and then last

of all the bundle of *kapa* containing the bones. If the deceased was accepted by Pele, the bundle made a circuit of the pit without being burned and then burst into flames and vanished. A flame appeared on the surface which was taken to be a spirit of the person just accepted by Pele. (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:150)

Elsewhere, Pukui concludes the above description with: "If Pele would not accept the remains of the deceased, it was tossed back to the family or thrown up and its parts scattered on a ledge where the family gathered them up and took them home" (1945:3).

Von Kotzebue mentions that "dying persons sometimes desired that their bones should be thrown into the crater of the volcano at O Wahi [Hawaii], which was inhabited by the revered god Pelai [Pele]" (1967:178).

H. B. Nalimu writes: "Pauahilani was a man who carried the bones of chiefs to Kilauea and threw them into the mouth of the crater in old times. This waha o Kilauea was a big open hole with a fire in it where smoke arose between ka pali kapu o Ka-moho-alii and Hale-ma'u-ma'u. Awa, pigs, etc were also sacrificed" (n.d.:802).

Various descriptions of the actual ceremonies are found in the literature. Kamakau writes most extensively of the ceremonies for disposing of the dead in the volcano:

For a dead beloved one whom they wished to become a volcanic manifestation . . . of the crater . . . of Kilauea on Hawaii, the Hawaiians would act in this way: They would take to the volcano the bones, hair, fingernails, or some other part of the dead body, sacrifices and offerings for the gods . . . , gifts for the priests and prophets and guardians of the volcano, a pig, *'awa*, and a tapa garment of whatever color the relatives to whom the body belonged chose to be a visible sign to them . . . and they would ascend to the pit of Pele. . . . There they ritually killed the dedicatory pig . . . for the dead newcomer the *malihini*, to become a native, a *kama'aina*, of Kilauea. If the ritual went well . . . a pouring rain would pelt the uplands and the sounds of thunder would reverberate to the sea, as a sign of consent to the admission . . . of the *malihini*. In the morning, the pig was roasted, the *'awa* chewed, and all would feast. Then the prophet of Pele, the *kaula Pele*, and the relatives of the dead, from 10 to 40 as eyewitnesses, would take the corpse and the offerings—a live pig . . . and some *'awa* — to the very center . . . of the fire, where the fires were quiet and where fiery lava . . . welled up . . . instead of tossing about or rolling in great waves.

The prophet stood and pleaded . . . for the acceptance of the *malihini* and for his being united with the *kama'aina* of the pit, and he recited the ancestry of the dead one so that his ancestors in the crater of Kilauea would know him as one of them. It was useless to make offerings to them, for they were just the *kama'aina* of the place, not the gods. When the *'awa* and the pig were thrown in, they were immediately consumed. When the body of the *malihini* was thrown in, it was as though it were being fondly lifted by a procession of people and borne tenderly upon fingertips into Halema'uma'u, the home of the *kama'aina* chiefess of this place. She, Pele, had built this place to warm strangers who came to the mountain through icy mists. The body was borne along for the distance of a chain or two without the tapa that covered it being scorched; then, like a swelling wave, a flame swept over it and the *malihini* vanished. Some minutes later a flame appeared and billowed, and a column

of fire appeared, streaked with whatever color the relatives had chosen to wrap the body in. They would hear the sound of many voices making a din, chanting *hula* and *oli* and *mele*, and the colored column which was the *malihini* they had brought would move about joyfully. Then the people to whom the *malihini* belonged would wail and call out the name by which he had been known in life and say, "You live! You live!" The "sign" . . . which the relatives saw was their beloved one; this was the body of their beloved. . . .

If the corpse was that of a chief, some people divided the body into 40 or more pieces and distributed the little pieces among the districts . . . of Hawaii. Those of each district could take their pieces to be made into a *pele* [volcano spirit]. There might be 40 or 100 pieces, and so each person might become a "multitude" . . . of volcanic spirits. The danger in making the body of a high chief, or perhaps a ruler, into so many spirits was that they might burst forth and devastate the land. The *kaula Pele*, therefore, did not like to do this. Those who did yield to the pleading of certain people and consent to do so were called "destroyers of the land" . . . and "troublemakers to the kingdom" That is the reason why chiefs killed prophets of Pele in the old days, and why the prophets acted in great secrecy. If there was a great eruption that devastated the land, the people became greatly excited and believed that a high chief had been taken into the pit of Pele. The mistaken idea . . . that many spirits are banded together in the pit of Pele has persisted from ancient times to this. It is a place free from all defilement, according to the belief of these people.

Many people wished to become volcanic spirits, and their relatives would make the appeal for them—perhaps because they believed that they would continue to live in the volcanic fires. There were many signs to be seen if one could not become a spirit of the volcano. A person did not become such merely by the making of a great many gifts and offerings; many are the eyewitnesses and prophets who can testify to this. When the prophet and the relatives of the dead one took his bones, hair, fingernails, or his spittle, perhaps, and the prophet made the appeal and threw the bundle into the glowing fire, if the bundle fell into the fire and was thrown back again to the place from which it was thrown without the *tapa* wrappings being burned, then the prophet would retrieve the bundle and ask what the obstructions . . . were that had caused it to be thrown back. If, when it was thrown a second time into the fire, it vanished into flame, then it had first been returned because of the obstruction that had now been cleared up. But if the bundle broke open and the bones or fingernails or whatever it was scattered, why was this? It was because the person had been spurned. He had no right . . . there, and had no relatives in that place. He became a wandering spirit at Kama'oma'o, a catcher of dragonflies, a shredder of spiders in the *wiliwili* grove of Kaup'e'a. (1964:64–66)

Pukui quotes portions of the above from Kamakau and adds: "My great grandmother was taken to the volcano. This was after Christianity had come. But because we're related to the fire—the line of Pele—great grandmother's people took her secretly, after the flesh was removed from the bones. They wrapped the bones and took her [the bones] to the Halemaumau fire pit of Kilauea Crater and chanted and prayed and let her go happily to her people who were fire" (Pukui, Haertig & Lee 1972:1:116).

Reverend Nalimu describes the disposal of chiefs' bodies: "Chiefs were laid in caves until

after decomposition then they were taken and thrown into the Pit of Pele. The bodies of chiefs were not stripped of the flesh when they had just died but were left in an advanced stage of decomposition, one, two or three months" (n.d.:778).

Kalaaukumuole provides fragments of a ceremony held at the death of a child: "Unihilele: This god is there in Kilauea, the place of the women of the pit, in this way: the duty of this god, if a child dearly beloved died, Unihilele was appealed to: 'here is the taro top, restore my child,' and so forth" (1866). It is not clear whether bones were thrown into the pit at this time.

Green and Beckwith provide another account of a burial ceremony:

The highest honor of all was conferred upon those dead whose bones were cast into the crater of Kilauea to be with Pele. Even to have their bones placed in fissures near the volcano was considered fortunate. The souls of those whose bones are cast into the crater are said to live with Pele in happiness.

The description of such a burial was given to Miss Green two years ago by an intelligent Hawaiian woman over sixty years of age, who recalled an incident of her childhood life in Hilo where she was born and brought up. When she was ten or eleven years old her adopted father . . . then an elderly man, said to her, "We are going up to the crater to deposit bones of your ancestors." The two were accompanied by an old *kahuna*, or priest. When they reached the pit, a red handkerchief was spread near the edge and upon it was placed an *umeke*, or calabash, containing the bones. No mention was made of offerings, but probably these also were placed upon it. The three worshippers sat a little way back of the improvised table facing the pit, the girl sitting between the two men. Then the two men commenced to chant, calling upon Pele to receive the sacred bones. Gradually the lava rose in the pit until at length it reached the top, and then subsiding, took with it the calabash, cloth, and all. Instead of sinking immediately the calabash circled the pit, while at various points detonations were to be heard as if the gods or the spirits of the dead who inhabited Halemaumau were saluting the arriving company. After encircling the crater, the calabash sunk. Then the two men caught hold of the girl by the arms, telling her that soon would appear the visible forms of the dead and she must not leap into the pit after them in her excitement. They continued chanting, and sure enough, there in lava appeared the shapes of human figures, some of which she recognized as those not long dead, but whether the same as those just deposited she did not say. "You may believe this," said the old lady; "I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen it myself." (1926:185-86)

Pukui describes funeral ceremonies held by her family in Ka'ū:

As my family belonged to the lineage of Pele, the bodies of our dead were laid away in a cave until after decomposition was all over. Then the bones were carried with the appropriate gifts to Kilauea fire pit where lived the Prophet of Pele (*Kaula Pele*). The *Kaula* went with the relatives to the rim of the Pit (*Ka Lua*) and with prayers the gifts (*mohai*) of pork and 'awa were tossed to the Woman of the Pit (*Ka-Wahine-a-ka-Lua*). The bundle of bones were then thrown in with the words, "Here is your offering, O Pele, please accept him." The 'uhane was then believed "to live with Pele for all time." If the dead was not acceptable to Pele, that is if she would not recognize the kinship, the bundle was thrown back to the feet of the priest. It was then

carried back to the cave. There had never been a time when the bones of our own relatives were ever thrown back. This justified our belief that a kinship existed between our *'ohana* and the dreaded fire goddess. (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:152-53)

Kaaie describes a similar type of burial on Maui at Hale-a-ka-lā where the entire body was thrown in the pit (1862:3148). A different translation of the same account is found in Fornander (1919a:570,572). Although Kaaie does not mention Pele, Handy and Handy assume such burials were conducted on Maui by people who believed themselves related to Pele (1972:336-37). If, indeed, Pele was appealed to in this ceremony, it is the only description of a ceremony held for Pele beyond the island of Hawai'i, except ceremonies associated with the hula. It is perhaps noteworthy that Maui is the only island except Hawai'i that has experienced volcanic eruptions since human habitation of the Hawaiian Islands.

There are sacred burial places on the cliffs or on level places. There is a pit on Hale-a-ka-la called the Pit-of-Kaawa (Lua-o-Ka'awa), directly above Nu'u, on Maui. The bodies are prepared thus, just as it has been described. The bearer of the dead also takes with him the food of which he was fond, such as pork, banana, sugar cane or other things. These are taken according to one's fondness for them. Upon reaching the pit, the relative of the dead calls to a departed ancestor within, "So-and-so, here is your child." If the body (tossed in) falls into the water, he has no relative in this pit, but he who has a relative is caught as his corpse is thrown in. It lands on a ledge and does not drop into the water. After the corpse vanishes, the bearer returns home after which their [*sic*] is much crying and mourning. (Kaaie 1862:3148)

In addition to pit burials, deep chasms in the lava were also apparently used for disposing of the remains of those believed to be related to Pele. Green and Beckwith report that "even to have their bones placed in fissures near the volcano was considered fortunate" (1926:185). Byron writes: "Besides the roughness of our yesterday's march, to-day we had great chasms in the lava, which often demand our utmost care in walking. Near one of the largest of these, four poles had been erected to mark it as a burial-place, where the bones of many of the people, particularly the worshippers of the fire gods, used to be deposited" (1826:180).

OFFERINGS

'Awa and pigs were necessary offerings to Pele at the most important formal ceremonies—as they were for the other major gods of Hawai'i, also. Other offerings, however, of various types were made to Pele at domestic altars, when walking over her domain, at lava flows, at Halema'uma'u, and when conducting rituals in her *heiau*.

Numerous writers mention that *'ohelo* berries could not be eaten until some were offered to Pele (e.g., Ellis 1979 [1827]:174; Byron 1826:186). Brigham reports "a broken fern leaf covered by a stone" (n.d.:5) was an offering still left to Pele at the turn of the century when passing through her territory.

Offerings were given to Pele at the lava flows. Brigham mentions a "bundle of *awa* done up in a red handkerchief found on the still hot flow of 1887" (n.d.:20). According to Ellis "many [hogs] were thrown into the rolling torrent of lava to appease the gods, and stay its progress" (1979 [1827]:173). At a lava flow in 1868, Lyman met "a native kahuna" who told him that if he were given "a black pig and a white hen, he would endeavor to appease the wrath of the Fire Goddess Pele" (1929:6).

At the crater of Kī-lau-ea offerings of “fruits, pigs, fowls, fish, and sometimes human beings” were given to Pele, according to Kalakaua (1974 [1888]:139). Ellis writes that fish were required offerings from people who lived near the seashore, and “vast numbers of hogs, some alive, others cooked, were thrown into the craters during the time they were in action, or when they threatened an eruption” (1979 [1827]:173). Kamakau reports that “a live pig . . . and some ‘*awa*” were offered during the ceremonies when the dead were deposited in the crater (1964:65). A Hawaiian account of Captain James Cook’s death, published by de Varigny, claims that “sacred fish intended for Pele’s altar” were forcefully taken by Cook’s men (1981:17). Several writers (e.g., Byron 1826:186) mention locks of hair as suitable offerings at the crater. Stewart reports “taro, potatoes, and sugar-cane, and the cloth-plant . . . hogs and fowls” as items that were sacrificed at the crater (1970 [1830]:301). Pukui says that “‘*awa* and a cooked pig” were thrown into the crater at the time bones were disposed there (1945:3; Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:150). Westervelt reports that because of Pele’s enmity toward the hog-god Kamapua‘a:

The most acceptable sacrifice to Pele was supposed to be a puaa (a hog). If a hog could not be secured when an offering was necessary, the priest would take the fish humu-humu-nuku-nuku-a-puaa and throw it into the pit of fire. If the hog and the fish both failed, the priest would offer any of the things into which, it was said in their traditions, Kamapuaa could turn himself. (1963 [1916]:277)

Ellis observed “wreaths of flowers, pieces of sugar-cane, and other presents” at a temple, and was told that during an annual festival, “large gifts of hogs, dogs, and fruit” were brought to the temple (1979 [1827]:250). He was also told that at the ruined temple near Kī-lau-ea:

Large offerings were frequently made of hogs, dogs, fish, and fruits, but we could not learn that human victims were ever immolated on its altars. These offerings were always cooked in the steaming chasms, or the adjoining ground. Had they been dressed any where else, or prepared with any other fire, they would have been considered polluted, and have been expected to draw down curses on those who presented them. (1979 [1827]:179–80)

In Titcomb’s discussion of the use of ‘*awa* in Hawai‘i, she quotes a letter which claims that “the priests used this kind [of ‘*awa*, i.e., ‘*awa mo-i*] in sacrificial ceremonies to Pele . . . obtainable today; *awa hiwa*: skin dark, also leaves; used in Pele worship, also at *heiaus* and *koas*” (1948:110). In a chant from Kepelino, ‘*awa* is offered to Pele and Hi‘iaka (Titcomb 1948:156). An ‘*awa* offering prayer to Pele is also found in Emerson (1965 [1909]:199–200).

Ekaula claims that “‘*awa* with greens” are suitable offerings to appease ‘*aumakua* of the Pele family (1865). Handy and Pukui write that Pele and Hi‘iaka could be appeased during times of illness with offerings of “taro greens and salt” (1972 [1958]:143). Kamakau claims only “a gift of a bit of salt was required” for the volcano spirits (1964:89).

Kalakaua claims human sacrifices were made to Pele (1974 [1888]:139). Menzies, who visited Hawai‘i in 1794, reports that Hawaiians “sacrifice their criminals by disposing of them in the same manner [i.e., throwing them into the volcano]” (1920:161). Whitman writes that “at the time of the eruption the poor natives were struck with consternation and apprehended the destruction of their little world. Thousands of victims are said to have been sacrificed to appease the angry gods” (1979:64). However, the more extensive discussions of the Pele religion (e.g., those of Kamakau, Ellis, and Pukui) do not mention human sacrifice. Ellis apparently inquired about human sacrifice, but received no confirmation of the practice (1979 [1827]:179–80).

SORCERY

Various members of the Pele family were involved in sorcery, but the only sorcerer's prayer directed to Pele discovered in the literature appears in Joseph Emerson's article (1918:28-30). This prayer, a type called "A Kuni Prayer (A Prayer with Fire)" is used to revenge the death of a person who "dies under suspicious circumstances" (23), and may be addressed to Uli, Kāne, Kanaloa, Pele, or Ka-moho-ali'i. The prayer invokes "the death of the victim . . . in a horrible, sometimes in a blood-curdling fashion" (24) after a fire is lighted.

In all prayers to Pele the closing formulae, "Amama, ua noa," etc., or "Elieli kapu," etc., are omitted for the reason that she can be addressed in prayer only by those related to her, for whom she thus becomes an "aumakua." The "kuni" prayer is only used after the "kuni" fire is lighted which must be made of uhaloa wood. Upon it is thrown some "pupu-awa" and "opihi-awa," and, inclosed [*sic*] in a wrapping of ki leaves, are put some "pupu makaloa," "kua-paa," "limu-kala" and "kalo-lau-loa," which are roasted in the fire as a preliminary to the prayer. This ceremony is limited to no particular night. It may even be performed in the daytime. The word "Ku," to stand, is applied to any dry land where one may stand, and thus becomes an appellation of Pele, who made the dry land. This name for Pele should not be confused with that of Ku, one of the four principal gods. (Emerson 1918:25)

O Ku,
 Unproven is the guilt of him who died,
 Slain by a god;
 Yea verily, slain by a god.
 He has built his house;
 The thunder has rolled;
 The earth has quaked;
 Their testimony to his innocence has reached to heaven.
 O thou rain, gift of Ku;
 And thou, Holani, god of agriculture;
 O ye heavens,
 And thou, Hamoea, goddess of the massage,
 Ye all are his witnesses.
 The heavens have declared for him.
 If during thy night, O Lono,
 Thou didst fail to see;
 Surely then it was on some common night, not thine, that this
 deed was done.
 O Ku, Holani, ye heavens; and thou, Hamoea;
 The evidence is now clear as the dawning light.
 As I present the case
 The evidence will flash before your eyes.
 When Ku gives testimony
 The garment of the guilty kahuna will become his coffin.
 With the testimony of eye-witnesses,
 The death sentence will not be delayed.
 Ye winds in your wide circuit;
 And you, ye rains, present your testimony.

Ye magical sands of Mahinahina,
 In close sympathy with those of Heiheii;
 O Pele, maker of the earth;
 And this thy earth, O Pele,
 Nursed by the heavens,
 Snap then your jaws until the sound reaches the heavens.
 Ye rains, ye fruits, the gift of Holani,
 Stand as Holani.
 O ye heavens, Hamoea now gives her testimony.
 The heavens are ablaze with their verdict;
 The thunder shall be his coffin.
 The earth gives its verdict;
 An earthquake shall be his coffin.
 The mountains give their verdict;
 The mountain ridges shall be his coffin.
 The ocean gives its verdict;
 The raging surf shall be his coffin.
 Stand as Holani.
 O ye heavens,
 Hamoea approves the death sentence. (Emerson 1918:29–30)

The preceding prayer was addressed to Pele, the *'aumakua* of the person who composed it. “Its object is to destroy the evil-doer, the rival kahuna, who by his black art has caused the death of a well-known person by whom, it is claimed, no offence justifying such a fate has been committed” (Emerson 1918:24).

The literature frequently mentions Pele's sister Kapo as one of the deities used in sorcery (Poepoe Collection n.d.:31; Kirtley & Mookini 1979:76, 77, 79; Emerson 1888:1; Anonymous 1886:558; Anonymous 1888:555). In 1863, a letter to a Hawaiian-language newspaper reported that a woman of Kaua'i was using Kapo to practice sorcery (Anonymous 1863). Malo claims that possession by Kapo could result in “a swelling of the abdomen . . . which was a fatal disease. Many deaths were caused by obstruction of the bowels” (1951 [1903]:116). Joseph Emerson writes, “An inferior demon of the *Pele* family is the obscene *Kapo*, a conception of impurity too revolting to admit of description. She is continually employed by the *kahunas* as a messenger in their black arts, and is claimed by many as their *aumakua*” (1892:8). An anonymous writer reports:

The goddesses that were usually sent in this kind of sorcery [“to destroy the intended victim”] were Kapo and Kuamu, two that were included in the one name of Kapo. . . . The trouble (death) caused by the two were hemorrhages above (nose and mouth) and below (womb and rectal). When sickness of this kind was seen, it was said “This is Kuamu's death” or perhaps “This is Kapo's”. (Poepoe Collection n.d.:31)

Waiamau claims a sorcerer could send Kapo (as well as certain other gods) to harm a victim by reciting the following:

Go to that person there . . . (to, for instance, Naimu, the person desired dead).
 . . . All of you go to Naimu, he will be your house to live in, your place to sleep. There will be your clothing, your poi, your fish, your water. All things for you will be there. Don't return here later. If you come back here excrement

will be your food, urine your water. All of you go there and eat him to death.
(Kirtley & Mookini 1979:79)

Pukui describes the dual nature of Kapo:

Kapo established a school for the hula, ritual dance-drama. Her nature was dual. As Kapo-‘ula-Kina‘u (Kapo-red-spotted) she was the Kapo invoked by *kahuna* when sending evil back upon a witch. This Kapo was a goddess whose temper was violent and vengeful. But when worshipped by dancers and chanters, this same person was the gentle Laka, the spirit of the wild wood. Yet when the *kapu* of seclusion was disregarded by a student or teacher during the period of devotion to hula training in the *halau*, the loving Laka quickly changed into vengeful Kapo and smote the culprit. So was the hula respected in the olden times; it was beneficent when rules were kept, yet deadly when they were not. The *hala-pepe* (*Dracaena aurea*), a plant used on the hula altar, was one of Kapo’s *kino-lau*, as Laka; and the tree ‘*ohe* (*Tetra plasandra Hawaiianensis*) was another. The tree was associated with sorcery, of which art Kapo also became the patroness, due to her ferocious side. (Handy & Pukui 1972 [1958]:124–25)

In some Hawaiian myths, Kapo is depicted as a beneficent deity. According to Manu, she and her sisters introduced trance and the healing arts to Hawaii before Pele arrived (1899). In another myth, she saves Pele from Kamapua‘a by distracting him with her flying vagina (Beckwith 1970 [1940]:187).

Hi‘iaka-i-ka-poli-o-Pele, usually depicted in myth as Pele’s favorite and youngest sister, was also called upon by sorcerers to assist in their malevolent rituals (Emerson 1888:476). Malo reports, “Hiiaka caused hemorrhage from the head of the *kahu* of whom she took possession” (1951 [1903]:116). Emerson elaborates on the role of Hi‘iaka in sorcery: “Her younger sister, *Hiiaka i ka poli o Pele*, after slaughtering many of the inferior gods that formerly dwelt near Waimea, on Hawaii, on the famous Mahiki road, became an active agent in the destruction of the Hawaiian race. She is the especial *aumakua* of those sorcerers who practice the murderous arts of *po‘i-uhane*, *apo leo*, and *hoonoho uhane*” (1892:7). Alexander writes that “the goddess Hiiaka-i-ka-poli-o-Pele was also much employed by this class of *kahunas* [i.e., sorcerers].” He elaborates on the kinds of sorcery Hi‘iaka assisted:

Kahuna Hoonoho. The practices of the *kahuna hoonoho* strongly resembled those of modern spiritism. The medium was called the *kahu* or *ipu* of the spirit, which was often called a *makani* or wind. Sometimes the spirit descended upon the *kahu*, and sometimes it spoke from the roof of the hut. . . . The necromancer always demanded *awa* before commencing operations. . . . After drinking the *awa* the wind descended upon the *kahuna*, and showed him the cause of the sickness, whether the patient had been bewitched by a sorcerer, and by whom. The same practitioners were employed in cases of theft to recover stolen goods, and to detect the thief. (Alexander 1891:68)

Apo leo was the art of depriving a person of the power of articulate speech. In order to do this, the *kahuna* prayed at night to Uli and Hiiaka, presenting them with the usual offerings of *awa*, etc. The next day he sought out his intended victim and entered into conversation with him, during which (as was believed) he caught and took away his voice, or paralyzed his vocal organs, so that he could never speak again. He might linger a long time in this wretched condition, or die in a few days if the sorcerer so willed. (1891:71)

The *po'i-uhane*, who worshipped *Hi'iaka*, had the faculty of not only seeing the souls of living persons, *kakaola*, but of catching them with the hand, *po'i*, and of either squeezing them to death or imprisoning them in a water-calabash. The sorcerer then had the owner of the soul in his power, and could levy blackmail on him as he pleased, for if he killed his *kakaola* he would go into a decline and soon die. (1891:72–73)

Pukui departs from this view of *Hi'iaka* and describes her as a healing goddess and “physician to the family of her sister *Pele*” (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee 1972:2:146), a role she frequently performs in the *Pele–Hi'iaka* cycle of myths (N. Emerson 1915).

Joseph Emerson claims that *Kuamu* was “an inferior demon in the form of man connected with the *Pele* family.” He was also a messenger of ill will used by sorcerers. The following prayer was used to inflict his evilness on victims:

O, *Kuamu*, go thou to *Puhi*,
Enter him head and tail,
Let him become your bread and meat,
Return not back again until he is devoured of worms.
The tabu is lifted. (Emerson 1892:21)

As noted earlier, *Kuamu* is sometimes regarded as an aspect of *Kapo* (Poepoe Collection n.d.:31).

Emerson also reports that *Ka-moho-ali'i* was another god who assisted sorcerers (1888:476), but he is more commonly depicted as a benevolent, helpful shark-god (Emerson 1892:9–10).

Kihe's notes provide fragments of a ceremony at a child's death: “*Unihipile*—child dies, hair thrown into *Lua Pele*—becomes a *kino makane*” (n.d.:569). According to Joseph Emerson, this is part of a ceremony to create an *unihipili*, a spirit used by sorcerers to execute their commands. The *kino makani* is a wind body, one of three aspects of the spirit, the others being sea and land. No mention is made by Emerson of *Pele* or her family being directly involved (1892:4).

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to reconstruct the traditional cult of *Pele* as it is described in the early literature on *Hawai'i*. *Pele* was a significant god (*akua*) as well as an important ancestral deity (*'aumakua*) to many Hawaiians on the island of *Hawai'i*. She was less important as an object of worship on the other islands, although the extensive mythology of the goddess was widespread throughout the archipelago. Early accounts indicate that she was generally regarded with fear, although those Hawaiians who traced their ancestry to her probably also regarded her with affection as a protective deity. The literature reveals at least 4 types of formal ritual leaders for *Pele* ceremonies: *kahuna pule*, who officiated at the *heiau* and *Hale-ma'uma'u*; *kāula*, who conducted ceremonies at *Hale-ma'uma'u*, and probably elsewhere; *kahu*, who assisted the ritual leaders by providing offerings and sometimes sacrificing them at the formal ceremonies; and *haka*, mediums who were possessed by the goddess or were able to communicate with her. In addition, many other people knew the appropriate rituals for various ceremonies to *Pele*. These ceremonies were held at various locations, such as the household; the hula *hālau*; tree-felling sites for canoe building; steam vents, craters, and paths within *Pele's* domain; active lava flows; *heiau*; and *Hale-ma'uma'u*. These ceremonies included curing ceremonies, requests for protection from lava flows, funeral ceremonies, daily household prayers, and prayers to request protection of the goddess during various activities. The offerings made to *Pele* during these ceremonies included pigs, *'awa*, fruits, vegetables, *kapa*, dogs, fish, fowl, flowers, and

salt. Some writers claim humans were sacrificed to Pele, but the bulk of the literature does not mention such sacrifices. Certain members of Pele's family—especially her sister Kapo—were important deities in sorcery, but there is little evidence that Pele herself was significant in sorcery.

The religion of Pele was greatly altered by Christianity, but it was never destroyed. The major *heiau* fell into disuse and disappeared, along with the ceremonies performed in them, but private belief and worship of the goddess continued, especially in the volcano area. The literature of 19th century Hawai'i is replete with references to Pele worship (e.g., Hill 1856:264–67; Lyman 1929:6; Korn 1958:55; Emerson n.d.b; Brigham n.d.:20), and it has continued unabated to the present time (Nimmo 1986). However, modifications have occurred. For example, offerings of gin are frequently substituted for 'awa, red cloth has replaced *kapa*, and red is now the color associated with Pele rather than white. Pele presently dominates ritual attention, whereas previously a variety of volcano gods received obeisance. The cult now has a much more dispersed group of followers: in the past, it was primarily localized in the volcano districts of Hawai'i Island, but today it draws adherents from throughout the Hawaiian Islands, crossing ethnic, racial, and economic divisions. The goddess has become an important focus for the Hawaiian Renaissance, the current revitalization of Hawaiian culture, and ceremonies are held for her by numerous people. Each year during the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival, special ceremonies are conducted for her by dancers at Ki-lau-ea (Bowman 1984). Another annual ceremony for Pele marks the beginning of Aloha Week on Hawai'i Island (The Sunday Star-Bulletin and Advertiser 1986:A-3), and recently special prayers were offered to the goddess at Ki-lau-ea as part of the concluding ceremonies of the "Year of the Hawaiian" (Clark & Tanji 1988:A-5). Some Hawaiians are currently fighting geothermal energy development in the volcano area in the belief that such development is a sacrilege against Pele (Pele Defense Fund 1988:A-10).

Undiminished by Westernization and modernization, Pele continues to attract a variety of followers in contemporary Hawai'i. For some, she is a living deity occasionally encountered throughout the islands. For others, she is an apotheosized ancestor to be worshipped with the rituals of tradition. Still others view her as the personification of the creative forces that gave birth to the Hawaiian Islands and the life upon them. She has survived the most difficult times and seems destined to become increasingly important in Hawai'i. It appears that Pele will be around for a very long time.

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