

Hum 105 world mythology assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Many volcanoes and mountains stretch across the world; however, all volcanoes and mountains are not considered sacred. Mount Fuji and Mauna Kea function as sacred places rich with mythical elements that have a functional role in culture, and are comparatively similar. Mount Fuji was once a sacred place only accessible to men for spiritual enlightenment, but is no longer strict on visitation. Although ceremonies remain held during climbing season to this day, many people view the ritual as more a cultural experience instead of a religious one.

Japan has two other mountains, but neither is as sacred or rich with religious and mythological Japanese culture. Mount Fuji is one of the most sacred places in the Japanese culture. Every year thousands climb to the shrine every summer. Traditionally the climb to the shrine on the peak was a religious movement and women were not allowed to make the journey. This climb usually required the wearing of white robes (O'Meara, 2006). Today thousands come to climb generally during "climbing" season from July 1st to August 26th. Many believe that this place is very sacred and many believe it to be spiritual (O'Meara, 2006).

People commonly believe that ascending this mountaintop is to bring luck and the more one climbs the better. The mythic belief retains empowerment because the mountain also serves as a national emblem (Leonard & McClure, 2004, p. 350). Some have climbed at least 100 times. At the start of each climbing season two religious sects hold sacred ceremonies to begin climbing season (O'Meara, 2006). Some have marathons ascending and descending the mountain. Many believe it to be unlucky to ascend any other sacred mountaintop. Climbing Mt. Fuji is one of religious tradition.

Tradition states that the mountain is split into three parts from peak to base. The grassy areas represent the mundane world. The forest line represents the transient line between this world and the world of the gods. The burned areas with a thick layer of volcanic ash represent the realm of the gods and Buddha. The idea of ascending and descending the mountain represent travels between the world of the living and the dead. With each passage one could receive purity and have the sins of this world washed away (Fujisan, 2009). Shintoists believe Mount Fuji is sacred to the goddess Sengen-Sama.

They also believe the mountain itself to be an embodiment of nature.

Another religious sect believes that the mountain itself is a sacred being which contains a soul. The Buddhists believe the mountain is a gateway to another world (Sacred-Destinations, 2009). Mount Fuji is a sacred place and has been since the first inhabitants of Japan. Buddhists believe the mountain came to be around 286 BC after an earthquake that formed the mountain as well as the Lake Biwa, the largest lake in Japan (Sacred-Destinations, 2009). This mountain is a very sacred part of Japanese religion and for years people treated it as such.

Today it is more of an attraction and the religious meaning has been lost a little. Mount Fuji seems to be more of a tourist hotspot than a spiritual place, one in which souvenirs can be bought. Mt. Fuji or Fuji San refers to the most sacred mountain in Japan. Mt. Fuji is such a natural symbol and sacred not only to the Shinto and Buddhist but also for most Japanese people. The name "Fuji" is a local Ainu word that means "deity of fire" because of the often-volcanic eruptions (Mount Fuji, 2011). The Japanese built a shrine about 800 A. D. to the gods to help calm the erupting volcano.

Mount Fuji later became home to a Shinto goddess Konohano Sakuya Hime “ the Goddess of the Flowering Trees. ” The Shinto goddess Koyasusama is also known as the goddess who grants easy childbirth. The Shinto goddess has “ shrines at the base and summit of Fuji” where there is a fire ceremony at the conclusion of the climbing season (New World Encyclopedia, 2009).

The Fujiyoshida’s Sengen Shrine is the main Sengen Shrine positioned on the north side of the mountain. The shrine stands in a dark forest and is set off the road lined with stone lanterns and tall cedar trees.

In the past the Shrine was a starting point for climbing Mt. Fuji, and these hikers would start their ascent with a prayer at the shrine. Buddhist found Fuji as a “ symbol of meditation” and calls its “ summit zenjo,” that is a Buddhist term that describes perfection of a meditative state (Mount Fuji, 2011). Japanese Buddhists revere the mountain as a gateway to another world. “ Shugendo practitioners established the first climbing route to lead pilgrims to Fuji’s summit” (Mount Fuji, 2011). Today pilgrims continue to climb Mount Fuji. Some stop to worship at the shrine of Konohana Sakuya Hime, pray at the summit altars, or ritually circumambulate the volcano’s crater” (Mount Fuji, 2011). Aokigahara, also known as the Sea of Trees is another sacred and mythological place that lies at the base of Mt. Fuji. The Sea of Trees are associated with demons in Japanese mythology, haunted by the ghost of people left to die. Mauna Kea is a traditional mythical place that compares to Mount Fuji. Mauna Kea is a volcano found on the big Island of Hawaii. In Hawaiian mythology, the peaks of the island of Hawaii are sacred.

Only high-ranking tribal chiefs were allowed to visit the peak. Mount Fuji is the central figure in the neisho-e work. The Japanese consider Mt. Fuji to be

<https://assignbuster.com/hum105-world-mythology-assignment/>

sacred and is a symbol of national identity (Wikipedia, n. d.). Mount Fuji is also considered to be a symbol of beauty. The mountains are also a sacred place because the higher the mountain the closer the mountain's reach to heaven. Some sacred mountain can sometimes be just a mythical thought, depending on the meaning or the purpose of the mountain. Mount Fuji, located in Japan, is the highest mountain with an active volcano.

Japan has Three Holy Mountains. Mount Fuji is the mountain the sightseers go see when they are in Japan. The other two mountains in Japan are Mount Tate and Mount Haku. Some people think that the meaning of Fuji is immortal, but no proof has been determined on that issue. Many Japanese writers have used Mount Fuji in their artwork, literature, and as a background picture in several movies. Mount Fuji was sacred to the point that woman were not allowed to go to the mountain. The volcano inside Mount Fuji is currently said to be active, but has a very slim chance of erupting.

Mauna Kea is also considered to be the most sacred mountain in Hawaii. The tribal chiefs were the only ones allowed at the top of the mountain. Mauna Kea is one of the best sites that people can visit for astronomical purposes. Mauna Kea is an inactive volcano, unlike Mount Fuji, and is among five other volcanoes in Hawaii. Hawaiian Law implements visitor restrictions on Mauna Kea. Mauna Kea is sacred, and portrayed as the first born of the father of the sky (Wakea) and the mother of the earth (Papa). Mount Fuji and Mauna Kea are active volcanoes.

Both volcanoes are sacred places where tribal chiefs are the only ones allowed to go to the top. The mountains are sacred because of developing

the highest point closest to heaven. Mount Fuji last erupted in 1707-08.

Mauna Kea last erupted was about 4, 600 years ago. Both mountains have that attractive cone shape, and are hotspots of their location. Once a sacred Japanese religious site, Mount Fuji has become more of a tourist attraction. This volcano became a shrine to Gods, and later to the Goddess of the flowering trees. Similar to Mount Fuji in sacredness and Goddess mythology is Mauna Kea, another volcanic mountain.

Mauna Kea's myth embodies the mountain as Poliahu the Snow Goddess, the first child of the sky father and earth mother (Lovingthebigisland's Weblog, 2009). Both sites are rich with mythology, culture, and both are sacred places. Although Mauna Kea has limits on who may ascend, Mount Fuji is open for all to climb. Both Mount Fuji and Mauna Kea retained their sacred status because of their heights being closest to heaven. References Fujisan (2009). Mt. Fuji and religious beliefs. Retrieved from http://www.fujisan-3776.jp/english/religious_beliefs/religious_beliefs.html.

Leonard, S. , & McClure, M. (2004). *Myth & knowing: An introduction to world mythology*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Lovingthebigisland's Weblog. (2009). The Hawaiian snow goddess poliahu and the summit of mauna kea. Retrieved July 30, 2011, from <http://lovingthebigisland.wordpress.com/2009/02/05/the-hawaiian-snow-goddess-poliahu-and-the-summit-of-mauna-kea/>.

Mount Fuji. (n. d.). Wikipedia: The free encyclopedia. Retrieved July 29, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Fuji. New World Encyclopedia. (2009). Mount Fuji. Retrieved July 29, 2011, from http://www.ewworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Mt._Fuji

O'Meara, D. (2006). Mount Fuji. *Faces* (07491387), 22(5), 6. Retrieved from EBSCOhost History. com (1994-<https://assignbuster.com/hum105-world-mythology-assignment/>

2009). Mount Fuji. Retrieved from [http://www. history. com/topics/mount-fuji](http://www.history.com/topics/mount-fuji).

Sacred-Destinations (2009). Mount Fuji. Retrieved from [http://www. sacred-destinations. com/japan/mount-fuji](http://www.sacred-destinations.com/japan/mount-fuji). Sacred Land. (2011). Mount Fuji.

Retrieved July 29, 2011, from [http://www. sacredland. org/mount-fuji/](http://www.sacredland.org/mount-fuji/).

Wikipedia. (n. d.) The great wave off kanagawa. ASK. Retrieved July 29,

2011, from [http://www. ask. com/wiki/The_Great_Wave_off_Kanagawa](http://www.ask.com/wiki/The_Great_Wave_off_Kanagawa).