

Appendix D

Science, Culture Clash Over Sacred Mountain

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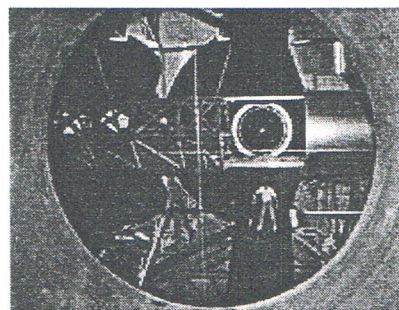
By USHA LEE McFARLING, Times Science Writer

MAUNA KEA--When Ed Stevens drives the dusty track to this wind-swept summit atop Hawaii's Big Island, he tries hard not to see the gleaming white and silver telescope domes set starkly amid this dormant volcano's red rock.



The Sierra Club's Nelson Ho visits a shrine on Mauna Kea. (photo)

He tries not to see where precious cinder cones--homes to goddesses--were flattened and paved for the hulking Western machines. He tries not to see a blindingly white radio antenna dish within a stone's throw of an ancient rock shrine that resembles Stonehenge.



Technicians clean mirrors on Keck II telescope (photo)

"I go up there and I don't see them. Because if I see them I get angry," said Stevens, 70, who regularly drives two hours from his house in Kona to worship at Mauna Kea. In the naturalistic religion of Hawaiians, Mauna Kea--the White Mountain--is the highest temple in Polynesia, where, amid the snow, Hawaiians placed shrines and practiced burial rituals so secret that it is taboo to speak of them to outsiders.

Photos by KEN LOVE / For The Times

But he can't ignore the newcomers completely. "You hear this humming," he said. "It's so intrusive when you are trying to commune with these entities. These benefactors."

The mountain is equally sacred to astronomers: With its astonishingly clean, clear and dark skies, it is the best place on the planet to view the universe. This desolate peak holds the world's densest concentration of telescopes: 13, including the world's two largest.

When the first telescopes rose from the mountain--one a year in 1968, 1969 and 1970--there was not a peep of dissent from Hawaiians. Thirty years and nearly \$1 billion worth of telescopes later, though, Hawaii is a very different place.

A once fledgling Hawaiian movement has grown into a vocal political power in the islands. There are calls for secession from the United States, a return of native Hawaiian lands and, on Mauna Kea, a moratorium on telescopes and even their removal.