Testimony for Sunday

Ginger Towle <towle@hawaiiantel.net>  Thu, Apr 23, 2015 at 1:26 PM
To: bor@hawaii.edu

Leningrad Elarionoff's article was published by West Hawaii Today this Thursday. The "true" people of Hawaii who care about the future, Like Leningrad, are those you should listen to. Everyone has been so gracious and polite to the all those creating problems and they are behaving like a bunch of spoiled brats and should be sent to their room. Enough is enough! They call themselves native Hawaiians, big deal! Anyone born in Hawaii with a drop of Hawaiian blood can be considered a native Hawaiian.

It has been proposed that the new facility should be named after King David Kalakaua, which it should! In fact I think the whole mountain should be dedicated to him and become the King David Kalakaua Science District!

We need to honor all the agreements, which took years to get approval and start building. NOW!!

Everyone on your board needs to be thanked for their restraint and gracious behavior.

Aloha,

Virginia U. Towle
75-5788 Nele Place
Kailua-Kona, Hi 96740
808-329-2051

scanLENIGRAD ON tmt0001.pdf
1581K
TMT may be the light kupuna envisioned

It seems that every ethnicity has members who span the spectrum of understanding and behavior. I suppose it should not be surprising that it is true of the Hawaiians also. I, too, am a Native Hawaiian and although I share some of the feelings being expressed about Mauna Kea, I cannot condone some of the tactics and expressions being made by those protesting the building of the TMT telescope.

I was born and raised in Ka’u at a time when our kupuna were still connected to some of the old ways that were passed down through chants. My mother, being a storyteller, understood the Hawaiian chants that were repeated by the older storytellers and sought them out everywhere we went. She in turn would tell us kamalii (children) bits and pieces when we showed interest. My mother often took us when she chatted with the kupuna of Ka’u and we got to know them, and they, us. Often times, we would have opportunities to hear them speak in English as they repeated stories that were passed on to them by their kupuna.

There are some relevant stories applicable to Mauna Kea that I can recall, which cause me to differ in opinion from the protesters of TMT. These kupuna I refer to were not boisterous and, unfortunately, very private in their beliefs. I wish to respect their privacy in repeating these stories.

The old folks of Ka’u often repeated the story of how the original Hawaiians came to Hawaii with humility and reverence. The point of interest I wish to make here is the kupuna say that when the original Hawaiians arrived from kahiki (a far off land) they built a heiau (place of worship) at Kalae, better known as South Point to many. The rock enclosure is still there today and desecrated by those seeking relief. The builders of the enclosure incorporated two large rocks, which they named Hina and Ku. Many of the people who visited that area accepted the explanation that the two rocks were both Hawaiian gods. The common explanation was that these two rocks represented the Hawaiian gods who guided the original travelers to these shores. One of these rocks was eventually stolen and the enclosure fell into disrepair.

The Ka’u kupuna refuted the common explanation given for the rocks being set up in an obvious place of respect.
They maintained the rocks were meant to depict the manao (wisdom) of the god who brought the original Hawaiians to Ka'u. They supported that claim by interpreting the name Ka'u to mean breast, insisting that it was Ka'u, the breast, that fed and nourished the seafaring pilgrims who arrived at Kalae weak, tired, hungry and thirsty.

These same kupuna also made the claim that Mauna Kea will someday give us a clearer understanding of this god who brought them here and that he was both Hina and Ku. Hina, in this case, meant white haired or ancient. Ku represents the steadfastness of this god as an immovable foundation. How interesting that it is the same description given to the God creator in the Bible.

Now fast forward from the sayings of the kupuna who lived in Ka'u back in the 1940s to the scene on Mauna Kea today. TMT in planning to build the world's largest telescope that would allow us to see beyond our limited scope. Do you suppose we would get a better understanding of how finite we are in this vast universe? Do you suppose the early Hawaiians may have understood the complexity and reliability of the universe enough to chart their 3,000-mile course across the Pacific relying on the Hina and Ku of their god? Could it have been it was only by chance did they arrive here safely?

Is there a possibility the same mountain the protesters call Mauna Akua (god mountain) is really a window through which we may gain a better understanding of the god who was known for Hina and Ku? I agree with them in that Mauna Kea is sacred. Some in the protesting group say it is sacred because it is god. It is my understanding the kupuna claim it is sacred because it is a gift, built solidly from the ocean floor to its peak for a purpose.

Sometime in the late 1940s or early 1950s, a prominent local family in Waimea predicted to the community that one day, from Mauna Kea will come a light that will illuminate the world. Most people scoffed at that prediction saying Mauna Kea was beyond the days of having an eruption. As I recall, the Hilo newspaper carried that story.

The old kupuna never wavered in their belief and with the advent of the telescopes on Mauna Kea, that prediction is being fulfilled. Mauna Kea has become a window from which we can gaze in wonder at the immensity of the universe we live. That predicted “light from Mauna Kea” may well be a greater understanding. The more powerful the telescope, the greater our auwe will be to the creator.

When built, the TMT telescope may fulfill the impossible chanting of those who came here way before us trusting in a god that was Hina and Ku.

Leningrad Elarionoff is a resident of Waimea.

Viewpoint articles are the opinion of the writer and not necessarily the opinion of West Hawaii Today.
Testimony for Sunday Board of Regents

Ginger Towle <towle@hawaiiantel.net>  Thu, Apr 23, 2015 at 1:38 PM
To: bor@hawaii.edu

People have a difficult time getting to meetings but you need to hear from them.

Aloha,
Virginia U. Towle

---

scanKen O. Itr ed0001.pdf

602K
TMT will offer long-term benefits

First let me confess, I am a supporter of the Thirty Meter Telescope. As an engineer, I love challenging projects, and the advancement of science. There will be long-term benefits that we cannot imagine — as Ben Franklin said when he was experimenting with electricity. He was asked what use it was. His answer applies equally to the telescope. “Of what use is a newborn baby?”

The protesters make the telescope sound enormous, but it has about the same relationship to Mauna Kea as the dot at the end of this sentence to the full page of the newspaper.

What I cannot understand is the university’s reluctance to give it a Hawaiian name. I suggested the King David Kalakaua Telescope. He was an amateur astronomer and welcomed astronomy to the islands, but they will probably name it after some obscure astronomer.

Ken Obenski
Kaohe, South Kona

Educators failing student protesters

Respect for the aina is commendable, but please remember that your Native Hawaiian ancestors were also navigators and stargazers.

Do schools and the University of Hawaii not teach about the remarkable voyages that were possible only because of knowledge of the heavens?

Do they also not teach that while Mauna Kea was thought to be the “navel” of the ancient known world, priests sacrificed humans for what they believed was “sacred,” the majority of the people were serfs, and women weren’t allowed to eat bananas?

That the students have been sucked into a protest tells me that they want a cause, but their teachers and professors aren’t giving them the tools necessary for a better understanding of the importance of following what the voyagers began.

Saving the aina is not about stopping discovery, it’s about day-to-day care for their homeland, and I can think of many more causes that are sorely needed on their island, education being foremost.

Susan Rhymes
Kekaha