FIERCY ISLANDS IN THE SEA

The Hawaiian Islands are not volcanic in origin—those of volcanic construction have been destroyed. The Hawaiian Islands are the result of a long process of erosion and deposition. The oldest islands, those in the north, are the youngest and are the most landlocked. The youngest islands, those in the south, are the most oceanic and are the most active.

The Hawaiian volcanic system is divided into two parts: the Kilauea and Mauna Loa districts. The Kilauea district is the source of the island of Kilauea, and the Mauna Loa district is the source of the island of Mauna Loa. The Kilauea district is the most active and is responsible for about 90% of the volcanic activity in the Hawaiian Islands. The Mauna Loa district is the source of the island of Mauna Loa, and it is responsible for about 10% of the volcanic activity in the Hawaiian Islands.

MUUSUANFUFOFHO

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

E Pele!

Goddess of the burning stones.

Life for me. Life for you.

The history of fire is more gently.

Here is your offering...

This is Pele's domain. Pele, a daughter of Haumea the Earth Mother and Wakea the Sky Father, is the goddess of fire, maker of mountains, mother of winds, eater of forests, and burner of lands. She is a powerful force of nature, and she is a force to be respected.

At the time of the creation of the earth, Pele was known as the goddess of fire and was associated with the sun. She was depicted as a beautiful woman with long hair, and she was often seen riding on the back of a black stallion. She was also associated with the moon and was said to be able to make the sun rise and set.

Pele is said to have lived in a cave in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, near the summit of Mauna Loa. She was known to be a very powerful force, and she was said to be able to control the weather and the elements. She was also known to be able to make mountains rise and fall, and she was said to be able to make the earth tremble.

Pele is also said to be the mother of the volcano Kilauea. Kilauea is one of the most active volcanoes in the world, and it is said to be a manifestation of Pele's power.

For more information, please visit the website of the National Park Service at hawaii.nps.gov.
SEAFARERS FIND THE ISLANDS

When a canoe approached from the south, the huge kilometers out to sea. Even if Pele happened to be sleeping they neared the island of Hawai'i, after weeks of sailing in the wrack of the sea and the birds of the air. But as they would ever reach a saving shore. A group num­

lacking in edible plants, the islands they had found were water to drink. It would have given them little to eat, ex­

3,800 kilometers (2,400 miles) of open sea, not certain

made the voyage, living aboard a great double canoe.

mountains she had raised would have guided those first

in the islands of Hawai'i, after weeks of sailing

Hawaiians home.

acacia koa, several species of hibiscus, the alpine silver-

exotic (introduced) plants, animals, and insects and by

birds of the air. But as

water to drink. It would have given them little to eat, ex­

made the voyage, living aboard a great double canoe.

miles away the canoe, which had sailed across the

seas, they would have been

kilometers out to sea. Even if Pele happened to be sleeping

So little evidence of the early

tains had acquired an amazing number and variety of

plants and animals—with the exception of mammals. Only bats and only one or two spiders to these islands.

What had this distinctive life on the island developed?

Almost as soon as the growing shield volcanoes appeared above sea level, seeds and spores of living creatures or the complete organisms themselves were carried here by ocean currents, high winds, or flying birds. Very few of these hapless migrants survived to the brutal new environment, but every now and then one wanderer did succeed in establishing itself and thereby became the ancestor of a line of descendants that thrived and multiplied.

They were no longer remote islands and their sheltered people, plants, and animals.

Traces of early Hawaiian settlement remain on the land—i.e., Pele's molten lava evidences. The earliest Hawaiians could not find them. They did not intrude much upon her presents near the summit of Kilauea, probably because they feared them. The rites of only two religious or sacrificial temples, or heiau, have been reported near the caldera upon the cliffs of two-kahuna, "the place of priestly worship," where the Hawaiian Volcanos Observatory now stands, the other on Windward Lodge, the high wall above Byron Lodge.

At the southern end of the park, however, near the Kalapana entrance, the ruins of several fishing villages lie among alien rocks. This coastal area was more suitable for Hawaiians to live in: both sea and land provided all they needed to prosper. And here, too, they lived far enough away from Pele's land to be able to dodge her wrath whenever the sea sent waves into the mountainside. Adjoining the park museum at the Kalapana entrance, stand the remnants of one of ancient Hawaii's most sacred places, Whalana Heiau, the Temple of the Red-mounded God. According to tradition, it was built in the 15th century, in the high walled style prescribed by Pele, chief priest to the conquering ali'i. In the name of their forest god, Pele introduced several new ceremonies—a red-feathered grille for a ruling chief to wear as a sign of his office; the abatement of prosecution for criminals when in the presence of their chiefs, the glaring-red, red-mountain image of the god of war Kii-kulii-moe, Kii the Divider of Lands, and the sacrifice of human beings to that same deity.

HAWAII VOLCANOES TODAY

Today, this national park, created primarily to preserve the natural setting of Mauna Loa and Kilauea, is also a refuge for those native plants and animals that still survive the encroachment of civilization.

Hawaii's keiki (children of the gods) are aware of their natural history. Geologists, botanists, ecologists, and volcanologists, working here and cooperating with colleagues around the world, are involved in programs for predicting the times and sites of eruptions. In studying Kilauea, during its periods of quiet as well as during eruptions, there are many learning opportunities for persons who wish to learn about the manner in which earth is born and its parts were formed, how complex are the processes by which land is formed and destroyed.

And, of course, Pele is here—sometimes resting, often driving. But she will stay until forced to move, perhaps to a new island that may someday emerge from the ocean's depths.

—O. G. Bellows