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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kuchamaa (Tecate Peak)  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_  not for publication  
city, town Tecate  vicinity  
state California code LA county San Diego code 073 zip code 92080

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	<u>1</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Stade R. Craig \_\_\_\_\_ Date 5/22/92  
Signature of certifying official

John J. Davjak, Preservation Officer, Bureau of Land Management  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8/18/92

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date \_\_\_\_\_  
SHPO, California  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Autonietta Glee 10/6/92  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
ReligionCurrent Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Ceremonial Site or Shrine/Public Use

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

NA

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls NA

roof

other

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

Tecate Peak (Kuchamaa), located 25 air miles east of the Pacific Ocean, rises to an elevation of 3,885 feet above mean sea level. Located in southern California adjacent to the International Border, the mountain lies largely in the United States between the communities of Dulzura and Potrero. Tecate, Mexico sprawls for several miles along the southeastern base of the peak.

As part of the Southern California Batholith, Tecate Peak is a rugged granitic boulder strewn mountain. The peak is actually an isolated, gigantic outcrop which has differentially weathered. The overgrowth of vegetation creates an illusion that the mountain is covered by thousands of granitic outcrops. The entire region is characterized by precipitous mountains interspersed by broad valleys. The view from the peak is breathtaking. Evans-Wentz puts it aptly: "(the) summit affords an unimpeded view of unique grandeur in every direction, limited only by the immense circle of the world's horizon" (1981:10).

Kuchamaa is the Kumeyaay term for Tecate Peak. This mountain was first identified as sacred in an ethnographic study describing the Kumeyaay Indians of southern California and northern Baja California, Mexico (Cuero 1970). The bulk of data, however, comes from Native American interviews (Woods 1980, Talley 1981, Robertson 1982). The studies by Woods and Talley were initiated in support of environmental documentation to evaluate potential project impacts. The late Mrs. Rosalie Robertson, a recognized Kumeyaay leader, was specially interviewed to augment existing information.

The mountain describes a series of topographic ellipses oriented northeast to southwest. The western flank consists of several dissected subpeaks. Tecate Peak's north edge drops sharply to Highway 94 to an elevation of less than 1,000 feet above mean sea level. The eastern aspect culminates at an upland bench. Finally, the southern segment consists of a spine which continues into Mexico.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Religion  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ethnographic to 1942  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

Kumeyaay/Juaneno  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

NA

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

As a sacred mountain to the Kumeyaay Indians, Kuchamaa meets National Register criteria "A", since this mountain has a "quality of significance in American culture which possesses integrity of feeling and association," and which is "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our (Native American) history." Which is to say that, Kuchamaa is a religious property deriving much of its significance from its historical importance. Even though the mountain has been some what compromised by non-contributing features, it continues to retain its integrity of feeling and association.

Kuchamaa is of paramount religious importance to the Kumeyaay people of today as it was to those of the past. Use of the mountain has attracted Native Americans from both southern California and northern Baja California (Voigt 1990). For these people, the peak is a special place, marking the location for acquisition of knowledge and power by shamans. Oral tradition tells of important shamans who used Kuchamaa as a center to instruct their initiates (Robertson 1982).

Imbued with power by one of the Kumeyaay creator-gods, the mountain was and remains the site for important rites and rituals, including vision quests and purification ceremonies. Contemporary Native Americans most frequently use Kuchamaa during periods of full moon and equinoxes. At these times Native Americans pray for renewal of Earth Mother and peace (Voigt 1990).

See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CONTINUATION SHEET

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

### Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

### Specify repository:

BLM, Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 510 Acres

### UTM References

A 1 1 5 3 0 0 1 0 3 6 0 5 2 8 0  
Zone Easting Northing

C 1 1 5 2 7 5 6 0 3 6 0 3 4 1 9

B 1 1 5 2 9 6 8 8 3 6 0 3 6 3 7  
Zone Easting Northing

D 1 1 5 2 8 7 8 7 3 6 0 5 1 0 5

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Kuchamaa is 3885 feet above mean sea level. The nominated area includes all land from the 3000 foot contour level up to and including the peak. On the north it drops abruptly 2885 feet to Highway 94. The western flank consists of several dissected subpeaks and the eastern aspect is an upland spine. The southern boundary conforms to the International Border. This is a total of 510 acres, 320 to the west and 190 to the east. See item #7 (Description) for boundary justification.

See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

Kuchamaa was and remains important to southern California Native Americans as a structural unit. If the mountain lacked its physiographic proportions and regional position, then it is quite possible that the peak would not have been revered. The physical stature of Kuchamaa constitutes one reason that it was used as a place of spiritual learning and worship.

See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mike Mitchell and Patrick Welch - Archaeologists

organization BLM, Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area date 5-13-92

street & number 63-500 Garent Ave., telephone (619) 251-0812

city or town North Palm Springs state Calif. zip code 92258-2000

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Tecate Peak is not in pristine condition. Both direct and indirect impacts are present. A wide swath, paralleling the International Border, is cleared across the southern face. An access road, built in the late 1930's, snakes its way to communication facilities situated atop the peak. The buildings and associated graded pad for parking, occupy a portion of the summit and create a disturbed zone approximately one acre in extent. The first building is a cinder block communications structure with various attached antenna, dishes, and other miscellaneous communications apparatus. This building is single story, and measures approximately 40 by 20 feet and is surrounded by an eight foot high chain link fence. Outside the fence, about 30 feet to the west, is another cinder block building which measures only about 4 by 4 feet in area and is also single story.

INTEGRITY

Tecate Peak is located in rural south central San Diego County. Aside from the intrusions and non-contributing structures discussed above, the only other major modern impairment to the mountain is to its viewshed. This impairment pertains to the small city of Tecate, Mexico, located approximately 5 miles to the southeast. As a consequence, other than the communication facilities et cetera, the physical integrity of the mountain and its viewshed is good.

In terms of the spiritual integrity of the mountain, the religious feeling available to Native Americans has been compromised since the intrusion of the first communication facility in 1942 (Robertson 1982). The Kumeyaay community, however, still reveres the mountain within their belief systems and also continues to hold, although compromised, its ideological integrity within their cultural context. The variety of intrusions, therefore, do not entirely cancel the ethnic values associated with the peak. With the elimination of the communication sites, which has been proposed by the recently completed South Coast Resource Management Plan, the spiritual integrity and importance of the mountain will be restored (Voigt: Personal communication).

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The premise behind this nomination is that Kuchamaa is unique and meaningful to Kumeyaay ethnic identity. The combined spiritual aspects of the mountain make it an outstanding example of Native American religious values. Preserving this area and taking steps to reclaim the mountain top to a natural condition will help to insure that it will be appreciated by future generations of Kumeyaay. This nomination is therefore significant on the local level.

The spirituality of the mountain could well make it the ultimate Kumeyaay cultural resource because it is where "you get your power" (Robertson 1982). Other sacred areas occur in the region, but none are as significant as Kuchamaa. During an interview atop Tecate Peak, Mrs. Robertson stated that...

This is one of the biggest ones's here. I would have heard something if there were other mountains. There are other mountains, sure they're important, but this is one of the main powers where you get your power. We got a lot of sacred peaks, but that's for a lot of different things, but where you get your power it's here, this mountain. Cuyapaibe is famous too, for religion, but they didn't do the things over there that happened here (Robertson 1982).

Our primary informant, Mrs. Rosalie Pinto Robertson, was born in 1918 on the Campo Indian Reservation in San Diego County, the great granddaughter of Pion Hilmeup, the last traditional (hereditary) Tribal Chief of the Kumeyaay.

As a child, Mrs. Robertson learned to speak both English and her native Kumeyaay language, as well as Cocopa and Quechan. Both her grandfather and great grandfather were a major influence on her life; before their deaths they had passed down to young Rosalie, and her brothers, both the spiritual and cultural traditions of the Kumeyaay. In the absence of her brothers during World War II, Rosalie was handed the duty of leadership by her grandfather at his death.

As a result of the information and training received from her grandfather and great grandfather, Mrs. Robertson became one of the primary sources of her tribe's traditions, history, and culture. Because of her ability to speak both English and Kumeyaay, and being knowledgeable of both Euro-American and Indian ways, Rosalie became an intermediary between tribal elders and the various public and private agencies with which they dealt.

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Before her death on January 16, 1984, Mrs. Robertson passed on her knowledge of the Kumeyaay cultural tradition to others of her tribe and the scientific community, in order that the rich Kumeyaay heritage might be saved for future generations.

Several interpretations have been proposed for the word Kuchamaa. The noted linguist, John Harrington, considered the term to mean "exalted high place" (Evans-Wentz 1981:17). Ruth Almstedt provides an alternate translation. She renders: "the ones that cure" or "the ones that lift up" (Staniford 1977:44).

Local folklore provide other possibilities regarding the meaning of Kuchamaa. Ella McCain (1955:27) believed that the term originated from an Indian named Chuchamow who lived on the side of the mountain. She knew this man in 1878 when he was quite old. Oral traditions also tell of an Indian bandit, known as Kuchamaa, who used the mountain as a stronghold. Evans-Wentz, however, points out that the peak was named Kuchamaa well before the time of this individual (1981:18). Most probably these individuals were named after the mountain, not vice versa.

Knowledge of the peak appears to have been widespread. In addition to the Kumeyaay, members of the Luiseno, Juaneno, Paipai, Quechan, Mohave, and possibly the Cahuilla and Cocopa used or visited Kuchamaa (Robertson 1982). One Juaneno individual recollects travelling to the mountain's base in 1928 to undergo part of his puberty initiation ceremonies (Lobo 1982a).

DATA LIMITS

Before discussing Kuchamaa's significance further, it is important to outline data limitations. Principal prohibitions still exist within the Indian community regarding discussion of the shaman's role within their traditional society (Pinot 1982; Robertson 1982; Shipek 1982b). As a result, ethnographic and contemporary information represent only a partial picture, at best, of southern California Native American religious beliefs.

Shamans were select, special members of Kumeyaay and most other Native American cultures. These were individuals with connections to the spirit realm; people to be feared. Mrs. Robertson believes that kwisiyai (kumeyaay for shaman) are important because "he's a boss to us. He's very respected. We're afraid because we don't know what he can and can't do. We just have to show him respect"

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(Robertson 1982). A certain amount of circumspection occurs when discussing a shaman.

The ethnographic record only partly documents traditional Kumeyaay culture. As illustrated by Mrs. Robertson's concerns, there was reluctance on the part of Native American informants to reveal intimate and esoteric aspects of their culture. Legends associated with Kuchamaa, for example, are special and remain known only to the Kumeyaay. "They won't talk about it. Especially this place (Kuchamaa), they will other places but not this place" (Robertson 1982).

Native cultures were largely in shambles when the major ethnographic works were conducted in the early 1900's. The effects of missionization by the Spanish and Mexicans and displacement by the subsequent Euro-American culture affected all southern California Native American societies. The ethnographers limited the scope of their results by spending relatively short periods of time with the people. Anthropologists also may not have asked questions relevant to current concerns.

The location of an informants' homeland also caused data gaps. Information collected at one reservation was often extrapolated to other portions of traditional territory. Much information, for example, was collected at Mesa Grande (located in northern Diegueno territory) and extended southward to include the southern Diegueno or Kumeyaay (see Waterman 1910). Any one of the above reasons could explain the paucity of ethnographic data regarding Kuchamaa.

In terms of the archaeological record, no prehistoric or historic remains have been discovered. This is to be expected, given the fact that Kuchamaa is a sacred mountain where only shamans and their initiates were allowed. Also, since the mountain is sacred, discarding or disturbing the mountain's natural state would be sacrilegious.

SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL QUALITY

Kuchamaa became a special, sacred mountain because it was selected by the Kumeyaay god Maiha (also Maiyoha) (Robertson 1982). This is particularly significant since Maiha is considered one of "the great creator gods" (Dubois 1908:223) in Kumeyaay mythology. Few earthly places received this personal attention. A southern Diegueno (Kumeyaay) creation story recorded by Gifford indicates



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the importance of this deity:

...All was salt water in the beginning. In the water there were two deities Maiyoha and his younger brother...the earth was made by Maiyoha...Maiyoha, the one who stayed on earth, felt sad over his younger brother leaving him. He then made

a man and a woman from clay...All people sprang from this pair...the god watched the image during the night. Toward morning he thought he heard them talking. At daybreak he said to himself, "I believe that I have accomplished a great undertaking. There is no need of my remaining here. Since I have done so excellently, I may as well go up into the sky" ...As he departed to the sky he said, "I have made everything: the earth, the sun, the moon, the people" (Gifford 1918:170-171).

A ceremonial ground painting is an element in Kumeyaay male puberty ceremonies (Waterman 1910). These paintings usually include representations of four sacred places. Evans-Wentz (1981:7-10) makes a case that one of these places, termed "the mountain of creation" is actually Kuchamaa. Mrs. Robertson, however, did not verify that Tecate Peak had been depicted in any ground paintings (1982).

In addition to Maiha, other spirits are linked with Tecate Peak. There is a temple-like cavern within the mountain, according to informants interviewed by Evans-Wentz (1981). This was substantiated by Mrs. Robertson, who indicated that the house inside Kuchamaa is inhabited by a spirit who is responsible for giving people their dreams. In quoting her late uncle, a shaman himself, Mrs. Robertson states "he said it's so true, so real, how else would I have known those songs? It's there that I saw them" (Robertson 1982). The spirit house inside the mountain makes Kuchamaa unique. Few examples of such places are present in the southern California ethnographic literature.

### INITIATION

The mountain, Kuchamaa, played an important role in the shaman's initiation ceremony. No other place is known to exist in traditional Kumeyaay territory where these were conducted. Special rites were performed at the summit (Robertson 1982). According to

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information collected by Evans-Wentz:

...As the young men of the tribes tributary to Cuchama (Kuchamaa) approached manhood, after having undergone the preliminary initiation of earlier boyhood, singly and solitarily, one by one in turn, when the tribal elders had prepared them, they went on pilgrimage to the summit of "The Exalted High Place" to choose their lot in life (1981:26).

Shaman initiation was an important and integral part in becoming a kwisiyai (Rogers and Evernham 1983). Very few people were considered shaman at birth and an initiation was necessary in order to acquire knowledge and acceptance as a kwisiyai (Toffelmier and Loumala 1936). Individuals indicated that they had shamanistic capabilities through revelation of their dreams. Practicing kwisiyai also helped in the selection by choosing individuals with good "health, intelligence, sense, energy, and abundant sexuality" (Toffelmier and Loumala 1936:199). Only those individuals with special innate sensitivity were selected. "Some people got to be witches or medicine-men (kwisiyai), and orators, but not many" (Waterman 1910:341).

The actual ceremony was preceded by a year of training. According to Toffelmier and Loumala, during this period initiates received instruction regarding the

...diagnosis of disease, curing methods, dream interpretation, tribal and professional ethics, star lore, spirit communication, hunting secrets, witching songs, and how to prepare magic to insure success at gambling and love (1936:200).

Initiates culminated a period of fasting, purification, and meditation with the inducement of visions, often brought about by the drinking of the hallucinogenic datura. While in either a trance or dream state, candidates "learn of their animal guardian, and receive certain songs, cures, knowledge, a sexual name, and magical paraphernalia" (Toffelmier and Loumala 1936:197). This experience ends with enforcement of strict dietary and behavioral taboos. Initiates were guided by established kwisiyai until they demonstrated competency. A festival was held at the conclusion of the probationary period (Loumala 1978). Apparently, successful completion of puberty ceremonies allowed access to certain shamanistic knowledge. According to Loumala; "recognizing individual differences, people judged each (puberty initiate)

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pragmatically" (1978:603).

Kumeyaay use of datura during initiation ceremonies requires clarification. Several Native American groups in southern California consumed the drug as part of the boy's initiation into the toloache cult, part of the Chinigchinich religion (Kroeber 1956; Loumala 1978). Use of datura spread southward to the northern Diegueno or Ipai, but apparently was never included in the initiatory ceremonies of the Kumeyaay and surrounding groups (Spier 1923; Gifford 1931; Meigs 1939 & Evans-Wentz 1981). Datura, however, was sporadically consumed as part of shamanistic ritual (Cuero 1970; Loumala 1978; Spier 1923). According to Spier (1923), the drug was taken by only a few people. Mrs. Robertson (1982) indicated that a powerful shaman also named Kuchamaa tried to dissuade initiates from using datura because of its sometimes deadly side effects. Throughout California, datura was incorporated into Native American religious structure since it generated visions and facilitated "acquisition of power from sources accessible only in altered states of consciousness" (Bean and Vane 1978:667).

#### THE ROLE OF SHAMAN IN KUMEYAAY SOCIETY

The significance of Kuchamaa can be appreciated by understanding the position of shamans in Kumeyaay culture and all Native American societies. According to Bean (1976) most Native California cultures divided their universe into three compartments: two spirit worlds and a middle world occupied by people. Bean states that "priests or shamans are extremely important socio-political figures in Native society. They are boundary players of power..." (1976:410). Shamans were able to transcend all compartments and interact with "power sources in all three worlds" (1976:410). This is quite important since the Native American world view held that all actions were causative. Natural phenomena and other events were often controlled by beings in one of the two spirit worlds. Shamans, therefore, became extraordinary people since they could intervene on behalf of the individual or group.

Kumeyaay shamans were responsible for the spiritual and religious well-being of the group. They conducted important rites and rituals which strike at the very heart of their culture. In addition to healing activities, certain shamans were responsible for mundane economic pursuits. Some were able to predict weather, insure a successful hunt or bountiful seed harvest. Shamans

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influenced a wide range of tribal activities (Loumala 1978).

The relationship between shamans and other tribal leaders illustrates the influence wielded by the kwisiyai. Kumeyaay society also contains an administrative or organizational leader known as the kwaipai (captain). This person fulfilled much the same role as a town mayor. He maintained powers of punishment and control over political, economic, and social affairs of the tribe. The kwaipai, however, worked together with a council of shaman. Early encounters with the Kumeyaay by Spanish and American settlers generally recognized the kwaipai (Shipek 1982). When asked which person was generally more powerful, Mrs. Robertson responded that "I'd stick with the kwisiyai any day. The captain has to wait" (1982).

In 1982, Mrs. Robertson was also interviewed concerning burials on Kuchamaa and their relative sanctity. Information received reflects that the burials are a contemporary Kumeyaay belief based on tribal oral history (i.e. mythology). We presently have no substantiated record of burials being present on Kuchamaa. The following is, therefore, submitted as being currently unsupported by the archaeological record.

Portions of Kuchamaa are hallowed ground, made sacred by the burials of cremated shamans (Robertson 1982). Their ashes were either disseminated or interred on the mountain. Places of burial are perhaps the most sensitive and significant issue to Native Americans. Woods (1980) addressed the burial question during interviews with Native informants for evaluation of a proposed transmission line. One person said that:

Well, from my own experience...we were preached to a lot, you know, about death--all our customs and traditions and what we should do and all that, we heard that growing up, and I'm going by what they told me and I still believe them. That any burial--that's the most sacred thing to us...I was told that if we find anything we are not to touch it or move it (Kumeyaay 2/8/79 Woods). (Emphasis added).

SHAMANIC USE OF KUCHAMAA

The mountain holds extreme religious importance since it represents the place where the shaman or kwisiyai obtained power and knowledge. Kuchamaa was used to interact with and appease

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potentially hostile spirits. The peak was necessary for maintenance of tribal health and prosperity.

Only shamans (or boys training to be shamans) were permitted on the upper reaches of the mountain. Since it was not a common area, ordinary people were not permitted above God's Tear Spring (Talley 1981; Robertson 1982). This was not a mountain for casual use. Currently, in spite of the resurgence of traditional Kumeyaay religious fervor, some informants indicated that they would never live near it (Woods 1980). Such is the aura surrounding Kuchamaa.

Shamans as medical specialists were unique individuals within Kumeyaay society. The mountain played an important role in acquisition of healing skills. Delfina Cuero, a Baja California Kumeyaay, relates a story about a relative who after becoming a healer traveled to Kuchamaa. He spent five days there receiving his healing songs, probably through the dream experience (Cuero 1970). Almstedt's interpretation of Kuchamaa as "ones that cure" seems particularly appropriate. Mrs. Robertson also tells of a relative who visited Kuchamaa in a dream state to receive medicinal knowledge.

...He told me that this place was so powerful that he could come up here in a dream ...His mother was sick and he wanted to get her well...He flew over there (the spring God's Tear on Kuchamaa) in his dream. When he got back the next morning they (spirits) had told him in his dream to take a good, hot bath every morning before sunup for four days. (They warned) don't get close to nobody and then he's suppose to find certain kinds of herbs and give it to the mother...He claims he did that through the dreams here and then he had the power and he did cure his mother (Robertson 1982).

The mountain was important for other shamanic ceremonies. Kuchamaa's summit served as a place for sacred kwisiyai dances. Folklore indicates that their dancing created a circular pit at the top (Robertson 1982).

The horloi was one dance performed at Kuchamaa (Woods 1980; Talley 1981). This dance is linked by the ethnographic literature of other Native American groups to initiation into the toloache cult (Waterman 1910; Spier 1923; Kroeber 1956). Kumeyaay participation is briefly described above (see initiation). Since introduction of the Chinigchinich religion occurred rather late, reference to the horloi may represent a late adoption. Alternatively, this dance

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may have also been performed at shamanic initiation rites.

The horloi and additional dances performed at the mountain underscore the importance of Kuchamaa. Dance was an integral part of religious expression and was often linked with traditional songs to depict significant cultural events (Waterman 1910). Participation in ceremonies was important since physical involvement could initiate the trance state or invoke power. Dances, songs, performers, and dance sites combine to form a cultural complex of religious meaning.

Shaman contests or feats of power took place on Kuchamaa. These events attempted to gauge the efficacy of individual spiritual strength. It is uncertain what specifically took place since common folk were not permitted to observe. Toffelmier and Loumala (1936) report one type of contest where established shaman pitted their powers against those newly acquired by initiates. From Kumeyaay oral tradition, the most famous contest occurred between a group of Kumeyaay kwisiyai and the Luiseno. "They had a big fight here" and the Luiseno shamans "sent their power over here and split the mountain". The Kumeyaay retaliated by destroying some of their sacred places (Robertson 1982; Voigt 1990).

KUCHAMAA, MAN OR MYTH?

The following discussion outlines information available about the shaman Kuchamaa. The actual existence of this individual is questionable and requires corroborative data to document his historic authenticity. This discussion illustrates the mythological importance and mystique which surrounds the mountain, Kuchamaa.

Kuchamaa, the man, was a great leader since "they (other shamans) would come here (Kuchamaa) and talk to him...he had too much respect because he was a man that could tell you things that's going to happen" ((Robertson 1982).

Kuchamaa (the man) tried to bring peace to the southern California region when there was a great deal of factionalism. In order to end the fighting, Kuchamaa called different shaman from all over to the mountain. Mrs. Robertson recollected that these shaman received "a lot of laws and rules (from the shaman Kuchamaa) that they should take back and try to work on their own tribes ...to see if they could get along and stop the fighting, stop the wars"

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(1982). Mrs. Robertson continued, stating that

They went out and it didn't work. That's when they were called back again. That's when it started...that's when that weed (datura) came up and they started that up here so Kuchamaa told them that I don't think (that) this is the right way to do it...When they started dying like that he figured out that this is not the way...We'll fast for a week: no food, no water...They cooked that stuff and they drank it and they began to feel all kinds of crazy stuff. It wasn't right. He saw that and said "No, this is going to stop right here because you'll die..." (Robertson 1982).

It is interesting to speculate about the meaning of this passage. The shaman Kuchamaa may have lived when the toloache cult was introduced into Kumeyaay territory. Several people believe that the origin of this cult and its attendant Chinigchinich god represented a Native American response to the effects of the dominant Spanish church (Strong 1929; Kroeber 1956). This entire period would have been culturally stressful. The turmoil may have created the need for a culture hero in order to restore a balance to the region. The man Kuchamaa may have tried to fulfill this role.

PERIOD OF USE

The earliest period of use for Kuchamaa is unknown, early 1900 ethnographers fail to mention Kuchamaa, either the man or the mountain (see Data Limits). Mrs. Robertson (1982) thought that the shaman Kuchamaa lived during the 1800's, although this is uncertain since his presence is, in part, folklore. She felt he may have lived earlier "the tradition, it's handed down" (1982). If the above hypothesis regarding toloache cult introduction is correct, then Loumala provides a time frame for transfer to the Kumeyaay. She states that the Kumeyaay "first learned toloache customs around the 1850's from the Ipai (northern Diegueno) (Loumala 1978:603).

Establishing the length of time that kuchamaa was used for shaman initiation and ceremonies is also difficult since there is, of course, no written record. Mrs. Robertson felt that Kuchamaa has been used "as long as there have been Kumeyaay" (1982). Evans-Wentz does not provide any information regarding the origin of ceremonial use of the mountain either, but states that

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Among the early California races inhabiting the territories about Cuchama, long before the coming of the European invaders, the subtle power of the Sacred Mountain to awaken the Superior Man had become so widely recognized that the Mountain was spiritual sanctuary of paramount importance (1981:26). (Emphasis added.)

CONTEMPORARY USE

In 1942 at the beginning of World War II the U. S. military placed a communications site on the summit of Kuchamaa. Since that time and continuing until several years ago, there has been other authorized communications sites granted by the Bureau of Land Management. Because of the intrusion of the communications facilities, the terminal date for period of use is being placed at 1942. With the proposed termination of right-of-way grants, the integrity of the mountain will return.

Even with the intrusions of the past 50 years, there has been active contemporary use of Kuchamaa by both the Kumeyaay and Juaneno. In terms of accessing the upper limits of Kuchamaa, however, traditional Native American use of Kuchamaa has changed. Where as in the past only shamans were allowed on the peak, today both the ordinary Kumeyaay and Juaneno are increasingly using the peak for enactment of sacred ceremonies and ancient sacramental acts. As a result, the mountain is widely recognized as an important cultural link with the Kumeyaay ethnic past and their religious heritage. Fittingly, parallels have been drawn comparing the Native American view of Kuchamaa to the christian respect for a cathedral.

Contemporary Native American concern towards Kuchamaa can be illustrated by their response to two recent projects. The Kumeyaay voice was first raised in 1979 to protect Kuchamaa when it was threatened by an electrical transmission line. An alternate route of this project proposed to cross the southern flank between the International Border and the summit. The outrage from the Kumeyaay community was sufficient for the transmission proponents to drop this route from study (Woods 1982).

Native American opinion was galvanized again in 1981 over proposed development of a 280 acre park at the base of the mountain (USDI, BLM 1981). Concern from the Indians was forceful and direct. The Kumeyaay felt that this project would desecrate the mountain by



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providing increased access to many recreational campers. This would impact the visual and audio integrity. The application was withdrawn because of these Native American concerns.

The general public can reap significant benefits from appreciation of Kuchamaa. Understanding the spirituality of the peak goes well beyond the usual archaeological study of material culture. This knowledge increases the public's awareness and sensitivity towards the richness of Native American culture.

Interpreting the importance of Kuchamaa provides a better understanding of the range of human experience. Just like contemporary peoples, Native Americans developed explanations for their genesis and located their place in the cosmos. Throughout history people have erected great structures in honor of supreme beings. In the same fashion, Kuchamaa represents a natural, earthly temple and source of religious wonderment to the Kumeyaay of southern California.

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During a visit to Kuchamaa in order to evaluate a development proposal, Native Americans identified a sphere of spiritual influence extending for several miles from the mountain. This constitutes one zone of spirituality; approachable by both Kwisiyai (shamans) and ordinary people. As such though, this area lacks the qualities of religious relevance to qualify for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Actual Native American use of Kuchamaa provides guidelines for establishing boundaries. This nomination includes that portion of the mountain located above an elevation of 3,000 feet AMSL. According to current data, this area is considered sacrosanct. In the ethnographic and prehistoric past the summit was used for arcane rituals and approached only by shamans and their initiates. Cultural taboos prohibited common folk from ascending beyond a spring known as God's Tear (Robertson 1982). The location of God's Tear Spring has not been verified, but best estimates place it as the spring located just above the 3,000 foot level. Finally, according to Robertson (1982), the high mountain slopes hold burials of cremated Kwisiyai. As with the spring, none of these have been verified. Their alleged presence above the 3,000 foot level require us to use this contour interval as the boundary for the National Register District.

The nominated portion of Kuchamaa includes 510 acres, with the eastern segment, consisting of public lands, containing 190 acres. The western, state owned parcel, is demarcated by north-south section lines. This area contains 320 acres. The southern boundary conforms to the International Border. Private lands occupy a large portion of the lower slopes of the mountain below the 3,000 foot contour interval.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92001268 Date Listed: 10/6/92

Kuchamaa  
Property Name

San Diego County CA State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Antoinette Bee  
for Signature of the Keeper

10/20/92  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: The Period of Significance is amended to read c1850 to 1942.

This information was confirmed with Carl Barna of the Bureau of Land Management.

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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



OVERVIEW OF KUCHAMAA, Looking WEST-Southwest. NOTE STEEP, HEAVY ROCK EXPOSURES  
NOMINATION is for that portion ABOVE 3,000'

CA, SAN DIEGO





THE ROAD LEADING TO THE PEAK AND THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AT THE SUMMIT. BOTH ARE NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES OF KUCHAMA.