

Ko te kawa i taumata rubi
 I taumata raha
 Kawa i te rangi—e
 Pikitia e koe ki to matua, ki a Hakuai
 Ki to tupuna, kia Rehua i te rangi—e.”

THE MAORI KITE OF AUTE BARK.

BY HAMIORA PIO OF NGATI-AWA AT TE TEKO.

CONTRIBUTED TO MR. ELSDON BEST. TRANSLATED BY MR. E. TREGGAR.

THE (best kind of) Maori kite was of *aute*.¹ It was woven or plaited into the exact resemblance of a flying bird. It was made by the Maori as a bird having wings and body, and these wings and body were wound around with *aute*. That is why it was called an *aute* bird. A top-knot of feathers was stuck in its head, and a line was attached to the kite so that a man could hold on to it. When it was taken to a place whence it could be flown, all the people of the place came to the kite-flying. Two men flew the kite, and these men had to be dressed in chief's raiment, *viz.*: the mat of dogs' tails, and the mat of white dogskins. Those two persons had to be chiefs or men of renown in war; a common man was not allowed to fly the *aute* kite—it was for chiefs and warriors only. One of the men waved the kite, one held the string to fly it. The kite being waved and the string tightened, away aloft went the kite. First it swooped and thrust with its head-feathers at the people flying it, making these persons jump about—then it climbed upwards. A cry of joy arose from the tribe. When it had ascended a small disc was sent up the line to the kite (this disc is called a “messenger” by English boys). The tribe gathered to chant the charm-song for the *aute* bird:

Climb up! Climb up!
 To the highest surface of the heavens
 To all the sides of the heavens
 O, thou!
 Extend thyself,
 To the seventh division (of the sky),
 To the eighth division,
 The world is made one with space,
 Where is the sacredness?
 The sacredness is in the tranquil temple.²
 The spacious temple (called)
 “Holiness in the heavens.” E!
 Climb thou to thy ancestor, the *Hokioi*,³
 To thy ancestor, “Rehua in the Heavens.” E!

Kites p 53

THE MAORI KITE OF AUTE BARK.

193

NOTES.

(Mr. Elsdon Best remarks that Pio does not speak of the *puihi*, or streamers, or tails attached to the lower part and also to the two wings of the kite. Kites were also made of *upoko-tangata* (a kind of *toe-toe* grass) and of *raupo*, the latter being least prized. A *raupo* kite may be seen in the Auckland Museum; also an illustration of one in Taylor's "Te Ika a Maui." Some further notes may be found in a paper on Maori games sent by Mr. Best to the Auckland Institute some months ago.)

1. *Aute*.—The Paper Mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*). It is now extinct as a cultivated shrub among Maoris.

2. *Taumata* is here to be translated "culminating point." The highest point of Whitiorea, "the sun-path," is its *taumata*, although the homes of the gods are high above this. Naherangi, the great *taumata* in the Tenth Heaven, is the abode of Rehua, the lord of the celestial hosts.

3. The *hokioi*, called *hakuai* by the Tuhoe tribes and also by the South Island Maoris, is a mythical bird—a huge nocturnal bird of prey.

P.71

Some of the native kites were triangular in form but there were others of different shapes.

According to Luta Fihoniho, the ordinary manu tukutuku of the Ngati-Porou district was of just the same bird-like form as that in the Auckland Museum, which was obtained in the Arawa district, except that the legs were longer. The body and head were so made as to resemble those of a man, but the legs were certainly grotesque and did not resemble those of any known member of the human species. The body was provided with two long narrow wings in place of arms. A piece of thin board formed the body and head of the kite, the head being flat but having the features of the human face carved thereon. The frame work of the wings was lashed on to the body. Three long, horizontal and slim rods of manuka formed the basis of each wing, and short, thinner pieces were lashed across these at right angles about four inches apart. This framework was then covered with raupo, the only part of the leaf so used being that part between the roots and the place where the leaves separate, the upper parts being discarded. The outer parts of these leaf bases were stripped off and lashed on to the framework by the nati method of dyign, that is as raupo is fastened on to the walls

P.72.....of a house. When flown, the wings of this kite flutter or flap in a manner said to resemble that of a bird's wings. The flying cord was secured to the middle of the body of the kite. This kite had no tail but was sometimes ornamented with feathers. The head was sometimes covered with dog's hair.

Some of these kites are said to have measured as much as fifteen feet or more across the wings. Two men manipulated the cord, and two others started the kite by taking it some distance away from the cord holder and casting it up into the air.

The manu aute had a head but was not provided with legs. The wings of a kite were called the paihau. Other materials of which kites were made on the East Coast were raupe and toetoe upoke tangate, the leaves of which were scraped and then laced on to the framework. Although small kites were made for children, yet the pastime of kite flying ~~was~~ was indulged in principally by adults, whose kites were much larger and better constructed than those used by children. The stipes (kakaka) of Pteris aquilina, the common bracken, were sometimes employed for the framework of kites.

When about to fly one of the large kites, the cord holder takes up his position at a suitable place and he has a companion whose duty it is to attend to the unwinding of the cord from its spool as the kite rises and the cord is slacked out, an act described by the word whakahoro. The cord is twined around a stick in the same manner as a fishing line is, and not wound in a ball or across a stick in a straight manner. This attendant sees to it that the cord does not get entangled, that it runs free to the hands of the kaiwhakahoro, or payer out. The latter has to use judgment in his task, as when to pay out line, when to hold it, or draw it in.

To release a large kite two men convey it to a suitable point at some distance from the cord holder, and there raise it into position, one man being stationed at each paihau or wing to raise and release it, which they do when the wind takes control of it. As the kite is released the cord tender draws in the slack of the cord so as to render it taut. His companion watches and tends the takai, or coiled cord. Some kite cords are said to have been of a great length, Tuta says 20 to 40 kumi (a measure of 10 fathoms), but statements of natives regarding lengths and distances are extremely unreliable.

The cord used for flying the large kites was a tamatoru or three strand one, but not made by the whiri or plaiting process, i.e., by plaiting the three strands as we would. It was the mea miro, or rolled cord, and the process was as follows: Two twisted strands (kanoi) were twisted together by the well known rolling process termed miro. A third twisted strand was then prepared and placed ready for use. The two strand rolled cord (known as tamarua) was then opened out by means of rolling in the opposite direction to that employed when twisting it together. This process separated the two strands, and in between them was laid the third prepared strand, and the cord re-laid by the rolling process, the third strand occupying the space between the two original strands. This process of laying was also employed in making fishing lines and other small cords, as the result was a better, neater, close laid cord than could be produced by the whiri or plaiting method. Two twisted

strands can be rolled into a neat, well laid, cord, but the rolling process does not work well with three strands, hence the above described ~~method~~ method of introducing the third strand.

The following is one of the many charms repeated in former times when a kite was being flown:

P. 73

In some cases strings of cockle shells (tuangi) or Turritella were fastened to the head or neck of a kite, and these things made a rattling sound as the kite was agitated by the wind. Should a kite be seen to sag over sideways in its flight, adepts would call out-"Turuki! Turuki!" whereupon the cord tender would slack out the cord (aho) and enable the kite to ascend and regain its steadiness. A downward swooping movement of a kite is described by the term ko(ki te ko te manu, he aitua), and a kite sometimes so dives earhtward and is shattered. Such an occurrence was viewed as being unlucky, and this would mean not only that it was unlucky with regard to the act of kite flying at that particular time, but it also denoted that ill-luck or misfortune was hovering over the kite flyers. Thus should a kite flyer whose kite had so misbehaved chance to meet with some mishap, say on the following day, he would probably remark that he had been forewarned by the action of his kite. Behind this singular mental process lay the belief that the gods, familiar spirits, warn man of coming trouble by means of the most trivial occurrences.



When a kite is far up on a laong cord, it is unwise to haul in the cord in order to retrieve it, such a method often causes the kite to ripi and ko, to dart to and fro and swoop down. To avoid this dangerous movement, the cord is tamia or pressed down to earth, that is one person remains to hold the cord, while the other, walking along under the cord, runs his hand along the same and so keeps pressint it down as he advances, until in this manner, the kite is brought to earth. He then unties the cord and carries the kite home, while the cord holder hauls in and winds the released cord.

9 The better forms of kites were given special names, in many cases the names of ancestors of the owners. It would also appear that, at least in some cases, special names were assigned to the cords by which such kites were flown. Many such names of kites and their cords, of former generations, have been preserved by oral tradition on the East Coast. Thus Te Matorohanga, or Vai-rarapa, repeated a list of forty such names that had been preserved by the tribal whare wananga, or school of learning and house of knowledge. Some of these names were those of kites (manu pakau) made at Hawaiiiki, prior to the settlement of the Maori in New Zealand. There were charms or portions of such, to prevent kites from becoming entangled with each other, and also to cause them to descend gently to earth, so as not to be broken.

Tuta states that the aute plant became lost to his tribe in the time of his grandparents. The bark of this plant was prepared in strips for fastening on to the frame of a kite, and kites covered with this material were termed manu aute. It was laced on much as raupo (bulrush) leaves are. The bark was stripped off the shrub from the base upwards. Then the inner layer of the bark seems to have been stripped off. This inner bark somewhat resembled a sponge in its texture, and was so used by mothers who left their children for a while. They utilised it as a paepae waiu, that is to retain a quantity of milk, which, when the child dried during the absence of its mother, was squeezed into its mouth from the bark as from a sponge, by its attendant. In former times the aute was grown at the Pou-tiriao pa in the Waiapu district

When a manu aute was flown, its actions were narrowly watched (it seems to have been sometimes flown as an act of divination, i.e. auguries were drawn from its movements). If it preserved its balance well, and was steady in its flight, that was accepted as a token of success or good fortune, but if it darted about and swooped, the reverse was predicted. As our informant put it in his picturesque phraseology: "He manu tohy aitua te manu aute; nehemez ka ko, he aitua; nehemea ka ata-tu, a whiti ana te ra ki tua" (The manu aute foretells ill-luck; if it swoops, it is bad luck, ominous; if it is steady, then truly the sun shines before.)

The karere or messenger sent up on a kite string was a small, flat wooden disc, ornamented with feathers, and with a hole in the middle through which the cord was passed. The wind caught the feathers and carried the karere up the line to the kite.

In some cases special huts were built as places in which to keep the large kites, and these would be known as kite sheds (tawharau manu ~~///~~ tukutuku). The kite was placed on a platform or rack made of poles in such sheds. If it was intended to fly the kite, ~~///~~ it would be taken out of the shed the previous evening and placed somewhere so that the dew would descend upon it. This dampening process would render the covering of the kite tougher and less liable to injury than it would be in a dry state.

There are a number of references to kites and kite flying in Maori songs. In the following line the poet compares himself, or herself to a kite:-

"He manu aute au e taea te whakahoro ki te aho tamairo." Here tamairo stands for tamiro, an illustration of the curious native method of rendering a word or line euphonious by inserting extra syllables.

Manu Taratahi

A specimen of the manu taratahi is in the Dominion Museum. See Fig. 31 (p. 75). It was made by Te Tuhi KKM Pihopa of Te Whaiti. This form is triangular, the small end being upper-most when flown. The frame is composed of the culms of toetoe kakaho (*Arundo conspicua*), three of which

The widow composed a lament for Hihi, her dead husband, comparing him to a singing bird on account of his powers as an orator; and to a kite swooping down to earth as being emblematical of his death. ✓

BB try to see this info.

An interest paper on Maori kites, by Archdeacon Walsh, published in Vol. 45 of the Transactions of the New Zealand Institute is based on the above manuscript. It is however, doubtful if manu aute was ever used in a general sense, or applied to kites made of any other material. Also there is apparently some error in a remark made at page 378 concerning a kite "made of the stems of the Kakaho (*Arundo conspicua*) lashed on to the flowering panicles of the same, no other material being used." The Archdeacon refers to the song or charm repeated by kite flyers as a turu manu. One such in the White Mss is termed a turu, another is styled a karakia tuku manu pakaukau, a winged kite flying charm. The transcription of these presents difficulties hence they are not inserted herein.

The Archdeacon draws attention to a very curious custom, or at least occasional occurrence of former times, in which a flying kite was released and followed, and the land on which it descended claimed and occupied by the kite flyers; he gives several instances of this singular act. Th

The final anecdote in the above paper, that concerning the marooned woman is probably somewhat confused. As told by Te Awanui of Omarumutu, to the writer, it appears more probably. The woman was marooned on a small island by her jealous husband. She conceived the idea of sending a token to her friends per medium of a kite. Having constructed the kite, she waited until a wind was blowing from the island in the direction of her home, where her own folk lived. She then attached an ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ornamental pendant she wore to the kite, and allowed the kite to mount to a considerable height ere releasing it. The kite eventually descended in the district occupied by her own people, who recognised the attached pendant and its purpose. They eventually found and rescued the maroon, and all ended happily. The adventure is said by Bay of Plenty natives to have been a local one, but may, like many other Maori tales have been introduced ~~xxx~~ from Polynesia and localised here.

GAMES AND PASTIMES OF THE MAORIS

9

E. Best



In this story of the life of the Maori chief Nuku-pewapewa, Mr. Downes gives some account of a curious use of a kite made in the Wairarapa district about eight generations ago.

It appears that Nuku was trying to take a fortified village known as Maunga-rake, which, however, defied all his efforts at first.

He then conceived the brilliant idea of lowering a man from an adjacent cliff or hillside by means of a kite, under cover of night so that he might open up the gateway of the pa to admit the besiegers; the garrison keeping no watch apparently. T

The story goes:-"He built a huge raupo kite, something in the shape of a bird with great extended wings and during the darkness of night he fastened one of his men to this kite and floated him over the cliff by means of a cord into the pa below. The man quietly opened up the entrance and when all was ready at a given signal, Nuku lowered his men, four and five together by means of a forest vine, and before morning the pa was taken."

Such is the legend. We are not told why it was necessary to lower men down cliffs when the entrance to the place was open, such discrepancies frequently occur in Maori narratives.

Where references notified, all other dates will remain as originally printed.

In the two forms hereto attached.

Director, Civic Arts
Ronald F. Carr

P.R. Tickets for individual performances may be obtained at the Civic Arts Center office

9 ~~12~~ ~~13~~ #

It is shown in Fig. 32 (p. 80a). Its breadth across the wings is about twelve feet, the wings being widest in the middle of the kite where they measure 12 in. or 14 in. but only about 5 in. at their extremities. The framework of these wings is composed of twelve small, light wooden rods arranged lengthwise, the two outer ones being the largest. Across these at right angles are lashed short, light wands or twigs arranged in series of six each, with a space of two inches or so between each two series. The body framework is made in the same manner and is about seven inches wide near the wings, increasing in width downwards to about fourteen inches at the base.

The frame is covered with leaves of the raupo or bulrush arranged longitudinally and each leaf tied on to the frame. Some European cloth has also been used in places.

The diminutive legs terminate each in four claws. The head is not flat, but has prominent features, brow, nose and lips and feathers are fastened on it on the upper part. There is no cord attached to the kite.

With regard to the bird shaped kite formerly used, Tuta Nihoniho states that, on the East Coast, the head of the kite was made to resemble that of a man. It was a piece of thin, light wood, flat behind, but had human features carved on it in front, and pieces of Haliotis shell inserted as eyes. Its upper part was covered with dog's hair and ornamented with feathers,

such hair being also used as a beard. The wings were not rigid, but were so constructed as to move when the kite was flown, hence it somewhat resembled a bird flying. The wings were of considerable length, and came to a point at the ends. Two legs were formed below, and the flying cord was secured to the middle of the kite.

A kite made by an old native of the Bay of Islands district shows a rectangular form with two short wings or projections of similar form. The frame is composed of rush stems about one line in thickness and the covering is composed of dried flattened leaves of upoko=tantata, a sedge. The specimen is merely a small kite, such as were used by children, but is interesting because such items have not been deemed worthy of collection in past decades, ~~but~~ ~~through~~ ~~use~~ ~~xxx~~ ~~though~~ useful as illustrations of old time Maori life. This kite is shown as Fig. 33 P. 80a

The strongest part of the frame is the middle, where four rush stems are placed together, two on either side of the thin sedge leafcovering material. Near the outer edges of the body of the kite are two small ribs, each formed of two rush stems, one on either side of the leaves. These opposing ribs are in each case, bound to each other by a running lacing of fine Phormium twine passed round the two or four opposing stems between each two leaves. These flattened leaves are from $\frac{5}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch in width. In the centre of the spaces on either side of the mid-rib a lacing of fine twine serves to keep the leaves in position. The wings are stiffened and the body braced by two series of three rush stems each, across the ends of which

are tied short pieces of rush stem, one on each side of the leaves.

The little kite is fourteen inches deep in the body, and eleven inches wide, the wings projecting out three inches on either side. The structure is extremely light, and this item is but a child's toy, a diminutive specimen, but it is probably the only one of an upoko-tangata kite in existence.

The above described kite was made by an old native of the Taiamai district and was obtained by Mr. Neilson of Pjaewao/ Je re, arls tjat ~~and~~ additional pieces of ~~the~~ rush should be inserted in the wings. The cord was secured near the middle of the kite, and the place to attach it so that the kite would balance well was found by experimenting. If it flew in a lopsided manner, then the cord would be moved a little, until the fabric balanced well in flight.

Kites P. 54

N.Z. Official Year-Book, 1907.

There were a great many forms of riddles and guessing games, which were termed *kai* or *panga*.

The *purerehua* was the well-known and widespread "bull-roarer," which was operated by means of a stick about 4 ft. in length, to which the roarer was attached by means of a cord. The *kororohu* was the "whizzer" bekknown of our childhood, and a favourite toy of Native children in former times. They sang little songs of little worth while so playing.

One of the most common forms of amusement was "cats-cradle," or *whai*, as it was termed. This obtained not only among children, but also adults often indulged in the game. They set up a great many different patterns, some of which were most complicated, and each was known by a distinct name.

Another string game was the *pa tokotoko*. It was played by two persons, each of whom was provided with a piece of string, one end of which was formed into a running noose. The game seems to have consisted of attempting to catch the extended forefinger of the adversary in the noose.

Musical instruments were not numerous in Maoriland. Two primitive forms of flute were made of wood and bone. One of these was used as a nose flute. The Tuhoe people made them of the wood of the *neinei* tree. The *pahu* or war-gong was made of wood, as also was the *pu kaea* or trumpet. The *pu tatara* was made from a large sea shell. It emitted a loud booming sound similar to that of the *pu kaea*.

Among games played by children only were the *upokotiti*, *tara-koekoeka*, *hapi tawa*, *kura-winiwini*, *tatau tangata*, and *tatai wheiu*. The fourth mentioned was a string game. The children sat in two rows, facing each other. A string was passed down the space between them, each child holding the string with both hands so that it was hidden from sight. One end of the string was held in the mouth of a player seated at one end of the ranks, the other end being free. Another person had now to guess where the end of the string was—a difficult thing to locate, so expert were the young folk in manipulating the string.

Of outdoor games, that known as *wi* was somewhat similar to the "prisoner's base" of our own people.

It is interesting to note that the ancient Maori was acquainted with the whip-top and humming-top, and also with the kite. The whip-top was made to jump over small hurdles by means of vigorous whipping. A double-pointed whip-top was made to change ends by means of the whip. The humming-tops were made of wood or, in some cases, of small hollow gourds.

Kite-flying was a favourite pastime of the Maori, and often pursued by adults. The kites appear to have been made in two, if not three, different shapes. Some were in the form of birds, with long wings, and the generic terms for kites were *manu* (bird) and *kahu* (hawk). Others again had two wings on either side of a triangular body. They were constructed in a very neat manner from *aute* bark, leaves of the *raupo* plant, or the triangular stems of the

III

upoko-tangata. There were certain charms chaunted while a kite was being flown, in order to cause it to rise to a desirable height. The light shells of the fresh-water mussel were sometimes attached to a kite, which shells made a rattling sound when agitated by the movements of the kite.

Another favoured pastime was the casting of small darts, termed *teka* and *neti*. The dart was thrown so as to strike and glance off a small mound of earth, behind which the thrower stood. This sport had also its peculiar charm, repeated by the thrower in order to cause his dart to speed a goodly distance.

The *topa* or *koke* was an amusement of children. Into the stem of a broad leaf, as that of the *wharangi* shrub, was inserted the base of a culm of the *karetu* grass. The leaf was then cast forward by the thrower, who would stand on an eminence, such as a river-bank. When deftly cast, the leaf would sail onward for some distance before descending to earth. Charms were repeated by the children to cause these leaves to travel a distance.

The *pirori* or hoop was another old-time Maori toy. They were made from tough forest creepers, but were not trundled, as with us, by means of a stick. The players stood facing each other, on opposite sides of the playground, the hoop being thrown so as to roll across to the opposite player, who, with a stick, would endeavour to strike the hoop so as to cause it to return to the thrower's side. But he would not follow up the hoop. Sometimes hoops were thrown so as to rebound and jump over a hurdle.

The *reti* or toboggan was a favourite with children. It was merely a flat piece of wood, about thirty inches in length and five in width, sometimes elaborately carved. A child "squatted" down on this, with one foot immediately behind the other, the feet having two small steps to press against on the board. Toboggan slides were formed on steep slopes, and kept slippery by having water poured or sprinkled on them.

Stilt walking was common. Stilts were termed *pou toti*, and the foot-rests were about three feet from the ground. Wrestling on stilts was practised by the young people.

Swings were much patronised by young people, the favoured form being that known as "giant stride" to us, and as *morere* and *moari* to the Maori. If possible these were erected on the bank of a river or lake, where deep water obtained, so that the performers would swing out over the water, when they released their hold of the cord and plunged, feet foremost, into the water. The Natives are, of course, excellent swimmers, but do not appear to have ever taken to diving as we know it—*i.e.*, head first. They merely jump into the water, descending feet first, from considerable heights. They so jump from the face of a cliff, from an overhanging tree, or, if the top of the bank be level ground, they often make a running jump of it.

The long jump was practised, and children indulged in skipping, (*piu*), though the single skip-rope does not seem to have been used. A long cord was used, with a child at each end to swing the same. Several players would skip at the same time with such a cord.

XI

Excerpt from: Hamilton, A. The art workmanship of the Maori race in New Zealand. ~~Dunedin~~ Dunedin, Fergusson & Mitchell print, 1896

"A favourite outdoor game was kite-flying, with an elaborately made manu or kite, called also pakau and pakaukau, made in olden times of aute. Sometimes the head was hollow, and contained some shells, or kakahi, so that when the kite was flying, a sharp jerk on the cord made the shells rattle- he mea tatangi.* Leaves were also pierced and sent up the cord as "messengers". A kite was used as a medium for capturing a pa by sorcery. If the war party got within a reasonable distance of the besieged pa without being molested, the priest would construct a kite made of toetoe whatu manu, and fly it in the air; if the kite should fly lop-sided, it is an evil omen - but if it flies well, the priest will hold the line in his right hand (to hold it with the left hand would be an aitua), and letting it out he repeats his incantation. Still holding the kite, he sends a messenger up on the string; when it is half-way up he lets go the line, taking care to have the wind so that the kite will fly across the pa. If the kite catch on the palisade, it is thought that the incantation of the priest made during the performance will produce such an overwhelming dread or panic in the inhabitants that they will be easily conquered. As a rule, however to see kites flying over a pa was an evidence of peaceful times."

* A description of Te Manu Aute is given in detail in a MS by Te Rangi (Wm. Marsh) in the Grey Collection in the Public Library of Auckland, p. 202.

NOTES:

- aute- (1) mulberry
- (2) cloth made from the bark of the mulberry tree

toetoe - grass

aitua - of ill omen, unlucky

(Although kite flying is still occasionally seen in New Zealand, the kites used are the usual commercially produced type.
