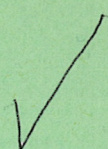


The Aute or paper-mulberry, which gives to the New Zealand kite its generic name, the term <sup>manuaute</sup> ~~manuaute~~ meaning "the bird (made of) the aute". This plant, a small tree with rough ~~tree~~ trilobed leaves, known to botanists as the Broussonetia  $\neq$  papyrifera, is common to most of the Pacific islands, where to this day its bark is used for the manufacture of tapa, or Native cloth.

It is probable that the first kites made in New Zealand were constructed on the Polynesian model, in which the aute was used in the form of tapa, or paper cloth, stretched on a frame; but the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient quantity of the bark, and perhaps the unsuitability of the climate for the manufacture of tapa, necessitated the adoption of another material, especially for the larger kites, and a substitute was found in the leaves of the raupo (a kind of giant sedge-Typha latifolia), a coarse tussock grass named upoko tangata, or in the flower stems of the kakaho (Arundo conspicua). Even after the plant had become scarce the connection with the aute was kept up, the heads of the kites being sometimes made of that material while the body and wings were commoner stuff.

All the larger kites consisted of a light frame of twigs or reeds to which were sewn the raupo, upoko tangaia, or whatever other material might be used to hold the wind. Even when the aute was used it was employed- at least in later times- in the form of strips of inner bark; in any case, there is no record of its

use in the form of tapa for this purpose in New Zealand.



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The Maori kite was known under several names, and probably each name described some special variety, differing from the others in size, shape, or the material of

which it was made. Thus there is the manu or bird, the ~~kuahu~~ kuahu or hawk, the paakau or wing, and

the manuwhara or kite of the canoe-sail. Still, the term manuaukte seems to have been retained as a general name and might be used loosely for any variety.

There is a very fine model of a Maori kite in the Auckland Museum, which was made for Sir George Grey by some East Coast Natives. Its shape is roughly that of a hawk with wings outspread, and measuring about 10 ft. or 12 ft. from tip to tip. It is made of raupo, neatly

sewn on to a light frame of manuku or tea-tree twigs, stained alternately red and black. The body of the

bird is surmounted by the likeness of a human head, made of linen or calico, painted and decorated with ~~the~~ hawk's feathers, the latter being shaved off from the quill so as to wave in the wind. This kite is of a very graceful form, and allowing for the difference of material, probably represents as nearly as possible the original manuaukte.

Mr. J. White, in his Ancient History of the Maori, tells of a kite, used in the olden times, which was made to resemble a man, with head, body, and legs - the body being made of ~~manu~~ kareao (commonly

known as supplejack), over which was put the  
bark of the aute tree.

A small variety of kite is also represented in  
the Auckland Museum by two specimens obtained through

Mr. Elsdon Best. These are of a triangular ~~shape~~

shape and are made of the stems of the Kakaho (Arundo  
conspicua) lashed on to the ~~stems~~ flowering panicles of the

same, no other material being used. These kites are  
about 2 ft. long, and are ornamented with bunches  
of hawks's feathers at the angles. This species  
seems to have survived all the others, and has often  
been seen by some of the older settlers.

So far as I have been able to gather, none of the  
New Zealand kites were furnished with tails, such as  
we understand the term. It is true that Mr. Elsdon

Best mentions the "tail" of akite, but the context  
shows that this was part of the solid structure, as he  
says that to this, as well as to the wings, were  
attached "long tails or streamers termed puhuhi"  
(puhipuhi?) These were probably light garlands of feathers  
such as were flown from the sternpost of a war-canoe, and  
were simply used for ornament, having nothing whatever  
to do with the balancing of the kite. The same  
author states that "sometimes shells were attached to  
the kites, and when flying, should the cord be held (checked?)  
the oscillation would cause the shells to rattle."

.....Shells of the kakahi, or fresh-water mussel, were used for  
this purpose, evidently on account of their lightness".

And Mr. A. Hamilton, in "Maori Art, P. 377 says that

the head was sometimes hollow, and that the shells  
were put inside. This statement agrees with that of a

Maori writer (Te Rangi, or William Marsh) whom I

shall have to quote presently. Mr. Elsdon Best

states that horns or points were attached to the head of

the kite. These were probably in the shape of long  
antennae, formed of stalks or toetoe or rauo, covered  
with feathers, such as were used on a war-canoe.

Professor A.C.Haddon in a most interesting

and end exhaustive essay on kites in general "Study

of Man p.246, states that the string (of the New  
Zealand Kite) was most expeditiously formed and

lengthened at pleasure, being merely the split leaves  
of the flax-plant (*Phormium tenax*). This may have

been the case in regard to the little toykites used by  
children, and perhaps to some of the degenerate kites o  
of later days but a string of knotted

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flax-leaves would have ben far too heavy as well a  
as much too weak to raise some of the monster kites which  
in old times were flown at the "great games" when the  
string was often hundred of yards long. In fact, it is  
expressly stated in a minute and graphic description of  
the manuaute, in a Maori MS by Te Rangi in the Auckland  
Public Library, kindly translated for me by Archdeacon  
Hawkins, that the string for such a kite as he describes



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was made of muka, or dressed flax - meaning of

course, that it was spun in the same way as a

fishing-line or any other small cordage.

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The Civic Arts Center Spring semester will start Monday, February 1st. In addition to its present curriculum the Center is tentatively planning to add a class for the school children and their mothers; an