The Lost Drawing of Nukutawhiti

THE EARLY Anglican missionary Thomas Kendall left, in a series of letters written in 1823 and 1824, a unique account of northern Maori religious beliefs. He urged that the carvings were ‘explanatory of the New Zealand mythology’ and, as an accompaniment to a long description written in July 1824, he made a sketch of one piece which was ‘emblematic’ of those beliefs. This drawing vanished from the Archives of the Church Missionary Society and I could not trace it when, eleven years ago, I published my interpretation of Kendall’s work. It had, in fact, come into the possession of a private collector in England (along with other Kendall material), but had been misidentified by him. It was only when K.A. Webster died and his collection passed to the Alexander Turnbull Library that it was recognized. (Figure I) This sketch of the ancestral deity, Nukutawhiti, provides new insight into the cosmogony of the Maoris and the significance of their carving.

The drawing is of a centre board or entrance (kuwaha) to a carved storehouse (pataka whakairo). The large figure is Nukutawhiti, the captain of the Mamari canoe, who met Kupe and from whom Ngapuhi of the Hokianga and the Bay of Islands trace their descent. It is the earliest drawing of a carved storehouse known, antedating Augustus Earle’s images by some three years. In style, however, it resembles others of the early nineteenth century. (Figure II) One is the famous Puawai O Te Arawa, held in the Auckland Institute and Museum, which possesses as its central figure, the canoe ancestor of Te Arawa people, Tamatekapua, who was also a contemporary of Kupe. Another storehouse, Te Takinga, has as its central figure, Pikiao, the ancestor from whom its builders, Ngatipikiao, a segment of Te Arawa living at Maketu,

1 Rev. Thomas Hassall, to whom Kendall had sent four carvings, to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), 6 August 1823, Mission Books, II, 469, CMS microfilm, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).
2 The Legacy of Guilt: A Life of Thomas Kendall, Auckland, 1968, especially Chap. VII.
3 Mrs Janet Paul first made the identification. I am also indebted to Prof. M.P.K. Sorenson who alerted me to the fact that the drawing had been recovered. K.A. Webster had misdated it (1825) and attributed it to the later missionary William Williams. Webster’s annotations appear at the bottom, right, of the drawing.
4 Augustus Hamilton, Maori Art, Wellington, 1901, p.140.
5 ibid., p.142.
FIGURE I
Kendall's drawing of Nukutawhi. D.R. Simmons, ethnologist at the Auckland Institute and Museum, has suggested that the carving style is Bay of Plenty-East Coast. The striated tongue, with a knob, is a feature of the Bay of Plenty-East Coast style, as is the particularly slanted eye and eye socket.
Pen and ink drawing, 24cm by 20cm. Alexander Turnbull Library.
FIGURE II

A *kuwaha* slab dug up from Miranda at the Firth of Thames, where it had been hidden from Ngapuhi. This figure possesses the knob on the tongue that is probably represented in the Nukutawhiti drawing.

*National Museum.*
took their name. The *kuwaha* which most closely resembles Kendall’s
drawing is that of Te Oha, the Abundant, which was built between about
1820 and 1825, also by carvers of Ngatipikiao. (Figure III) It is possible
that the elaborate storehouses of the Bay of Islands, which were not seen
by the eighteenth century explorers, were carved by Te Arawa carvers
from the Bay of Plenty in the early nineteenth century. There are several
references in the first missionary journals to carvings at the Bay of
Islands being made by men from the ‘southwards’. They were variously
described as coming from ‘the Thames’, ‘the *Tauranga*,’ and also from
the East Cape.’ Te Arawa carvers were particularly famous, and the
Nukutawhiti figure possesses certain characteristics of their style. These
ornate *pataka* were developed with the introduction of iron cutting tools
and were used as the repository for the community’s most valued posses-
sions, such as weapons and cloaks, or for preserved foods for important
guests. They were tapu.

Kendall described his drawing of Nukutawhiti as a ‘Deity’ in the ‘First
State’ of existence. He wrote that the Maoris conceived of three states of
existence, through which all life passed. The first state was the primal
state of undistinguished matter, chaotic and before the separation out of
either kind or form. The position of the fingers on this carving was, he
said, the sign that the carving represented a figure in the ‘First State’:
‘the idea of its secrecy, or unexercised power is to be taken from the three
middle fingers which are wanting on each hand, and the three middle
toes which are wanting on each foot. See the Hands and Feet of the
accompanying Figure’. He added, ‘Man in his First State was . . . shut
up between the Thumb and Little Finger’ of the deity. ‘He was a *Tapu.
See Nuku Tawiti.*’

Nukutawhiti was, as the canoe ancestor of Ngapuhi, the source of
their distinctive existence. As their ‘original’ ancestor, he was a deity.
But Kendall’s account suggests more: that he was a part of a wider
cosmological system, and there is evidence from other and early Ngapuhi
sources for such an interpretation. Aperahama Taonui, the future pro-
phet of Hokiang, wrote down for the young John White in 1849, his
‘genealogical book of the Maori ancestors’. Here, he placed Nukutawhiti
in the sequence of ancestors who existed before the ‘real men’. They were
the ancestors who ‘are now gods’ and whose ‘names were used as tapu
removers’.* In this genealogy he traced, from Nukutawhiti, the birth of

8, Wellington, 1952, p.156.
7 For example, John King described in detail in his Journal, 31 August 1825, a carving
being made for Wharepoaka, chief of Rangihoua, by two men from ‘the *Tauranga*’. King,
Letters and Journals, Mss Vol 73:15, Hocken Library, University of Otago (HL), and cited
8 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 27 July 1824, Kendall, Letters & c., Mss Vol 71:66, HL.
This letter is reproduced as Appendix I, *Legacy of Guilt*, pp.171-6.
9 ‘The Taonui Manuscript’, translated by D.R. Simmons, *Records of the Auckland
Te Oha. The style of carving of the head of the central figure of the kuwaha is different from Nukutawhiti, but the relative positions of the figures are similar. In front, the paepae, or threshold beam of the porch, possesses seven human figures flanked by manaia. Although this paepae was carved later than the kuwaha, and is probably a replacement, the side panels of Te Oha, which were carved with stone tools, possess the same image.  

* Auckland Institute and Museum.*
this land and of the ‘real men’.

In Kendall’s drawing, yet-unborn man is said to be caught between the fingers of Nukutawhiti. He is, presumably, the undifferentiated circle sketched between the two fingers. One other, early, two-fingered *kuwaha* figure is known. It is a Te Arawa carving, and there the join between the two long and spindly fingers was elaborately carved as an interlocking spiral (or figure of eight). One commentator has seen this shape between the fingers as manaia-like.\(^1\)

In the sketch, Nukutawhiti’s ‘Son’ also appears, placed below the main figure. Such a relationship between a large and small figure is often found in Maori carving, when the smaller figure is the son of the depicted ancestor.\(^1\) In the genealogies, Nukutawhiti’s son is the sky-father. Hone Mohi Tawhai of Hokianga said that the eldest son of Nukutawhiti was Rangi-nui, whose child was Papa-mauka, and whose sister was Papatuanuku, the earth mother.\(^1\) Aperahama Taonui described, in his genealogy, the birth of Nukutawhiti’s son or lineage, ‘whanau’.\(^1\) Te Papatuhiri-iho. He went on to explain, ‘Papa-tuhuri-iho gave birth to Papatuhuri-ake. The meaning of Te-Papa-Tuhuri-iho is: the sky was moved up from below, the meaning of Te Papa-tuhuri-ake is that the earth was turned down.’ But John White originally translated Aperahama’s explanation of the meaning of Te Papa-tuhuri-iho more literally than D.R. Simmons: it was the ‘descending of the sky to the earth’ (‘e ahu iho ana te rangi ki raro’), while Te Papa-tuhuri-ake was the turning upwards of the land.\(^1\) Here then, with variations, is the story of union of sky and earth, Rangi and Papa, or the beginning of life, in genealogies descending from Nukutawhiti, the god-ancestor who, as his name suggests, came

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\(^1\) Frank Willett, ‘A Maori Store-Chamber Slab in the Manchester Museum’, *Man*, LV (December 1955), 177. This *kuwaha* is reproduced in Phillipps, Figure 97, p.165. It was purchased in Auckland about 1900; it is not one collected by Kendall.

\(^1\) See, for example, the reproductions in Hamilton, p.149, of the poupou or interior slabs of a house built in 1845 at Gisborne, where the little figures placed between the loins of the larger figures are the sons of the depicted tribal ancestors.

\(^1\) Hone Mohi Tawhai placed Ranginui as the son of Nukutawhiti in two whakapapa he recorded in c.1860 and in 1892. They are to be found in Simmons, *Great New Zealand Myth*, p.39, where he compares them with that given by Aperahama Taonui in 1849. (It is to be noticed that, in all three genealogies, between Kupe and Nukutawhiti lie the apostles Matthew and Mark, although in the legends the two navigators are contemporaries.) Hone placed Ranginui as the ‘eldest son’ of Nukutawhiti and added Papatuanuku as his sister in his 1885 account of Pihe, the funeral lament for Nukutawhiti. See below, p.15.

\(^1\) Aperahama used this term meaning his offspring or family group; John White translated it as ‘son’ when he first published a part of the account, AJHR, 1880, G-8, p.16; Moerewarewa was the daughter.

\(^1\) ‘Taonui Manuscript’, pp.62-63. For White’s translation see the original manuscript, ‘The Book of the Ancestors’, Mss 120, Auckland Institute and Museum. Simmons seems to be translating with the legend of the separation of Rangi and Papa by their children in mind.
Maori carvings undoubtedly recorded the popular legends of the ancestors, who were seen as gods, but Kendall's drawing hints at a coherent symbolic structure for the universe, to which the myths belong. Kendall was not the only European commentator who considered that the Maori conceived of three states of existence. John White, who drew much of his early information from Hokianga informants like Aperahama Taonui and Hone Mohi Tawhai wrote, 'Amongst the Maoris generally the universe was held to be divided into three great states namely Rangi, (or the Heavens) Papa, (or the earth) & Te Po, (or darkness)'. He called this unpublished paper, 'A chapter from the Maori Mythology on the Soul of Man, its creation & various stages through the three worlds; Celestial, Terrestrial, & World of Shades'. White thus tied a concept of three 'states' of existence to a sequence of three inhabited 'worlds' in the Maori cosmos. While Kendall gave no Maori names for the three great states of existence, it is clear that the second state of existence is life in this world, and the third is the after-life. He wrote, for 'us who are in the Second State', the first state of existence to which we cannot return, 'is death and a Tapu.' The after-life is also 'death and a Tapu' for living men.

It has been suggested that the Maori regarded life 'not as an evenly developing process but as a discontinuous series of states. A man did not grow old, old age entered into him'. Kendall himself had used the phrase, man 'is dead as to time past, and only lives in present time', in his attempt to describe just such a concept. He wrote that in this world, or man’s 'second state', man is 'partly a living and partly a dead creature'. That is, time past is a 'death' and it is a 'tapu', for it is a condition or state of existence which the man has left. Moreover, the 'passages which separated the different stages or states of life' were considered by the Maori to be highly dangerous. They were dangerous because they connected death and life, or, in this world, the known and the unknown. The Maori religious rites of passage were most particularly connected with birth (passage into this world) and death (passage into the next) and they all involved tapu lifting ceremonies. Life itself was also seen to be com-

16 John White Papers, Mss Vol. 75: 87, ATL. There are two undated versions of this paper; one is written after the publication of the second volume of his Ancient History, that is, after 1887. But his earlier, 1856, lectures, published as 'Lectures on Maori Customs and Superstitions', AJHR, 1861, E-7, also describe the three 'worlds', p.10.
17 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 27 July 1824.
19 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 3 June 1823, Mss Vol. 71:54, reproduced Legacy of Guilt, p.134.
20 ibid.
21 Smith, p.24.
posed of treacherous passages between the separate states or activities (such as war), which were entered into, or departed from, only by further rites of passage.

I suggest that Kendall’s storehouse carving is emblematic of the ‘passage’ from the first state of existence to the second: that is, from life before ‘creation’ to life in this world. The carving represents the tribal ‘creator-ancestor’, Nukutawhiti, and man as yet undistinguished in form. The entrance to the pataka, Kendall said, was the ‘Door of this World’. On either side stood the guardians. To enter the tapu storehouse, then, represented the passage from one world to the next. To cross the threshold of the storehouse in violation of the tapu would be, as Kendall tried to explain, a ‘change of state or death’.  

In the myths there are references to the guardians. The door of the afterworld, Te Tatau O Te Po, has its guardian figure, Miru and his associated atua, to all of whom were attributed the power of makutu. The ‘door’ to this world does not seem to be so clearly recorded, although John White described in elaborate detail guardian figures at each level, or stage, of the progress of the soul from its conception in the first world, Rangi. He also described guardian figures in his schema of ‘progress’ through this world, or Papa. Although White’s accounts are suspect for their excessive detail and ‘systematization’, there is little doubt that he is drawing on early Hokianga sources for the basic concept of the progression of the ‘soul’ to its ultimate destruction. Father Catherin Servant also picked up, quite independently, the local belief that the soul of the dead man passed through various ‘worlds’ or states until it was finally transformed into a worm, toke, and was extinguished. Servant wrote his account in 1841; White published his first version of the extinction of the soul, when it enters the ‘final apartment’ and becomes the worm, toke, in 1861. The concept of the progression of the soul, through three great states, each with associated guardian or deity figures, does seem to be a part of the complex and varied myths of the other ‘worlds’.

In Kendall’s drawing, Nukutawhiti is shown wearing a hei-tiki, a pendant-tiki or embryo man. This feature, although considered unusual, is found on other kuwaha carvings. The greenstone tiki represents the creation of a man and it is also the precious heirloom which establishes the lineage of the whanau or group. Moreover, there was a hei-tiki specifically associated with Nukutawhiti, in which was ‘seated’ his tapu.

22 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 3 June 1823. He did not use this phrase in specific reference to the storehouse carving, but to another which is discussed below, p.14.
24 Servant’s letter is cited R.S. Oppenheim, Maori Death Customs, Wellington, 1973, p.97; White’s account is in AJHR, 1861, E-7, p10.
25 See Figure 124, Phillipps, p.197.
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deriving from the ocean god Tu-matatangaroa. It was named in the great lament for Nukutawhiti, the Pihe. This ancestral hei-tiki was exhibited on Ngapuhi marae at tangi in the nineteenth century and it was called 'Heiwa'. The Pihe states, 'Heiwa, heiwa, Tukua ki te marae': 'The heiwa, the heiwa, Present it unto the marae'. In this way the protective tapu of the ancestor was bestowed upon the community. Perhaps the hei-tiki in the drawing of Nukutawhiti refers to this lineage.

In the drawing, Kendall depicted other elements relating to Nukutawhiti as the creator of the people. On either side of him appear two figures, their heads turned outwards and described as the 'Dual Rib close to his Side'. Little human figures appear in this position in several *kuwaha* carvings, including that reproduced from Te Oha. In Kendall's accompanying letter to the sketch he wrote, the 'Dual Rib' of man, in the first state of existence, 'remains in the Side.' There may be a carelessness of language in his use of the two phrases, 'remains in' and 'close to', but much more probably, he intended a distinction as the 'Rib' begins to separate and take on form. In the first state, the ribs enclosed or 'hid' the two 'principles' of creation, 'Knowledge' and 'Life', but the principles were not yet distinguished. Man himself was also undistinguished in form in the first state and was therefore 'shut up between the Thumb and Little Finger' (*koromatua* and *koroiti*) of the deity, which, he stressed, was what the drawing he had made of Nukutawhiti demonstrated.

In this drawing, the 'Dual Rib' appears as a pair of human-like figures and the implication is that the ribs have acquired form. For the figure on the left is female and that on the right is male, according to the universal signs at their loins, which Kendall has used, presumably, to avoid sketching in their carved genitalia. Missionary prudery has intruded here. As the 'Dual Rib', the figures represent the two creative principles, knowledge (or wisdom) and life. The immediate association would seem to be the Hebraic idea of creation from the rib of Adam, but Kendall did use the Maori words *nga rara*. It is tempting to think of the figures as *ira tangata* and *ira atua*, the dual life principle of man and the gods. Both the figures are three-fingered like Nukutawhiti's son. In Kendall's schema, three fingers were emblematic of creation, that is form. They indicated existence and 'imperfection', although not necessarily existence in this world. For Nuku's son belonged to the ancestors before the 'real

26 'Nukutawhiti. The Pihe (Lament) for Nukutawhiti, with a Historical Narrative Explanatory of the Same, as Recorded by Mohi Tawhai. With Translations and Supplementary Notes by George Graham', *JPS*, XL, 2 (June 1940), 230-1, 233. The Pihe was written down by Hone Mohi Tawhai in 1885. He explained the origin of the term 'hewai', as being a necklace of leaves of the ruakawa tree which Nukutawhiti wore and this name, Graham noted, was given to the ancestral hei tiki which was exhibited at tangi. D.R. Simmons (and others) have accepted, but cannot explain, Kendall's earlier text of the Pihe at this point, that is, the reading 'e iwa'. Hone Mohi Tawhai's text at least makes sense.

27 ibid., p.233.

28 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 27 July 1824.
men' and other three-fingered carvings which Kendall collected were probably of the gods who are the children of Rangi and Papa.\textsuperscript{29}

However, there is a further problem with the 'Dual Rib' of existence. In a completely different piece of carving, which Kendall sent to England in 1823, the dual rib was also represented, but here it was a taurapa or sternpost of a war canoe. An example is shown in Figure IV. The double-ribbed structure is a conspicuous and consistent feature of many taurapa, and Kendall said that the taurapa represented the 'Dual or Mystic Rib'. His is the only description of the significance of the taurapa that is known. At the base of the ribs a human figure or face is usually placed; at the upper end the ribs are gripped by a biting manaia figure, which Kendall said was a bird, while the lower part was 'defended' by another manaia figure, which he called the ngarara, or lizard, itself emblematic of the Dual Rib, \textit{nga rara}.\textsuperscript{30} This manaia pair is a consistent feature of the taurapa and the implications are that man, placed where the sternpost joins the hull of the canoe, is being attacked, and defended, by creatures of the 'natural' world who are carved conspicuously in a non-naturalistic manner. The bird contending with the 'snake', in H.D. Skinner's view, was a common feature in Maori carving and was to be found on the sternpiece, where an avian-like creature attacked the upper tips of the ribs.\textsuperscript{31} The lizard, \textit{ngarara}, (carved at the base of the ribs) was usually viewed as a hostile creature, the manifestation of a deity, and was believed to devour the entrails of the living, bringing death. However, in Kendall's description, instead of being the man-eater (upon whom he had commented in quite an orthodox manner in earlier writings)\textsuperscript{32} the lizard-god is the protector of the Dual Rib. Lizards, who ate the violators of tapu, were also placed as the guardians of tapu objects in Maori myths, perhaps because they were held in such great fear. A row of lizards was carved along the ridge of Puawai O Te Arawa, presumably as protectors. One might compare the dualities embodied, for example, in Quetzalcoatl, the feathered-serpent of Aztez mythology, bearer of both life and death, and there is no doubt that the Maori myth-structures constantly refer to this duality. For both life and death originate in the ultra-human world, and many of the god-figures are ambivalent in their roles. Tapu itself is a destructive force and a protective force. Tapu, which demarcates the ultra-human and the human, serves 'sometimes to save life Sometimes to destroy it', as the missionary Samuel Leigh learnt from Kendall.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{29} See below, p.21.
\textsuperscript{30} Kendall to CMS Secretary, 3 June 1823.
\textsuperscript{31} 'The Bird-Contending-with-Snake as an Art Motive in Oceania', \textit{Records of the Otago Museum}, Anthropology No. 2 (September 1966), p.18.
\textsuperscript{32} Entry for first part of March 1815, Journal, Mss Vol. 55:23, HL.
\textsuperscript{33} Rev. Samuel Leigh, 'Notebook for use at Missionary meetings', c.1820, p.5, Mss B378, Mitchell Library, Public Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Leigh had spent only
Figure IV. A *taurapa*, or sternpost. The double rib structure is clearly visible. At the upper end a manaia figure bites the tips of the ribs; in the lower part the outer rib ends with a manaia head, which Kendall called the lizard, *ngarara*. (National Museum).

Figure V. Nga Rangi O Rehua, erected about 1824. (National Museum).

Figure VI. Carved panel from a meeting-house built at Hick's Bay, showing a lizard held up to the mouth. This carving is Ngatiporou style and probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century. The panel is in the Otago Museum. Photo by James McDonald, (National Museum).
The war canoe was a tapu object. No cooked food could be carried in it, and entrance into it must also be correct. Kendall wrote that to enter it by either the stern or the prow, both highly ornamented, was a 'change of state or death'. The war canoe, which carried men from one place (and tapu activity) to another, was painted to refer to two worlds. As Hare Hongi, a part-Ngapuhi, told Elsdon Best, the white and black markings represented the colours of this world and of the afterworld. The white represented 'Te Ao-marama', the world of light, and the black 'Te Ao-po', the world of darkness and death. The base red colour (kura) of the canoes was the 'sacred color', the 'way of rendering anything tapu'. Consequently, any violation of the tapu of the canoe would bring the punishment of the malevolent gods: death and the final change of state from this world.

Sometimes a canoe would be placed upright as a marker for a dead chief and when this was done, the underside of the canoe would be carved. In one striking example, Nga Rangi O Rehua, reproduced as Figure V, three figures were worked onto the base and the space between their legs was cut out as an open doorway. It seems clear that each figure stands astride the entrance into the next world. The lowest and largest figure on this marker has its hands arranged precisely in the manner of Nukutawhiti: the right hand is on its loins pointing downwards to the entrance to another world.

It seems, at least by analogy, that many carvings may have referred to the three states of existence and to the mythological figures who inhabited those 'worlds'. As the 'canoe-ancestor', Nukutawhiti was obviously a pivotal figure for Ngapuhi, even though the references to him, recorded in the nineteenth century, are extremely fragmentary. However, when a great chief died, it was the lament originally composed for Nukutawhiti by his daughter Moerewarewa that was sung. This was the Pihe, which was first recorded by Kendall and, as he tried to explain to the French explorer Dumont d'Urville in 1824, it contained the foundation of all Ngapuhi religious beliefs. The actual word 'Pihe' was, he said, composed of two particles, 'pi', which indicated 'adhésion, connex-
ion', and therefore source, and 'he' which 'au contraire exprime une disjonction, une scission violente. Ainsi le rapprochement de ces deux mots, pi he (Pihe) signifie séparation de ce qui est uni', or the time when the soul, wairua, and the body, 'ces deux substances intime unies durant la vie, se séparent avec effort au moment du trépas'. The Pihe, according to Kendall, refers to the manner in which the god, atua, destroys man (as Nukutawhiti was destroyed in the Hokianga river by the ocean god, now bearing the name Tu-nuiarangi), and the reunion of the 'créature' with the atua, that is with the ultra-human, by this action.

The Pihe was a lament known widely in the north and on the east coast, particularly around Tolaga Bay, where the Kupe stories are also part of the tribal accounts. In several Ngapuhi versions of their origin, Nukutawhiti sailed in Kupe's canoe, which had been re-adzed for the return voyage to New Zealand. Hone Mohi Tawhai recounted the tale of Kupe and Nukutawhiti in his explanation of the Pihe. Moreover, when Himiona Kamira wrote down his version of the migration of Nukutawhiti, he described how Nukutawhiti sang the karakia which implanted the 'living soul' (nga mauri ora) in the re-adzed and tapu canoe which was to bring the people. This was the kawa rite, which was said at the launching of war canoes. Nukutawhiti circled Kupe's canoe slowly give each part its 'final name'. The last 'spell' was cast as he stood behind the stern (tapuae, or footprint) of the canoe. These karakia were known as completing (whakaoti) the 'earthly aspect' and completing the 'heavenly aspect' of the canoe. When these karakia were complete, Nukutawhiti's rituals 'entered into and became one with those of Kahui-po (Assemblage of the underworld) to which men return in death. So, although the precise significance of this phrase is not clear, the recurring references to the passage from life into death, associated with Nukutawhiti, are clear enough. The kawa rite, conducted by Nukutawhiti, was to make safe the passage of the canoe from one world to another: from across the sea and, metaphorically, from life in this world to life in the next. There is yet another version of the tale of Kupe and the land which Nukutawhiti left, Wawau-atea (or the place freed from quarrelling), written down in 1855. Although Nukutawhiti is not mentioned by Hoani Timo, who was not considered an expert, he did include a fragment of the Pihe as sung by the 'mother' for the 'son'. It is, in fact, Moe-rewarewa's lament. Thus, in the scattered and incomplete legends of Nukutawhiti not only the rites of safe passage but also the dualism of


42 Dumont d'Urville, III, 688.
43 ‘Nukutawhiti’, pp.222, 225.
44 Himiona Kamira, 'The Story of Kupe', translated by Bruce Biggs, JPS, LXVI, 3 (September 1957), 224, 240.
45 The text is quoted in the Great New Zealand Myth, pp.31-32, 210-14.
death and life emerge as the constant elements. When we discover that both Kendall's drawing and the legends associated with Nukutawhiti refer to this dualism, then we can surmise that many carvings possessed similar significance.

In Kendall's sketch of Nukutawhiti, the figure has its hands positioned in such a manner as to suggest meaning—and indeed, in Maori carving, gesture is visibly significant, although the intent is now lost. Nukutawhiti has one hand, his left, on his breast, while the right covers his loins. I would suggest, although Kendall does not make the point, that the hands are positioned to refer to creation. In the letter which accompanied the drawing, Kendall wrote that the breast (u) was regarded as the seat or source of life. It 'corresponds', he said, with the first state, because it is the 'seat or field of union' of all matter. In the first state of existence, the 'State of Union', man was 'only breast. . . an u'. He was without distinction of gender, existing in the 'field or body of pure food, and pure seed', the composite mass of potential life.

In the drawing Nukutawhiti appears to be without the distinction of sex. This aspect may not simply be prudery on Kendall's part, because, as he said, the kuwaha carving was of a deity in the first state. However, Nukutawhiti's right hand could be enclosing his penis, rather than man. Some kuwaha figures do appear to be sexless, while others are clearly male and yet others are in the act of parturition. Some are a male and female copulating.

Between the legs of Nukutawhiti in the drawing appear the 'Spiritual Waters', or the primal waters which, Kendall said, were divided at creation. Before creation, when the waters were united, the universe was one 'undistinguished mass, all the seed from which in the beginning sprung creation'. United, the waters were called wai-u, or the waters of the breast: that is, waiu, milk, the waters of life. The implication of the carving may be that the spiritual waters also refer to the breaking of the waters that precedes birth.

Other elements in the drawing also related to creation. On either side of Nukutawhiti's son and upon his breast were placed the 'Appendages of Creation'. These appendages, or accompaniments, seem to be aspects of the lizard, ngarara, to which Kendall had carelessly given the name serpent, no doubt thinking of the biblical serpent, betrayer of man yet also the emblem of the promise of eternal life with God. On his breast, the son appears to hold a realistic (rather than stylized) carving of a ngarara. He appears about to eat it. Naturalistic carvings of the lizard held in this manner are found. (Figure VI) But Kendall also described a

46 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 27 July 1824.
47 ibid.
48 John iii, 14-15. And perhaps, as I have suggested before (Legacy of Guilt, p.148), in this equation of serpent and ngarara lie the origins of the nakahi (serpent) cult of the Bay of Islands and Hokianga.
particular piece of carving which he sent to England in June 1823 as bearing on its breast the 'principle of light or knowledge', that is, 'a serpent or reptile cut in pieces'. The lizard, bearer of death in this world, derives from the ultra-human world and is related, at least in northern stories, to the origins of man, and of his world. Augustus Earle was told a version of Maui fishing up the North Island in which the ngarara came up with the land and in his mouth, held by his long hair, was the first man. Earle added that almost all the carvings were 'illustrations of this idea in some way or other'. Another northern version of this legend, collected by Father Servant from the Hokianga between 1838 and 1842, specifically associated Nukutawhiti with the origin of the land. When Maui hooked his line it caught onto the gable of Nukutawhiti's house. With this story in mind, it seems significant that Kendall collected a carving in which the ngarara was dismembered 'and placed in the form of a fishing line, fishhook and bait' which according to the ideas of the New Zealanders are descriptive of the three essential or first principles from which man derives his origin; namely the breath of life, or fishing line, likeness or the fishhook, and the knowledge or the bait. This particular carved figure (now lost) was, he said, 'a Creator', an ancestor-god, 'completing a Human being'.

In the kuwaha drawing, the particles of the reptile are its stylized eye (which Kendall sketched as a semi-circular curve over the round eye), the tooth, and the twisting tail. In the accompanying letter, he wrote that the 'eye' of the serpent was emblematical of the 'First' word of 'wisdom', and the 'tail' emblematical of the 'Last' word of 'Life', or the two creative principles. It seems impossible to know whether he has simply been misled by the convolutes of the carving—and a manaia eye—or whether the dismembered particles, which are a common feature in Maori carvings, did represent the first state of existence, where the essential attributes of life 'were not settled in any distinct members of the body; but were equally diffused throughout every part of the field' of primal matter.

According to Kendall, the lizard, ngarara, was emblematic of the dual rib, nga rara, and of the creative force itself, to which he gave the name the 'Eternal Word', that is, the Logos. The lizard is held on the breast, u, the seat or source of life. Elsdon Best commented that there were a

49 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 3 June 1823.
50 Narrative of a Residence in New Zealand [1827-1828], ed. E.H. McCormick, London, 1966, p.191. Also, ibid., p.127: 'One of their favourite subjects [of carving] is a lizard taking hold of the top of a man's head; their tradition being, that that was the origin of man'. Earle illustrates this precisely in his water colour (and engraving) of 'A Tabood Store House', in which the lizard descends the central supporting pole to take hold of the head of the man. This illustration, which was reproduced in the original edition of the Narrative, is to be found in the Legacy of Guilt, facing p.113.
51 Customs and Habits, p.51.
52 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 3 June 1823.
53 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 27 July 1824.
number of carvings in which the lizard is shown ‘with its head in a person’s mouth’ and the ‘“tongue of the reptile”’ appeared ‘“attached to that of the man, as though the latter were receiving inspiration or some special endowment”’. Further, he drew, like Kendall, on Gnostic thought, when he observed that the lizard was believed to bring forth life ‘“through the mouth”’ and was ‘“the type of the generation of the Word—that is, the Logos or Divine Wisdom.”’. Best was clearly making the same equation as Kendall, but are either reliable? In this carving, Nukutawhiti’s son appears to be about to consume the lizard, for its head is in his mouth. Is he conquering death by devouring the man-eater? Or is it rather that the lizard is a dualistic figure and is imparting life to the man? It is possible that the lizard held in this manner is an image of conception.

In the first state of existence, all things existed within one ‘field or body of pure food, and pure seed’. It therefore followed that a deity in the first state lives on and from itself. Kendall wrote, ‘He is the pure food, of his own food’, a ‘self existing being’ which ‘only eats or more properly preserves his own dung’. Again, Kendall seems close to a central element in the Maori dualism. For food, kai, is the source of pollution of tapu. But it is the essence of life. Hence it follows that the gods cannot eat food, but must exist of themselves. In Maori mythology, the gods do not eat kai, cooked food, and in the story of Ihenga who penetrated the door of the afterworld, it is significant that he has to take his own food with him. He cannot eat the food of that world and return.

The essence of Kendall’s drawing is the particular relationship suggested by the presence of the ancestor-god placed over the doorway of the storehouse, described as the ‘Door of this World’. It connects with certain elements in the structure of the Maori cosmogony upon which other writers have commented. Anne Salmond has recently demonstrated the existence in the language of powerful ‘liminal metaphors’ all relating to the demarcation and crossing of boundaries or thresholds. Jean Smith has pointed to the significance of tapu lifting rituals to enable the safe negotiation or passage of these boundaries between the different states or conditions of life. Crossing the threshold, paepae, in the storehouse was emblematic of the passage from one state to another: from ‘death’ to life, or from life to death. The paepae mediates between the two states. Thus the vagina, the passage to life, which is also the

55 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 27 July 1824.
56 Te Kahui Kararehe, pp.59-63.
source of man's death in the Maui myth cycle, is called, as the vagina of Hine Nui Te Po, the goddess of death, the paepae o Tiki, the threshold of man. It therefore does not come as a surprise to discover that Ngatihau have a version of the myth, in which Maui fishes up the land, when his line hooks upon the gable of the house of Hine Nui Te Po. Maui brings up the earth and life (Nukutawhiti's house) and death (the house of great Hine of the darkness). The paepae or threshold beam in all Maori buildings possesses particular symbolic significance. The clearest example is the ritual known as 'biting the paepae', or the threshold beam at the latrine, upon which both Salmond and Smith have commented. Elsdon Best's Tuhoe informant, Tutakangahau Tapuihina, said the front of the beam was 'the side of life, the world of life' (te ao marama), but behind the paepae was the place of death, termed the kouka. 'The kouka is the realm of death itself. It represents Hine-nui-te-Po and anything passing to that side perishes.' The paepae is the 'destroyer of man, it is the saviour of man.' To bite the beam is to conquer the power by figuratively eating (kai), that is, destroying it. Hamiora Pio of Ngatiawa gives a karakia for the ngau paepae (biting the beam) which Salmond has translated, and it makes clear the ritual of passage to the 'world of life Seeking well-being'. It is therefore interesting to notice that in the myth of Kaitangata (Man-eater) who fell to his death into the pit of excrement behind the paepae, the agent of his betrayal was Rupe the pigeon-god who, in the Maui cycle, helped to fish up the land. He appears in both the Ngapuhi and Ngatihau versions already referred to and, in a Ngaitahu account of Kaitangata's death, it is specifically stated that he is Maui who, when he changed himself into a pigeon, was called Rupe. Perhaps the avian-figure who attacks the 'Dual Rib' of existence on the canoe stern is Rupe/Maui?

Another of the lost carvings collected by Kendall seems to have been a paepae beam from a storehouse. He described it as representing the 'seven first principles constituting man in his second state or this world.' The carving was of 'man', flanked on either side by a 'Beast of a peculiar form', dragging and pushing the man. The description would appear to be of the paepae of the porch of a storehouse, where the common image is of seven human figures. Six are flanked by a manaia, and the central figure by a manaia pair. The paepae from Te Oha appears in Figure III, while the side panel, which reiterates the image, is reproduced as Figure VII. Kendall's description seems to indicate that the carving represents time, and the states or conditions of life through which man passes. The

58 Smith, p.77.
60 Elsdon Best, Tuhoe, Wellington, 1925, reprinted 1977, I, 1140-1. Anne Salmond comments on this, and re-translates the Maori, op. cit., pp.25-7. See also Smith, pp.29, 74.
62 Ancient History, I, English text, p.85.
The right side panel of Te Oha, showing the seven human figures: an earlier version than the *paepae*, which is reproduced in Figure III. Here, each of the man-figures, except for the centre man, is paired, that is, the position of the hands is repeated on the figure opposite. The positioning of the hands is not the same on the *paepae* figures.
manaia figures, he wrote, represented the sun and moon, which dictate the passage of time. He added that the man is lame and the lame leg represents ‘time past’ and the sound leg ‘present time’. Man is ‘dead as to time past, and only lives in present time’.53

Other carvings he collected were almost certainly pare or door lintels, which also served as markers of entrances. A pare is reproduced in Figure VIII. Kendall described two carvings of a ‘Trinity’, in which the figures are holding up the heavens and supporting the light of day, while pressing with their feet upon the earth. The description certainly suggests the separation of Rangi and Papa by their pre-generated child, Tane (or in some versions, Tiki, Man). Kendall wrote, referring to one carving, that the Trinity was seen as 'opening the firmament of heaven', and referring to another carving of a 'Trinity', that the circular carved work between the figures represented the 'field of light'.64 The description of these triple images, the figures having three fingers on each hand, suggests the three-figured and three-fingered images which are found commonly on the pare. The solid base of the pare is known as papa, as is the earth. Pare served essentially to demarcate boundaries: they allowed passage, but painted red, they also warned of tapu. In many pare one of the figures possesses a vagina, or te ara mai o te tangata, the pathway of mankind,65 enabling the threshold to be crossed. If we can accept Kendall’s description, then the triple-imaged pare are again referential of the creation of life and of this world.

Some of the problems raised could perhaps be clarified if it were possible to trace any of the carvings which Kendall sent to England. But the Church Missionary Society has disposed of its collection. The provenance records of scattered carvings in other places, with the possible exception of one piece in the British Museum, which is reproduced as Figure IX, do not throw much light on the matter. The K.A. Webster collection, now in the National Museum, appears not to help. Kendall himself thought that he stumbled upon a cosmological vision which equalled his own Christian concepts in its grandeur. He tended to equate the creative force of life with a Supreme Creative Deity, but his emphasis

63 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 3 June 1823. The centre group of the Te Oha paepae was identified in the National Museum, probably by James McDonald, on Photocopy C 1163. The left hand manaia is called Rongo, the moon. The central man figure is called Tane, that is, man, or the god of man. The right hand figure is labelled Whiro, who appears as a god of death in several early northern accounts, and is sometimes identified with the ngarara. But the reliability of the labels on the photograph is most uncertain.
64 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 5 April 1823, Mss Vol. 71: 48 (quoted Legacy of Guilt, p.134); Kendall to CMS Secretary, 3 June 1823. Michael Jackson comments specifically upon this description of Kendall’s in his ‘Aspects of Symbolism and Composition in Maori Art’, Bijdragen, CXXVIII, 1 (1972), 47. Jackson considers that Kendall’s account of the symbolism in Maori carving ‘makes good sense’ (ibid., p.75) and I have attempted to reassess Kendall’s work partly in the light of Jackson’s views.
65 Smith, p.28.
A pare, or door lintel, with the door frame. The figures on the pare appear to be pushing open the heavens with their three-fingered hands, and pressing with their feet upon the base, papa, which here has a manaia (or lizard?) head and tail. In this example, the central figure (Tane?) is male. This pare is a Te Arawa carving from Rotorua, made in the early nineteenth century. It is held in the Auckland Institute and Museum.
This small wooden figure was obtained by the British Museum from Turvey Abbey, a Jacobean house in Bedfordshire, in 1904. That house belonged, from the late eighteenth century, to John Higgins, who was a patron of the CMS in the 1820s and whose family remained closely associated with the Society. The figure was acquired from his descendants. It has been suggested that it may be one sent by Kendall, because of the peculiar positioning of the hands. The gesture is recognized as the sign used by tohunga of the Koroiti church, an antecedent of Ringatu, according to Paul Delamere, the head of the Ringatu church. Kendall emphasized that the 'signs', 'Koro-Matua' and 'Koro-Iti', or thumb and little finger, were 'pointed out or described' upon certain carvings. He wrote, 'Koro Matua literally signifies the Parent Word, and Koro Iti, literally signifies the little word, or word of the Son.' He was attempting to convey the idea of the creative force of the universe, or the Logos. It may be that already we are witnessing the emergence of the syncretic cult.

Kendall sent one figure, whose hands and feet 'agreed' with the Nukutawhiti drawing, but it was lost in the wreck of the ship, the Mariner, in 1823. However, the implication of the sketch is that it would have possessed only two fingers on the hands.

The British Museum figure has a hollowed-out body, and a door or panel once covered it, suggesting that it was a repository for a tapu object. British Museum.
was always on the concept of the three states of existence. He himself wrote that the Supreme Being was a manifestation of the \( u \), and that he existed in the timeless first state, as part of the potential fertile seed. In the first state, the Supreme Being, and man, and all things were 'in their state as First and Last',\(^{66}\) the timeless union of all life. From timelessness to time; from time to beyond time: these were the three great states of existence. Each doorway had its guardians and its markers; each passage was thwart with dangers. The storehouse carvings stood as the reminder and the warning.

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\(^{66}\) Kendall to CMS Secretary, 27 July 1824. Emphasis mine.