

## MAORI JADE CARVING

The HAA collection of Maori jade carvings include a large hand club, various ear ornaments, leg rings for captive parrots and small ancestral pendants called hei-tiki. (Hei means pendant, tiki, a human figure.) Hei-tiki exist in large numbers and in a variety of sizes, averaging in height 3 or 4 inches. These were traditionally worn by both sexes and were ancestral mementos which were passed from generation to generation. They acquired personal names and prestige (mana) from the fact that they were worn on the body of nobles. The hei tiki were also said to represent the moon goddess, associated with fertility. (The form coincidentally resembles an embryo.)

The forms which these pendants, as well as other objects, assume is dictated by the material itself. The intractable nature of nephrite which is harder than steel, yet brittle enough to fracture when dropped on a hard surface, resulted in very compact forms. For instance, the characteristic tilting of the head toward the right shoulder was due to the great difficulty in removing waste material to form the neck of an erect head. Thus, the rarest of all hei tiki are those with an upright head.

Jade sources were located on the South Island. Northern tribes traded garments or other products for it and occasionally foraging war parties went south to get it for themselves. Villages on the eastern coasts of the South Island became famous craft centers of jade-working.

\* The material is known to the Maori as pounamu or "greenstone." There are however, a variety of colors, each of which has its own descriptive name. The most common was the kahurangi, which is a light to medium green with mottled spots; kawakawa is a dark, even green and inanga refers to the whitish opaque variety. Like the Chinese, the Maori regarded jade as a super-precious substance possessing magical powers.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS: -Discuss what an heirloom is.  
-Speculate on how the pendants were worn.

New Zealand  
Greenstone



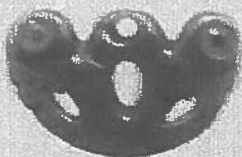
1



2



3



4



5

