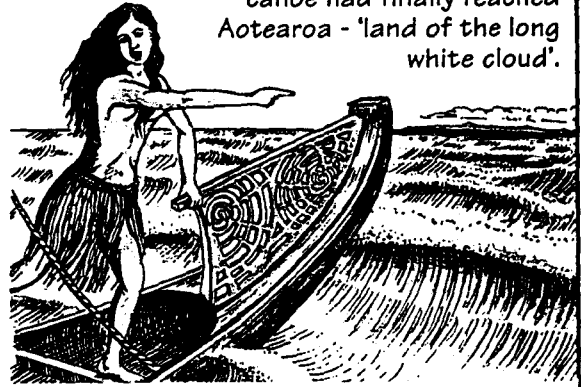


The Legend of Kupe

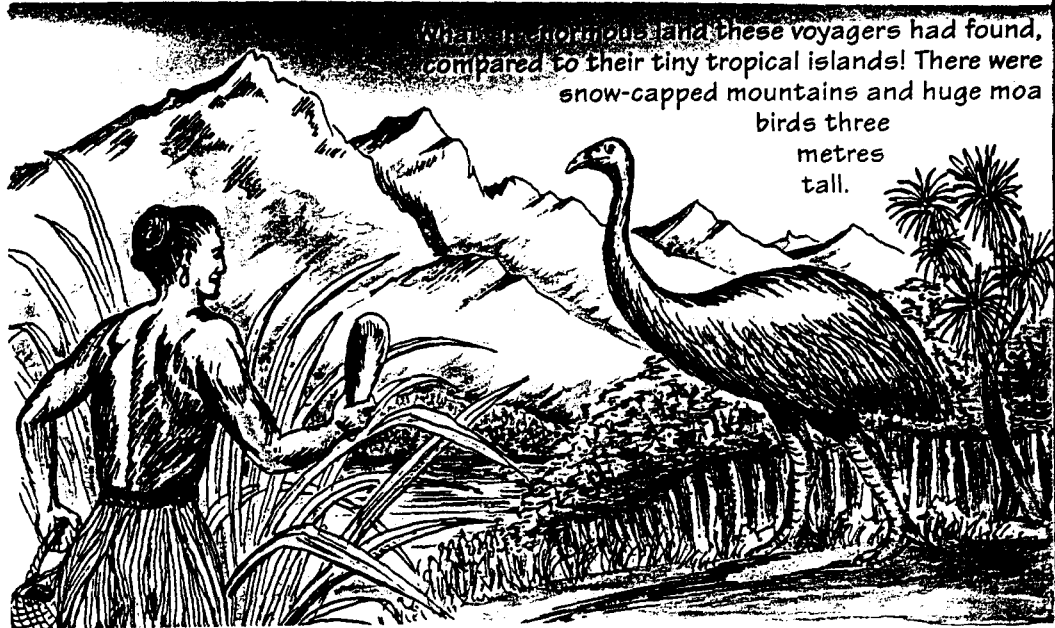
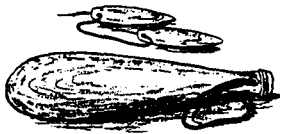


About a thousand years ago, Kupe and his family sailed from Hawaiki in a great canoe, perhaps hunting a giant octopus, or searching for the land fished up by Maui.

After a long time at sea, Kupe's wife saw clouds on the horizon lifting to reveal land. Their canoe had finally reached Aotearoa - 'land of the long white cloud'.



The travellers came ashore in the far north of New Zealand, then sailed down the east coast to where Wellington stands today. After passing through Cook Strait, they arrived in the South Island and discovered beautiful, precious greenstone.



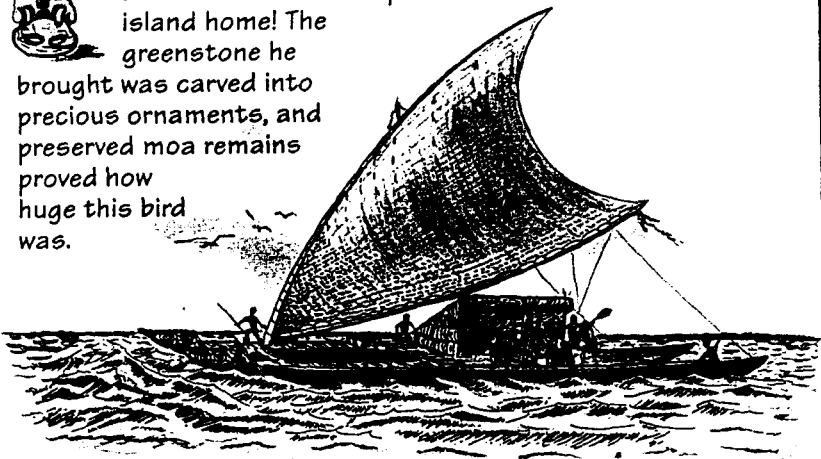
What a enormous land these voyagers had found, compared to their tiny tropical islands! There were snow-capped mountains and huge moa birds three metres tall.



Had other people arrived in New Zealand before Kupe? Some legends say he sighted only birds in the thick forests. In other stories, he saw people digging up fern roots for food. After many adventures Kupe sailed north again, following the west coast to Hokianga. Finally he returned home across the sea to Hawaiki.



What a story Kupe must have told when at last he arrived back in his tropical island home! The greenstone he brought was carved into precious ornaments, and preserved moa remains proved how huge this bird was.



Over the years, people from Hawaiki followed the legendary Kupe's trail across the sea to New Zealand.