

sea shore, or on the shore of a lake or river, where they often work awful havoc amongst people, either secretly or through the "Tohunga Makutu," or wizard.

The "taniwha," it must be remembered, is said to be a monster of the subjective world and not of the objective world and although the legend may at first sight appear a myth or fable, it may have a deep esoteric meaning behind it, and perhaps conceal some occult facts of vast importance to the true mystic. My own investigations in this domain have led me to discover that the Maori priest adept still exists, and that in their secret schools the initiate still retain a large amount of the ancient wisdom which has filtered down through most systems of religion and philosophy from, perhaps, a common source.

The myth, as related to me by a very old Ngatiruanui chief, runs thus: Aokehu* was my ancestor whom the taniwha, or sea-god, Tutae-Poroporo** (the tutelary taniwha of the Whanganui River) swallowed. Aokehu was a tohunga matauranga (an initiate). The monster took him right down into his capacious maw—and there he was. It so happened that Aokehu had with him his enchanted staff called "Tai-timuroa" (i.e., the long ebb-tide, or the tide long at ebbing). Being swallowed up he had time to reflect, and he began to ponder over the situation; presently he felt the staff move, and Aokehu remembered that he was not alone, without means of escape and at the mercy of the taniwha. Taitimuroa had already on more than one occasion proved an efficient power and talisman amidst most serious dangers.

Aokehu grasped the life-saving

*The son of "Hinewaitai," a sea goddess, and of "Kewa" (literally to emit, or he who came forth or manifested).

** "Tutae-Poroporo," not translated in literal sense of "Tutae," but as astral refuse. Poroporo in little round balls, here meant to indicate astral refuse, or what the Buddhist terms the accumulation of evil Karma.

staff, and as he did so he felt the monster shudder convulsively, for well the taniwha divined that he had drawn an all-powerful tohunga into his stomach. Aokehu softly began to breathe his sacred incantations over the magic staff, in order to prepare it for the deed of daring which would be at once the destruction of the sea-god and the liberation of himself. The monster, impressed with the manifesting influence of the tohunga's incantations, writhed and shivered, and furiously lashed his tail from shore to shore of the river, throwing up large bodies of mud and water, which deluged the land where the town of Whanganui now stands.

"Rage great fish
And lash your sides,
The cravings of your hunger
Methinks should now be fully appeased
For have you not the potent Aokehu
(in your capacious stomach).

When Aokehu had finished his incantations he made ready for the mighty combat before him. With a powerful lunge he drove the enchanted staff through the monster's stomach, thence hissing through its heavy side until finally it issued right through, and he drew the subtle weapon back to him. The monster increased his struggles, as he felt his life-blood oozing out from the rift in his side which the tohunga had made. Meantime Aokehu worked on to widen the gash, until it was large enough for him to escape; he rushed out through the opening thus made; thereupon the tohunga, having regained life and liberty, the monster became convulsed with the death throes and at once expired. Thus perished the dangerous taniwha, who up to that time had lived in the Whanganui River, close to where the present traffic bridge now stands, and who had attacked incoming and outgoing canoes with impunity, often devouring the occupants wholesale.

Since the feat of Aokehu my people cross the river in safety.

Aokehu is the type of a soul come forth from the eternal source