



hei matau — Te Ati Awa



Karetao — Rongowhakaata



Uenuku, a sacred carving of the Tainui people, is to go on show in the U.S.

The tall, striking carving will leave its home at the Te Awamutu Museum, where it stands awesome and proud under artificial lights, to go on display at New York's Metropolitan Museum in September next year.

Te Awamutu director Jim Mandeno said the 2.5m carving was kept in the custody of the Te Awamutu Historical Society.

The society had given permission for the carving to be taken overseas after first speaking with Maori Queen Dame Te Atairangikaahu and several elders.

He said Uenuku was found by a Te Awamutu farmer Mr R.W. Bourne at the bottom of Lake Ngaroto in 1906.

It was said to have been brought to New Zealand from Hawaiki in the Tainui canoe and was used as the repository for a stone believed to have held the spirit of Maori god Uenuku.

Mr Mandeno described Uenuku as the rainbow god, god of war, and provider, and said the four spikes at the top of it marked the four major colours of the rainbow.

The only time Uenuku had left the Waikato since its discovery was when it was lent to the Wanganiui museum. It was returned to Te Awamutu in 1958, he said.

Now it will leave for two years to take part in the exhibition, which was being put on by the Maori Affairs Department, the American Federation of Arts, and the Mobil Corporation.

It will also be exhibited at St Louis and San Francisco.

**Te Awamutu Museum director Jim Mandeno with Uenuku. Photo Jenny Scown.**