

TE ARA POUNAMU
(The Pathway to the Greenstone)

The green stone Pounamu was discovered by Ngahue, the companion of the famous Maori navigator Kupe who discovered Aotearoa and later returned to Hawaiki, the mythological land of their origin. The stone was found in the Arahura river on the west coast of New Zealand's southern island. Ngahue took a small piece of the stone back to his homeland where he used it to form two axes, Tutauru and Hauhau-to-rangi. From the stone that remained he made the ornamental ear pendant called Kaukaumatua, which in 1846 had been in the possession of the Arawa chief, Te Heuheu. Both, the ear pendant and its owner disappeared during a landslide.

Since primeval times Maori from the entire land have come to this special place on the west coast to search for the Pounamu stone. This they use to manufacture their tools, weapons and jewellery. On their journey to this coast they had to cross the Southern Alps.

The soil for this part of the project was taken from all four overpasses of these mountains, namely: Haast Pass (562 m), Harper Pass (963 m), Arthur's-Pass (920 m) and Lewis Pass (887 m).