

Detail of  
stone carving  
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### TANGI'IA & KARIKA

The story of Tangi'ia and Karika is Rarotonga's most famous legend. Tangi'ia was a Tahitian who quarrelled with his brother, Tutapu, an *ariki* (chief) of Tahiti. Tangi'ia took his people and fled in a large voyaging canoe across the ocean, visiting many nearby eastern Polynesian islands. At sea, Tangi'ia met another voyaging canoe, this one under the command of Karika, a Samoan. The two crews fought at first, but when a man was killed they were shocked, stopping the fight at once and declaring peace.

Still at sea, Tangi'ia asked Karika for directions to the renowned island of Tumu Te Varovaro (the ancient name for Rarotonga). However, Karika had plans for that island himself, so gave Tangi'ia inaccurate instructions, sending him deep into the south. When Tangi'ia found cold seas and no land, he realised he had been cheated and turned back, finding Karika already settled on the island that Tangi'ia (according to this particular legend) named to commemorate having erroneously sailed so far down (*raro*) to the south (*tonga*).

Putting their differences behind them, the two chiefs joined forces to defeat the incumbent population of Rarotonga, and then allied again to fight Tutapu, who had pursued his brother at the head of a Tahitian war fleet. After defeating Tutapu, the two chiefs then divided Rarotonga between them by sailing off in opposite directions around the island and meeting again on the other side to establish their two tribes' boundaries. Today, Rarotonga's Pa and Tinomana *ariki* titles descend from Tangi'ia's people, while the Makea *ariki* descend from Karika.