

**NGA TAONGA TAPU MAORI
O TE AO KOHATU**

Prized Treasures from the Traditional World of the Maori

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Tihei mauri ora!
Uea-wairea kahura ra ka takata a tai
ki roto o Takaroa, ki te maona o Ihutai Maroro.
Ka tu tonu ahau, ki Pito one.
Ka titiro atu au ki te Tihi Kahuraki
o Aoraki Mauka
Ariki e tatai mai ra me tona korowai hukahuka
nui, e mariki mai ra,
ona roimata Waiora; ki roto ki ka mania o
Te Pakihi Whakatekateka o Waitaha.
Ka taki tu te uri o Tahu Potiki, ki te waka tipuna
a Maui-tikitiki-a-Taraka.
Eke Panuku, eke Takaroa, eke tarewa tu ki te
Raki, ki te whaiiao, ki te Ao Marama.
Whano, Whano, haere mai te toki!
Haumi e, Hui e, Taike e!

I sneeze, it is the breath of life!
Let the veil of mist be lifted, that we may perceive the people
of the gathering tides,
upon the courtyard of Takaroa, within the waters of Ihutai
Maroro.
Here am I, steadfast on this estuary, gazing skyward at the
topknot treasured plume of Kahuraki, then upon the face of the
Paramount Chief, Aoraki.
With his glorious, snow-cald cloak of pure white, glistening with
melting teardrops of gladness, sadness and sorrow, falling upon
the plains, the everlasting plains of Waitaha.
And so, the threads of genealogical descent are sown by the
descendant of the ancestor Tahu Potiki/Kai Tahu Whanui.
Let Panuku rise, let Takaroa rise, let us be raised up to the
uppermost heaven.
Go! Go! Bring me the adze! Bind it! Join it! It is finished.

Concerning a Cultural Image of Reality

Ka mau tonu nga taonga tapu
o nga matua Tipuna, Kaimei nga
Taonga i tuku iho, na te atua

Hold fast to the treasures of the ancestors,
for they are the treasures that have been handed
down to us by God.

Concerning Realities

Considering Maori realities is the act of preserving Maori values and beliefs. Values are the practice of belief. For example, if you believe that the earth is your mother, then you will treat the earth accordingly. Central to this belief is the notion that land is the placenta/afterbirth of Mother Earth and that people are born out of her placenta.

Ko te whenua te wai-u mo nga uri whaktipu

This expression symbolises the notion that Mother Earth, through her placenta, provides nourishment and sustenance (Wai-u/Mother's milk) to her living descendants. Embedded in Maori Cosmological thought is the belief that the Universe, the natural experienced world, and human life is intrinsically linked to the whole of creation and its spiritual powers and that, in a sense, we are only part of a divine life cycle.

Culture

Culture is defined as the total inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge that constitute the shared basis of social action (Collins English Dictionary, Second Edition 1986). By their very nature all cultures evolve through time in response to environmental conditions. However, with any culture, there exists a core of basic convictions as a world view.

Images of Reality

Mythology, in a sense, is the medium for reflective symmetry for all cultural realities to be expressed, accorded, and preserved. Myths mirror images of realities for cultures as to the origins, discoveries, adventures and destinies of all life.

Myth, like art, is one of the means by which a culture's image of reality, its world view, is represented to members of that culture. They give account of a super-ordinary range of events,

before or behind the experienced natural world. The myth, in a sense, is sacred because the world is "cosmosized" by men and women ritually reactualising the paradigmatic act of creation.

Through myth men and women participate in the culture in an active way, in the timeless mystery of birth, life and death and they know the universe as an alternation of light and darkness. Myth then is not a tale or a fantasy (it belongs to the world of the culture as it sets out to repeat by actualising a primordial event for the benefit of those who taking part - the community).

Te Kaitiakitanga o te Ao Maori (Conserving the Maori World)

In order to conserve the values, beliefs, attitudes and motivations that existed in traditional Maori society, one must return to the cultural blitz of colonisation in order to recover the prized treasures of our origins, kinship ties, place and purpose in life. It necessitates the rebuilding, the reconstruction of the old world so that it may be fulfilled and renewed for the benefit of the contemporary world.

Maoridom is joining in the renaissance of international indigenous peoples' rights movements i.e. Maori land, seas, waterways, lakes and resource rights. The Maori of Aotearoa/New Zealand are in the process of restoring:

- the Jewel of Maori Identity,
- the Plume of Maori Dignity,
- the Soul of Maori Prestige.

The source of Maori consciousness and endeavour is (Nga Tikanga) Maori and Nga Taonga Maori.

Nga Tikanga Maori

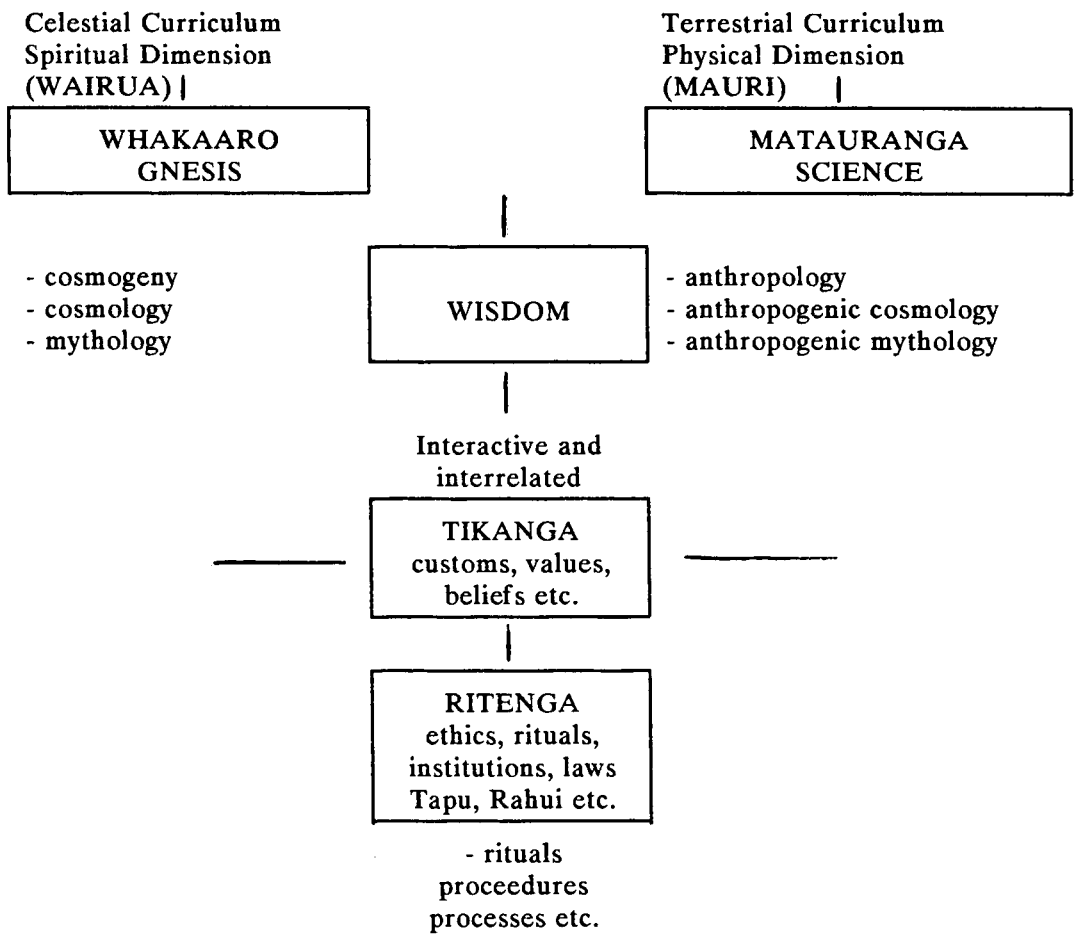
Tikanga comprises of the values, beliefs, ethics, norms, customs, knowledge and rituals etc. that emanate from Maori Cosmology, Cosmogony, mythology and anthropological thoughts and actions. This is represented in Diagram 1, by the notions of Whakaaro (gnosis) and Maturanga (scientia), which when brought together represent wisdom.

Tikanga Maori, in a sense, is the matrix of wisdom and knowledge. It is the womb that gives birth and renewal to the spiritual and physical values of interest in our beliefs, motivations and sense of purposes for the beneficial preservation of all lifeforms within this world.

Nga Tikanga Maori therefore is the combination of Whakamo and Maturanga based values and reflect the need to care for and to protect the Maui of all our inherited treasures that emanate from the universe, the natural and spiritual resources and people.

In summary, Nga Tikanga Maori could be explained as being the lifestyle of the Maori, their own ways, rules and conditions of proper conduct.

Diagram 1: Nga Tikanga Maori - the matrix of wisdom and knowledge



Nga Tikanga Maori values are actively expressed through human behaviour and/or rituals. The above diagram also represents the indivisibility of God, nature and humans.

Nga Taonga Maori

Taonga encompasses all things tangible or intangible and derive their meaning at both the physical and spiritual levels. Taonga comprises all treasures inherited from the past, to the present, and for the future generation. A diagrammatic representations of the notion of Taonga is presented in Diagram 2 and reflects the context in which Taonga derive their meaning.

Te Kore Kore is depicted in the diagram and located near the epicentre denoting its central importance as being the source of all creation. Te Kore Kore is the matrix, the primordial womb of the spiritual and physical life principles.

Mauri is represented as being the ethos of the Creator, the Supreme being and is embedded in the realm of Te Kore Kore. Mauri is described as being the physical life principle, elemental energy or the universal soul which permeates the whole of the total created reality. The spiritual (Wairua) is manifest in a tangible and physical form, therefore the physical state is imbued with this spiritual essence enabling life to be given to all the life forms in this world.

The second state of reality is Te Po, literally meaning "the night" or the realm of darkness. Within this physical state of reality existed Rangi-Nui and Papatuanuku. From these two (the primal parents) derived the male and female principles which gave birth, shape and form to all the Universal physical life forms of the Maori world.

Tangaroa is represented as one of the many offspring of the primal parents and is located in the realm of Te Po symbolising the fact that all the offspring of Rangi and Papa lived in darkness between the embrace of their parents. Repressed in this way Tane separated his parents by burying his head in his earthmother's bosom and by thrusting his feet against his father sky. By this act of separation light and space began to fill the darkness. As Te Po inclines towards the light of day we enter the third state of reality, that being Te Ao Marama, the broad daylight.

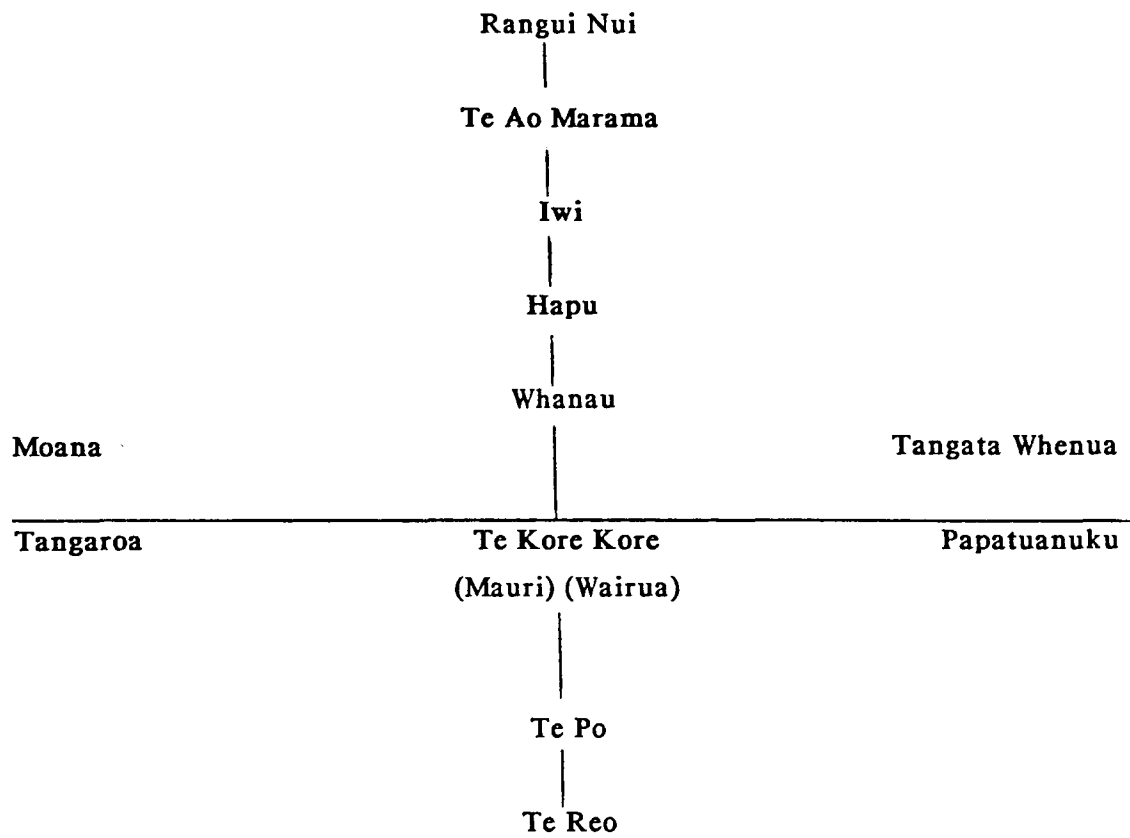
Te Ao Marama bears witness to the creation of all natural life forms including humans. They are the natural elements or resources of Sky, Earth, Sea (Moana) and People (Tangata). Tangata Whenua denotes that people are born out of the placenta of mother earth, depicting origins and destiny.

Whanua, Hapu and Iwi in its modern syntax denote the stratified social units within Maoridom, but these origins are derived from the anthropogenic realities of birthing (Whanau), pregnancy (Hapu) and Skeletal frame (Iwi), culminating in Te Reo (the language of the people or the voices of the elements. Therefore, through Te Reo, one is able to give structure, form, place and purpose to Te Ao Maori as one unified and coherent whole).

The horizontal dimension, in Figure 2, is reflective of the physical resources stemming from the sea i.e. Moana under the influence of the Ata Tangaroa through to the Tangata Whenua under the influence of Papatuanuku. Within this framework the notion of Mauri is representative of a continuum involving Mana, Wehi (fear), Ihi (awe), Tapu (sacred) and Wairua (the spiritual).

As all these components were created they are considered to be Nga-Taonga-O-Te-Maori by Maoridom.

Diagram 2: A diagrammatic representation of Nga-Taonga-O-Te-Ao-Maori



Some Aspects of Traditional Maori Relationships Between God, People, and the Environment

Unity in Diversity

In presenting a Maori world view, there is an acknowledged plurality of traditions and interpretations. Within these traditions the unity and continuity of attitude and action are recognised for each subsisting unit, whether whanau (family), hapu (subtribe), or iwi (tribe). Thus, despite a diversity of views, there is, for the purposes of this paper, a unity which is outlined in this Section.

Te Putake O Nga Mea Ra Katoa (The source of all things)

"Io whatata Io whatama
Ko Hekeheke i nuku - ko hekeheke i papa"

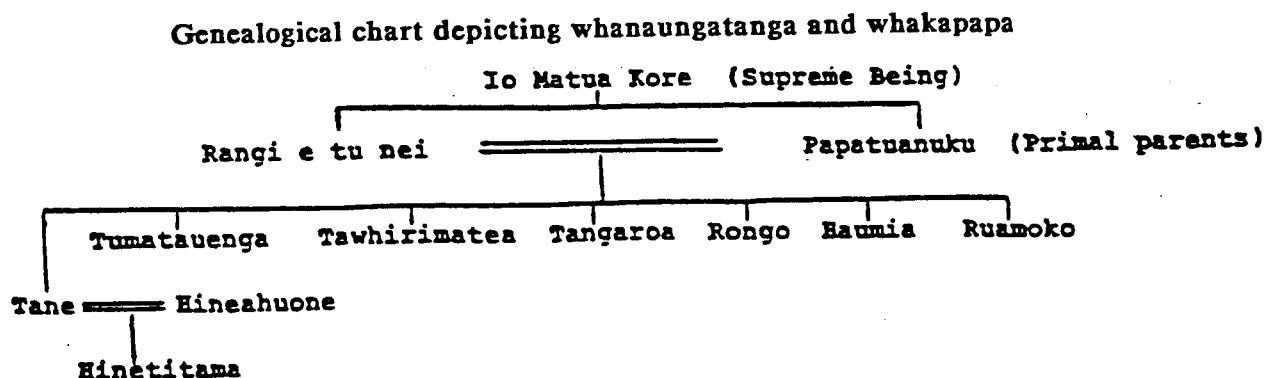
The source of all life was the realm of Te Korekore, the spiritual essence, and ethos of Io-Matua-Kore, (The Creator, The Supreme Being). Te Korekore is the matrix, the primordial womb of the spiritual and physical life principles.

Ranginui Raua Ko Papatuanuku (Father Sky and Mother Earth)

The male and female principles of all our created reality. They are the primal parents of the universe and of the natural experienced world, including human beings.

Whanaungatanga and Whakapapa (Relationships and Genealogy)

The central concept underlying the Maori relationships with the natural environment is whanaungatanga - being related to the natural world. Maori ancestry is genealogically traced back to the primal parents Ranginui, Sky Father, and Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother. From within the total created reality developed relationships as all offspring were from the one source.



All the many offspring of Rangi and Papatuanuku were archetypes of all human endeavours in the natural experienced world and off all elements of the natural world itself. They were unified and coherent in a continuous process of co-existing life cycles.

Tane became the Atua (God) of the forests and responsible for all life within them. It was also from Tane that the first human beings originated. Tane formed the first woman - Hineahuone. In order for his creation to have life, Tane had to receive the spiritual essence of life - the mauri ora from Io. This essence was breathed into the nostrils of Hineahuone. Hence the oft used expression in Maori speeches - "Tihei mauri ora" I sneeze - it is the breath of life. Tane and Hineahuone slept together and out of this union sprang forth all offspring.

The separation of Ranginui and Papatuanuku also liberated Tane's brothers who became ancestors for other parts of the world. Tane's brother Tangaroa for example, became the ancestor of the ocean and all life within it.

The events of the Creation are followed by later ancestors who give further meaning to the world. Maui, for example, was responsible for slowing down the Sun so that Day became the length we know it today. Oral traditions also tell of the arrival of the first Maori canoes in Aotearoa, and other acts performed by ancestors. Some acts were so significant that they became distinct features in the landscape. These landmarks, therefore, were visual confirmation of links with previous ancestors.

Mauri

The total created reality possessed mauri (the physical life principle). In humans it was of a higher order called mauri-ora which carries with it conditions responsibility, giving humans place and purpose within the total created world. Through mauri, all things cohered in Nature. As all things are descended from common ancestors, so all elements of the natural world possessed life, a universal living spirit. Preservation of the mauri was all important. Because in everyday life use was made of the environment, there was constant risk of limiting or affecting the mauri. To guard against this a set of rules governing conduct and behaviour consistent with their spiritual tribal (ancestral) beliefs had to be followed.

Mana

Mana is spiritual power and authority delegated by the Atua to chosen representatives to perform their revealed will in the natural, physical world. It is a term which incorporates the English equivalents of power, prestige, authority, influence and control. It also carries with it the notion of conventional relationships with the Atua and their chosen human delegates.

Kaitiaki

Responsible for protecting the source of the mauri were kaitiaki, the chosen representatives of the Atua. Kaitiaki took many different forms e.g. fantails, eels, certain plants, etc, depending upon the part of the nature they were responsible for. People were also kaitiaki. Tohunga (Maori priests) were the kaitiaki for the mauri of human beings.

Tapu

The preservation of mauri was associated with practices of tapu. Tapu is the notion of being in the presence of one's Atua which means that that person or object was set aside for restricted use by the Atua. A thing or a person were made tapu by dedicatory and consecratory ritual. There are different forms of tapu - the temporary state, the permanent state, and the seasonal state. An example of seasonal tapu was the practice of not leaving the feathers of snared birds in the forest because other birds would sense danger and leave the area. Similarly, the cleaning of fish in the seas constituted not only physical pollution but spiritual pollution. A tohunga was in a permanent state of tapu i.e. from the day of birth until death.

Specific forms of the temporary state of tapu were known as rahui. Imposed by someone possessing mana, rahui consisted of establishing the mauri, a sign or mark (talisman) which restricted access to an area or resource.

Noa is the complementary state of tapu. It is the state of being free from tapu and therefore available for profane use.

Wehi-Ihi

Wehi and ihi provided the incentive to abide strictly to the state of tapu and the accompanying rituals used by those with mana to install tapu. Ihi is the awesome power generated by those who have mana and are tapu. Wehi is the notion of fear or reverence generated by anxiety or apprehension in case one gives offence to the gods via those who are the assigned agents of God.

Economic Institutions and the Management of Resources

Belief in the mauri of the natural world and their protection exerted a real influence over economic affairs. It fostered an atmosphere of respect and fear obviating deliberate destruction of essential resources. Through the concepts of mauri, tapu, mana, wehi, ihi and noa, the conduct of people was regulated toward their natural environment.

The concepts/institutions initiated by tohunga or rangatira (chiefs) were the means by which Maori society functioned and regenerated. Derived from both whakapapa and deed, their individual mana was bestowed on them by the Atua and reinforced by the people.

Essential, therefore, to the functioning of the whole system (social, physical and spiritual) was the drive to maintain and increase mana. Three components outline the mana of Maori people - Mana kai, Mana whenua and Mana Tangata.

Mana kai - The provision of food and materials necessary for the sustenance and survival of the family and tribe. It also meant the production of surplus. Surplus food meant the ability to increase personal and tribal mana by providing hospitality for visitors in the form of feasts, or alternatively could be used for trade.

Mana whenua - The concept of mana whenua is central to the Maori world view of the environment. Land is the foundation source from which all knowledge, whakapapa, history, food and resources are derived. Land was also a reminder to the people of their kinship links with Papatuanuku - Earth Mother.

Mana tangata - The mana of the Maori people is seen to be dependent upon mana kai and mana whenua. Mana tangata is the notion of one's genealogical origins and link to the primal parents. Mana tangata derives its meaning and purpose because of place - mana whenua - and because of resources - mana kai. Without both of the above mana tangata cannot exist.

"Ko te toto o te tangata, he kai.
Ko te oranga o te tangata, he whenua."

The life line of people is food.
the wellbeing of people is land.

Differences exist between the Maori and European frameworks. Within the European framework the imposition of policies is top down, with the political process used to represent society and provide a feedback mechanism. Policies can therefore be imposed even if they are not unanimously agreed to.

Within Maoridom, societal structure is based upon the Whanau which combine into Hapu which in turn for Iwi and Waka. Policy (Tikanga) formulation rests with those associated with the resource which is generally at the Whanau and Hapu levels. They are the caretakers, users and repositories of knowledge pertaining to those resources within their Rohe (boundaries). As a result they formulate the institutions (Ritenga) that determine the choice set available to the operational levels. The overseer of the process being both the prescribed spiritual protocols, the peer pressure, and the spiritual practitioners (Tohunga). The consultative nature of policy (Tikanga) formulation within the setting of the Marae results in no policy adoption without unanimous consent.

Tikanga

Tikanga comprises of the values, norms etc. of Maoridom. This was represented by both the notions of Whakaaro and Maturanga, which when brought together represent wisdom. Whakaaro being the notion of knowledge and to know, whilst Maturanga relates on knowledge obtained from the celestial curriculum and is applied within the terrestrial state. This indicates that whakaaro and Maturanga are interactive and iterrelated.

Tikanga, in a traditional context comprised of "the three kits of knowledge" representing all the knowledge and the values, norms, rituals and protocols.

The three kits were:

Te Kete Tuari i.e. the kit that contains the scientific knowledge or that knowledge pertaining to human activities, natural phenomenon relating the kingdom of nature i.e. Maturanga; Te Kete Aronui i.e. the kit that consist of celestial and cosmogenic information designed to benefit human kind (i.e. the anthropogenic mythologies), or Whakaaro; Te Kete Tuatea i.e. the kit that comprises all rituals, acts and formulae with all things on earth and the cosmos i.e. Ritenga and Kawa.

The Maturanga based values are reflected within the need to protect resources and their Mauri through the use of institutions such as Rahui and tapu.

Together the notions of Whakaaro and Maturanga combine to form the notion of Tikanga, which could be explained as being "nga tikanga maori - their own ways, rules, conditions of proper conduct, or lifestyle."