

TĀTAI WHAKAPAPA

Ko Rangi, ko Papa
ka puta ko Rongo
ko Tānemāhuta
tū ki te rangi e tū iho nei.

Whai muri iho
ko Tangaroa,
ko Tūmātauenga
Haumiatiketike
Tāwhirimātea
I rere ki te rangi, e hai

Tokona rā ko te rangi ki runga
ko Papa ki raro
ka wehewehea
ka puta te whai ao
te ao māramarama

Ka takatū ko te ira tangata
i ngā arearctanga o Papa
Horapa kau ana ki te matawhenua
ki te tuawhenua
ki ngā motumotuhanga, e hai

Koia rā tēnei e Rongo
Whakairia ake ki runga
Hohou ko te rongo
Ki runga, ki raro
Ki te hunga tāngata
Ki ngā tamariki mokopuna
Hui ē! Hui ē! Tāiki ē!

(Nā Huirangi Waikerepuru, 1991)

*Supreme parents
Ranginui and Papatūānuku,
Bound in embrace.
From that union come
Rongomātāne and
Tānemāhuta,*

*Positioning himself heavenwards.
Tangaroa, Tūmātauenga and Haumiatiketike
follow,
And then Tāwhirimātea
Who fled to the sky father, e hai.*

*Ranginui hoisted skywards,
Papatūānuku below,
Separated so the physical world,
the world of light can emerge.*

*Humankind is nurtured
In the crevices of the mother's body
Spreading out to cover the face of the earth
The landmass and the outer islands, e hai.*

*This is how it is, Rongo
Uphold and secure this order
Secure peace and tranquility
Above and below
To all people and all descendents.
Affirm it and secure it.
So be it!*

This karakia (incantation) is the philosophical backdrop for Te Kōpae Piripono and its research. The Tātai Whakapapa articulates the genealogical structure of the Māori world and affirms our location on the continuum from cosmogonic beginning to preordained end. Within our tātai whakapapa, both the animate and the inanimate belong and are interdependent.

Recited at the beginning of an occasion or event, the Tātai Whakapapa is an affirmation of the central elements of Te Ao Māori and Māori beliefs about who we are and what is important to us. The recitation of the karakia recalls the beginning of our collective story, a narrative that serves as template for how we should approach life, maintaining the natural order in accord with our ancestors (atua), balancing opposing forces to achieve stability and well-being.