

# *he taonga maori*

BACKGROUND NOTES



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE:

The education resources provided by Auckland War Memorial Museum focus on specific galleries or on specific exhibitions in those galleries. There are a small number of resources that were developed for exhibitions that are no longer present but which have been maintained on the website by popular demand.

Visiting education groups may book to request the following learning opportunities:

- Self-conducted visits based on supporting resource materials.
- Gallery Introduction with a Museum Educator or trained guide (approx 15 minutes), using resource materials. Longer gallery tours and Highlights Tours are also available.
- Hands-on activity session for school groups with a Museum Educator (approx 45–50 mins), using resource materials. Students have the opportunity to handle real or replica items from museum collections,

Sessions will be tailored to suit the level and focus of the visiting group.

## ABOUT THIS EDUCATION RESOURCE:

This kit has been designed to meet the needs of a wide range of education groups.

The kit is in three separate sections and includes:

1. Teacher Background Material suitable for all levels
2. Curriculum Links from Pre-school to Adult [these are still under development]
3. Pre and Post Visit Activities and Gallery Activity Sheets

*Some education services at Auckland Museum are provided under a contract to the Ministry of Education under the LEOTC programme and Ministry support is gratefully acknowledged.*

## BOOKING INFORMATION

All education group visits must be booked.

**Phone: 306 7040 Fax: 306 7075**

**Email: [schools@aucklandmuseum.com](mailto:schools@aucklandmuseum.com)**

Service charges apply to education groups depending on the level of service required.

### Numbers and Adult/Child ratios:

Pre-school	1:3 or better
Y 1–6	1:6
Y 7–8	1:10
Y 9–13	1:30

All groups including Adult groups ought to be accompanied by their teacher or educator.

Adult/child interaction is vital to maximize the value of the museum experience. Group leaders need to have some background knowledge of what the students are expected to cover and they do need to participate in the introduction process on arrival. Knowing about the expectations of the class teacher and the museum will make the visit smoother for everyone.

**[www.aucklandmuseum.com](http://www.aucklandmuseum.com)**

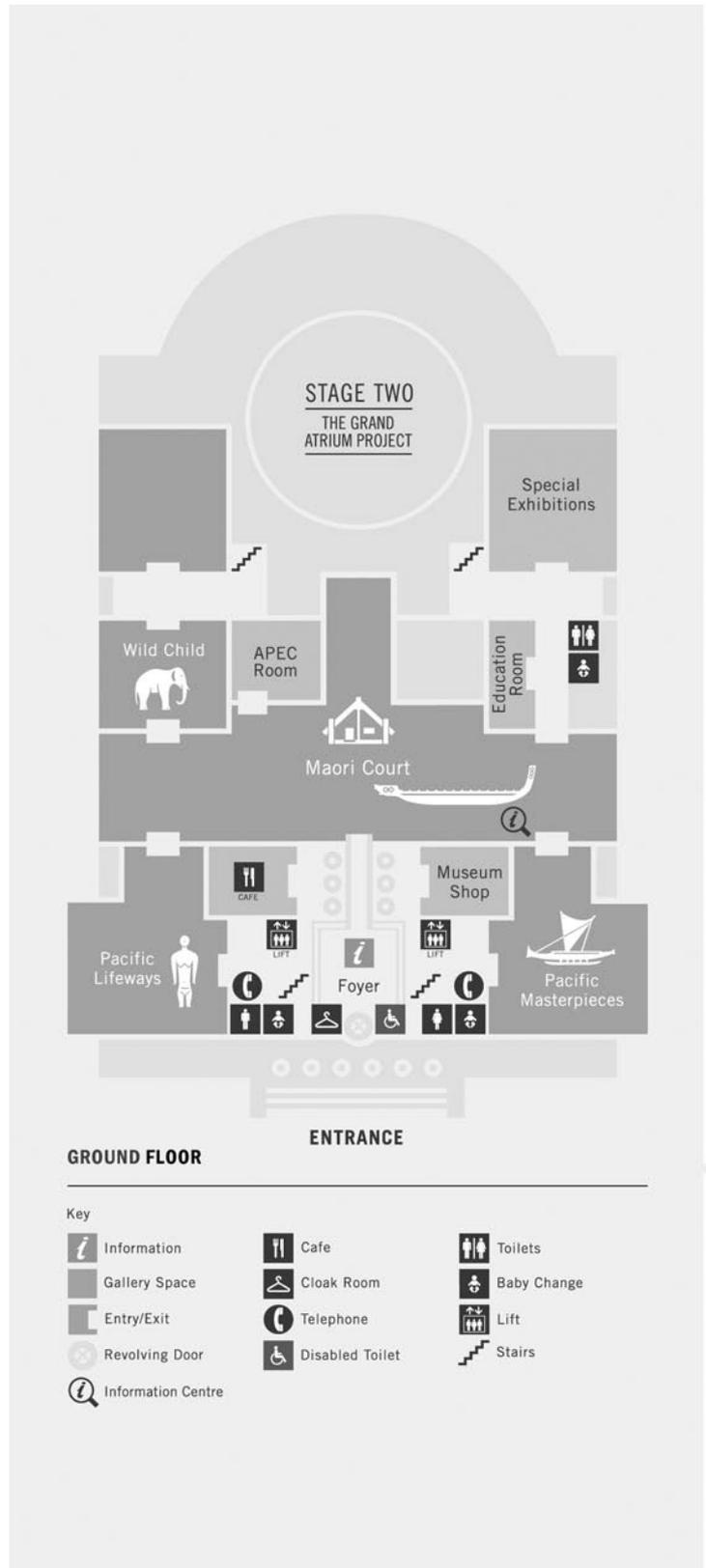
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# he taonga maori

introduction

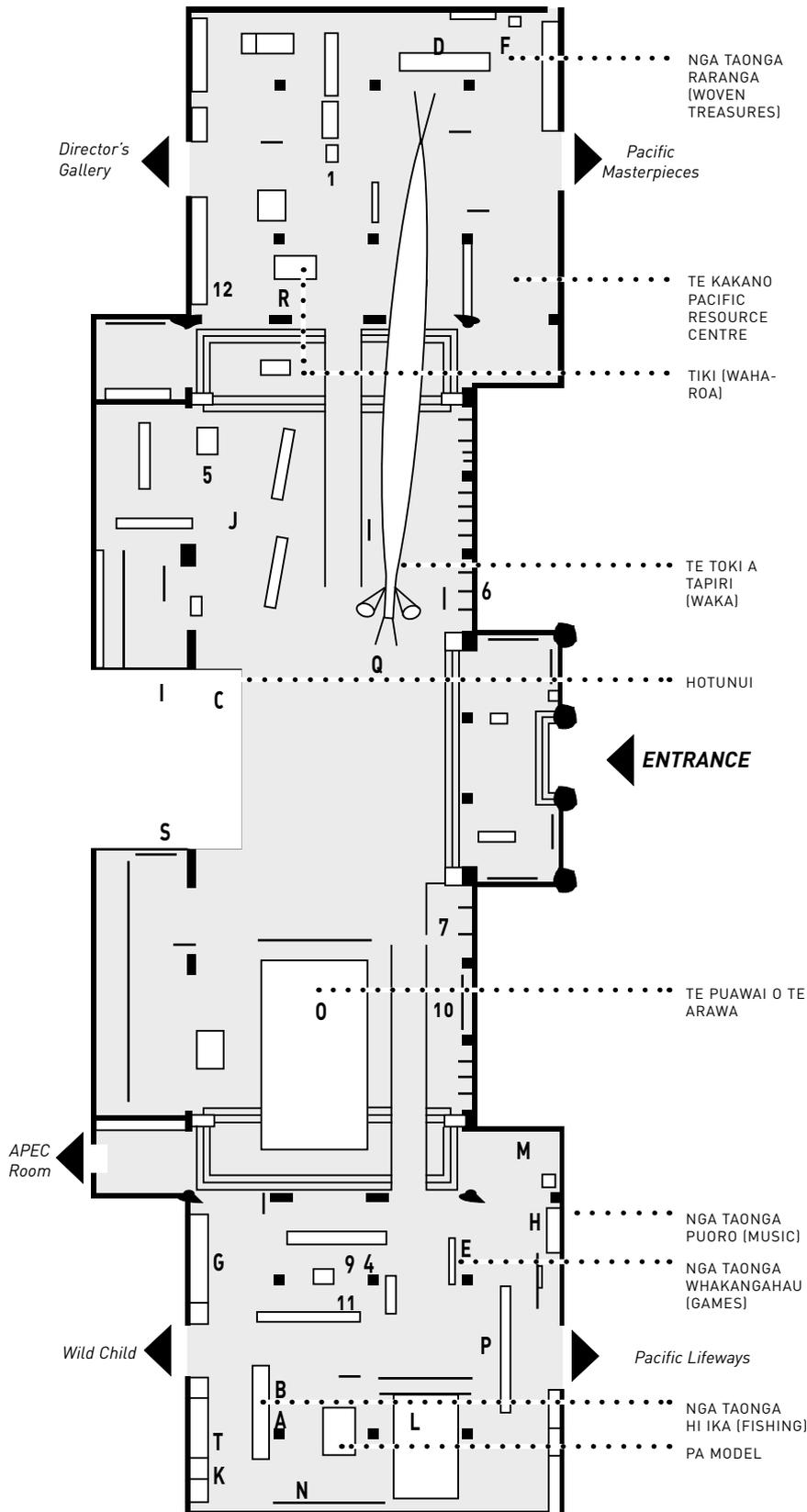


In *He Taonga Maori* (Maori Court), Maori history is explored through taonga (*ancestral treasures of the Maori*). Personal stories, accounts and myths cloak the taonga. The wairua (*spirituality*) of taonga Maori is joyously acknowledged; Maori are promoted as a living people — past, present and future.



# he taonga maori

gallery map



- A | Hi Ika
- B | Hinaki
- C | Hotunui
- D | Kahu Kiwi
- E | Karetao
- F | Kete Whakairo
- G | Ko
- H | Koauau
- I | Kowhiahwai
- J | Manu Aute
- K | Nga Mahi Whakahuahua Manu
- L | Pa
- M | Pare
- N | Hei
- O | Te Puawai o Te Arawa
- P | Te Taonga O Kaitaia
- Q | Te Toki a Tapiri
- R | Tiki
- S | Tukutuku
- T | Waka Kereru

## NGA TAONGA WHAKAIRO — CARVED TREASURES



Te Taonga O Kaitaia | K

### Te Toi Whakairo — The Art of Carving

The development of Maori carving out of earlier Polynesian art owes much to the availability of easily worked, straight-grained timber, especially totara, and of high quality stone such as pounamu (*greenstone or jade*), argillite and basalt for wood working tools. New Zealand's large size and the independence of tribes led to the many different carving styles.

Maori carved as a medium of expression and reflection of their respect for the natural and supernatural world. Carving has always been a specialist occupation, carried out by craftsmen who operated under the lore of tapu (*restriction*). Carvers used adzes to dress the timber slabs and shape the major features of the work, while surface decoration was achieved by a whao (*chisel*) and kuru (*mallet*). Waste materials were always carefully disposed of in a manner that ensured that the tapu was not broken, in case of offense to the ancestors.

### Te Taonga o Kaitaia — Kaitaia Treasure

This ancient carving was found in 1920 at the now drained Lake Tangonge, near Kaitaia. The angular

forms, chevrons, decorative notching and the character of the central figure all suggest that it is an early development of Maori art from older Polynesian models. These features are also seen on early pendants. The Kaitaia carving is carved from totara and may date from the 14th–16th century. The design structure, with its central figure and outward facing manaia (*god images*) motifs at each end is like later pare (*door lintels*). In the Kaitaia carving, both sides are fully carved which suggests it may have stood over a gateway.

### Pare (Door Lintel)

Pare often reflect the Maori creation story — the separation of Ranginui and Papatuanuku. Probably carved in the early part of the 19th century with stone tools, this pare belonged to a house that stood on a small island pa (*fortified village*), at Patetonga in the great swamp of the Hauraki Plains. Carved in classic sinuous western North Island style, it is unusually large for a stone-tool carving of the period. The central figure may represent Hine-nui-te-po, the goddess of death, or the earth mother Papatuanuku giving birth to the gods.



Pare | P



Tiki | T

## Tiki — Waharoa

This waharoa (*gateway*) is named Tiki after an ancestor of the Ngati Tunohopu people of Rotorua. In the 1830s the people of Ohinemutu fortified Pukeroa Pa — on the hill now surrounded by the city of Rotorua — in preparation for an attack by Te Waharoa and his Ngati Haa warriors. Three entrances were left in the stockade that surrounded the hill, each guarded by an ancestor carried on a gateway. Tiki was on the north side facing Utohina Stream. Later Tiki was moved down to Ohinemutu village on the lake shore.

## Hotunui — Whare Whakairo (*Carved Meeting House*)

Hotunui belongs to the Ngati Maru people of the Thames area. Hotunui was built in 1878 by the Ngati Awa people of Whakatane as a wedding present for Mereana Mokomoko from her father.

The meeting house takes its name from Hotunui, the celebrated tupuna (*ancestor*) of Ngati Maru.

The pou (*vertical panels*) inside Hotunui commemorate other ancestors of the Ngati Maru people. One is unusual in that it portrays Ureia, a marakihau (*sea monster*) who warned the Ngati Maru of impending storms and the approach of enemies.

## Te Puawai o Te Arawa — The Flower of the Arawa (*Pataka*)

This pataka (*raised storehouse*) was the property of Te Pokiha Taranui, the leading chief of Ngati Pikiao. Pataka were used to store food and treasures and were raised off the ground to be free from rats and dampness.

Te Puawai was completed in the early 1870s and stood at Maketu in the Bay of Plenty. Apart from its



Hotunui | H

use as a storehouse, the pataka was built to symbolise the power of Te Pokiha. Carved ancestral figures illustrate his genealogy, the large figure over the door being Tama-te Kapua, the captain of the Arawa waka (*ancestral canoe*).

## Te Toki a Tapiri — War Canoe (*Waka Taua*)

Te Toki a Tapiri is the last of the great Maori war canoes. With the hull adzed out of a single huge totara log, the canoe is 25m long and can carry 100 warriors. It was built about 1836 for Te Waka Tarakau of Ngati Kahungunu, who lived near Wairoa in Hawkes Bay. Its name commemorates Tapiri, a famous ancestor of Tarakau. Before it was finished, the canoe was presented by Tarakau to Te Waka Perohuka of the Rongowhakaata people of Poverty Bay, Tarakau receiving in exchange a famous cloak. Perohuka and



Te Puawai o Te Arawa | TP



The tauihu (*prow*) of Te Toki a Tapiri | TT

others of Rongowhakaata then carved the prow, stern and side panels near Manutuke on the Waipaoa River. In 1853 Perohuka presented the canoe to Tamati Waka Nene and his brother Patuone of Ngapuhi, to commemorate the end of the northern tribe's musket raids on the East Coast of the North Island.

Te Toki a Tapiri was then brought to Auckland and subsequently sold to Kaihau and Te Katipa of Ngati Te Ata at Waiuku. In 1863, following the outbreak of war in the Waikato, Government forces seized the waka, even though Ngati Te Ata had not taken part in the fighting. Ngati Te Ata later accepted crown compensation for this wrongdoing by the government.

A British sailor made an unsuccessful attempt to blow up the canoe while it lay on a beach at Onehunga. In 1869 the canoe was restored, and became the highlight of a regatta on the Waitemata Harbour organised for the visit of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh.

Ngati Whatua of Orakei later looked after the canoe until it was presented to Auckland Museum by the New Zealand Government in 1885.

## TA MOKO — THE ART OF TATTOO

Ta Moko was a unique form of tattooing involving marking of the body and the shedding of blood. It was highly tapu (*sacred*) and was accompanied by extensive rituals and karakia (*prayer*). When people were being tattooed they were tapu and so were not able to touch food. They were therefore fed by attendants with finely prepared food put through a funnel (*korere*) when the face was too painful for chewing. The process involved the carving of the skin with a sharp straight edged uhi (*chisel*). A toothed uhi would be used to insert the pigment. Uhi were initially made

from bones of large sea birds such as albatross or gannets. Gradually bone was replaced by metal and needles. Pigment was obtained by burning kauri gum, heartwood of the kahikatea tree and porina (*vegetable caterpillar*).

## NGA TAONGA RARANGA — WOVEN TREASURES

New Zealand is cooler than the tropical Pacific homelands of its first settlers. The people who came here had to develop new skills to make warm clothes from local raw materials. Ti kouka (*cabbage tree*) was familiar to Maori as ti pore (*Pacific cabbage tree*) had been brought from Polynesia. The leaves of the native ti kouka were used for thatching and their strong fibre for ropes, nets, baskets and sandals. It was also a food source.

The most important new fibre was harakeke (*flax*). Harakeke is considered a taonga because of its central role in Maori life. Clothing, ropes, nets, whariki (*mats*) and containers are made from the leaves and muka (*fibres from the leaves*). Kiekie was and is still sometimes used. Kiekie is related to the Pandanus plant of the Pacific. Its strong leaves are used for making mats, baskets and tukutuku panels, while the fibres can be used in rain capes. The roots were used as lashings.

Most kete are crafted from harakeke, others may be made of kiekie, kuta (*rushes*), pingao, ti kouka, toetoe and houhere (*lacebark*).

Natural dyes produced the colours black, brown and yellow.

Making kakahu (*clothes*) is a time-consuming and highly skilled craft, carried out mostly by women. Prestige cloaks such as kahu kiwi (*kiwi feather*) and topuni (*dog skin*) which reflected the mana of the wearer, rank among the highest achievements of Maori art.

As in any culture, fashions in Maori clothing respond to new influences and materials. In the early 19th century, kaitaka with patterned taniko borders were most in evidence. Since then black-tagged korowai and kakahu huruhuru (*feather cloaks*) have gained in popularity.

## Kahu Kiwi (*Kiwi Feather Cloak*) | KK

In the late 19th century, kiwi feather cloaks became the most prestigious of all fine cloaks. In these cloaks, the feathers are separately incorporated in the muka (*flax fibre*) base as weaving proceeds. In the cloak on display in the Museum, the edges are finished in red and black wool. King Tawhiao was photographed in this kahu kiwi during his visit to England in 1884.

## Tukutuku (*Woven Wall Panels*) | TU

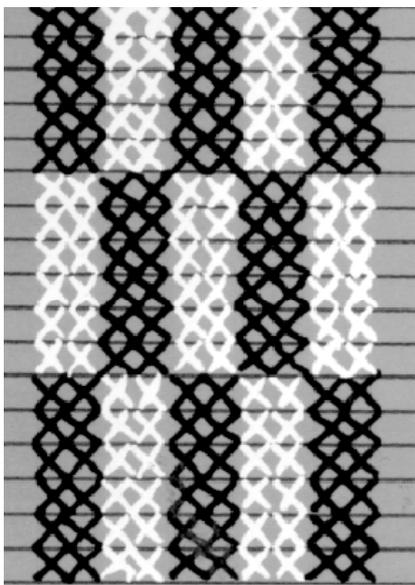
Tukutuku patterns are an integral part of the storytelling of a *whare (house)* and add beauty and balance to the interior of the house. The traditional tukutuku panel is a lattice-like frame made up of vertical stakes (usually *toetoe stalks*) forming the unseen back layer and visible horizontal wooden rods. The flexible material making up the pattern is *pingao (sand dune grasses)* or the leaves of the *kiekie*. *Kiekie (a plant that grows perched on other plants — an epiphyte)* leaves are gathered and bleached white by stripping, boiling and hanging to dry in the sun. Strips are also dyed when the pattern requires the addition of colours.

Pingao is used for its golden colour. It is gathered and sized into lengths, then hung in a shady spot and later stripped. Today, dyed raffia and fibre plastics are often used instead of traditional materials.

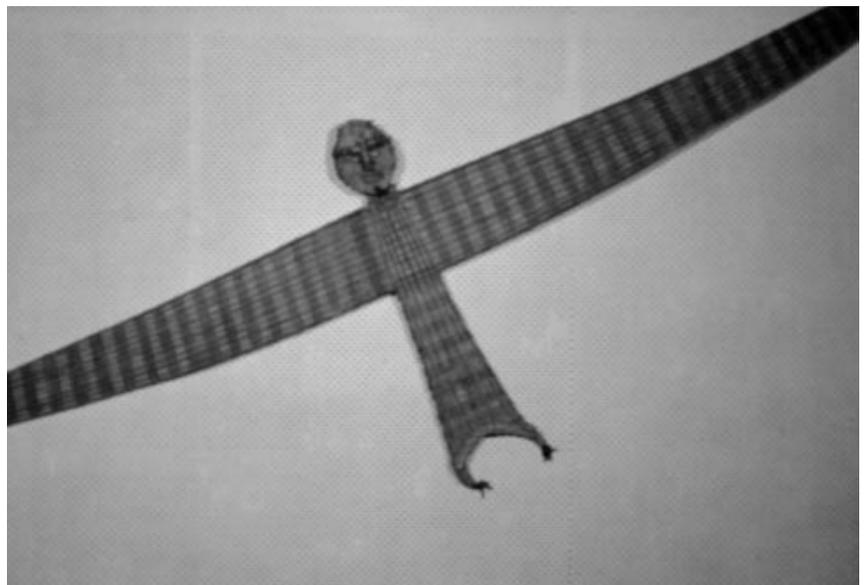
**Roimata Toroa Tukutuku Pattern — Tears of the Albatross (*Tukutuku Pattern*)** located in the alcove near the Natural History Information Centre on the first floor

The toroa (*albatross*) is a rare visitor to northern New Zealand and was revered by pre-European Maori. The story attached to the Roimata Toroa design tells of the introduction of the kumara plant and the significance of the albatross.

Pourangahua was a chief scientist sent from Hawaiiki to report on conditions in Aotearoa. He and his wife, Kaniowai and others, surveyed the east coast and ascertained that spring was imminent. He returned in haste to Hawaiiki and reported this to his chief Ruakapanga. Ruakapanga urged him to return to Aotearoa with kumara tipu (*shoots*) and sent him on his giant albatrosses, to speed up the journey to ensure that they were not too late for the planting season. Ruakapanga instructed Pourangahua to stick to the route and care well for the birds, and entrusted him with two sacred ko (*digging tools*). Thus the first trans-Pacific air crossing took place, but sadly Pou forgot in his excitement to care for the birds and neglected them shamefully. When too late, he remembered his instructions, he found the birds weeping tears of weariness and sorrow. He tried to make amends and sent the birds on their journey home.



Roimata Toroa Tukutuku Pattern



Manu Aute — Kite | MA

# he taonga maori

background notes

On their way home, the birds were beset by evildoers so that their physical condition revealed the whole sorry tale of neglect to Rua. For Pou's crime and for the tears the albatrosses shed, Rua caused pests, including hihue (*the sphinx moth — its caterpillar is called anuhe*) to attack the kumara. To this day, the kumara plant is still ravaged by these pests. Thus it is the roimata (*tears*) pattern — memorial to the tears of the toroa (*albatross*) that is selected when disaster or death is to be depicted.

## Manu Aute (Kites) | MA

Kites were flown both for amusement and for more serious purposes. When a war party was about to attack a pa of an enemy, a kite was flown. Only a tohunga (*priest*) or a man of high rank could fly a kite, reciting a karakia (*prayer*) when the kite was ascending. The kite's flying pattern would indicate certain omens to the tohunga.

## NGA TAONGA WHAKANGAHAU/ TAONGA PUORO — GAMES/ MUSIC

Many of the Maori pastimes and games of pre-European times have been lost through time. Those that have survived closely resemble pastimes of other cultures such as potaka (*spinning tops*) and whai (*string games*). Pakiwaitara (*similar to modern rhyming songs*) were commonly sung or recited as each game was played. In former times Maori traditionally participated in pastimes at night or in intervals between work, depending on the season. During the periods of crop planting and harvesting, there was little leisure time. Pastimes and games developed skills needed for hunting, gathering and war.

## Karetao (Puppets) | KA

Karetao were manipulated in much the same way as puppets and were used to help tell stories and for divinitive purposes during recitation of karakia. Songs accompanied each set of actions. The karetao is held in an upright position with one hand at its base and the other, holding the cord. By alternately pulling and slackening the cord, the arms assume different positions. At the same time, by shaking the karetao at the base, the arms are made to quiver and imitate a person doing a haka.



Karetao | KA

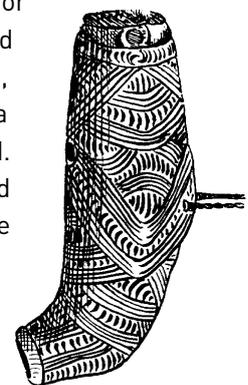


Koauau | KU

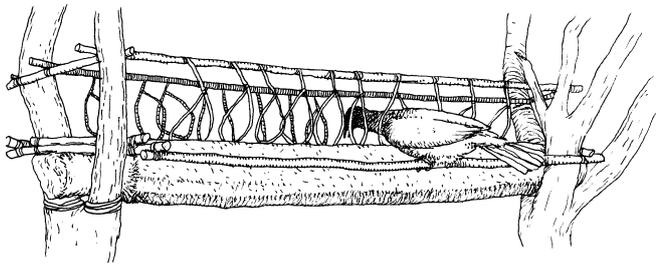
## Koauau (Flutes) | KU

Koauau are traditional instruments, one of a number of types of flute.

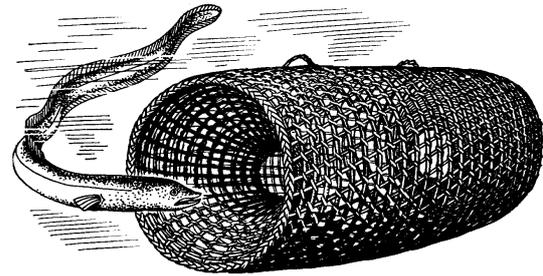
Traditionally koauau were made from human thigh and arm bones, or from wood. Native trees favoured for this purpose were poroporo, tutu and neinei which have a soft pith and are easily hollowed. However, matai, maire, rimu and totara which have no pith were also used. Koauau are played with the mouth, although some were played through the nose, similar to nguru (*nose flutes*).



Nguru



Waka Kereru | WK



Hinaki | HI

## TE MAHI KAI — FOOD GATHERING

### Pa Model | PA

The pa model shows a Maori settlement somewhere on the east coast of Northland. It is not an actual place but is based on the evidence of historic landscapes and sites. The way of life of these people is closely linked to land and sea. The headland occupies a strong defensive position, protected by earthworks and stockades. Inside are cooking areas and low dwelling houses. Roofed pits and raised platforms are used for food storage. Leading chiefs live in decorated houses on the highest terraces.

Many different activities are shown in this model. In fact, working together in groups was an important part of Maori life. The kumara gardens, for example, might engage a whole community at certain times in spring and summer. In early winter the men hunted pigeons when the birds were fat on ripe miro berries. Activities such as stone working, fishing, birding and canoe building are likely to have taken people far along the coast or into the mountains.

### MAHI KAI — GARDENING | MK

Maori tupuna (ancestors) brought their traditional cultivated plants from a tropical environment. The food plants that survived the change to temperate New Zealand were kumara, taro (*Pacific Island root vegetable*), hue (*gourd*) and uwhi (*yam*). New opportunities required new skills and knowledge. In the gardens, these plants were planted in spring and regularly harvested at the end of summer. The root of aruhe (*bracken fern*) was a basic food for communities throughout Aotearoa. To prepare an area for cultivation the scrub was first burnt and the ashes used

as fertilizer. The ground was loosened and sand and gravel scattered over heavy soils to break it up. Stone images of Rongo, god of the moon and agriculture were placed near kumara cultivations to ensure a good crop. Correct karakia and rituals were essential for a successful and abundant crop.

### Ko (Digging Stick)

In the preparation of gardens, soil was broken up by a ko made from a stem of small hardwood tress such as manuka. They were usually 2–3 metres long. A teka (*footrest*) near the digging end enabled the user to push the point into the ground.

Ko were the most widely used agricultural tools, although a number of other tools existed for other purposes.

### HI IKA — FISHING | IK

Maori were already skilled fishermen when they came to Aotearoa. In New Zealand, fishing methods and gear gradually changed to suit new circumstances. Hook and line fishing was carried out to troll for surface feeders such as kahawai, and bottom feeders such as tamure (*snapper*) and hapuku (*groper*). Matau (*Hooks*) were made from wood or bone and the lines from flax.



Ko | KO

Fish were also caught in huge seine nets and small scoop bags and set nets. Nets were weighted using mahe (*stone sinkers*) and often floats made of pumice or corky wood such as whau wood marked the placement of the net and acknowledged the offerings from the sea god, Tangaroa.

Fishing was considered a tapu occupation. It was done only by men and food was not eaten while fishing. The prow of the fishing canoes often had a head with an outthrust tongue to warn Tangaroa, god of the sea, that men were entering his domain.

### **Hinaki (Eel Pots) | HI**

Hinaki are made of finely woven plant stems such as from Muehlenbeckia (*maiden hair ferns*). They can be used attached to a net as part of a weir, where they catch eels migrating down the river to the ocean to give birth, or in open waters using bait. They were placed in rivers in such a way that eels entered the larger opening with the flow of the current.

Sometimes eels were kept alive in hinaki until they were needed as food.

### **NGA MAHI WHAKAHUAHUA MANU — BIRD HUNTING | WM**

In pre-European times the forests of New Zealand teemed with bird life. Many methods were used to catch them, including spears, snares and decoys. The main forest birds sought for food were the kereru (*wood pigeon*), kaka, tui, kakariki (*parakeet*), korimako (*bellbird*), weka and kiwi. The feathers from many of these birds were used as adornments on cloaks, dwellings, pataka and war canoes. Often birding parties would set out when particular berries that the birds ate were in season. Snares were not put in kowhai trees as the leaves made the birds thin and the flesh distasteful.

### **Waka Kereru (Pigeon Snares) | WK**

Waka kereru were filled with water and set out to catch kereru when the berries of the native miro tree were in season. The berries made the birds very thirsty and they were attracted to the troughs of water. If they put their head through a noose, it tightened when the bird attempted to fly away. (see *Te Ao Turoa* resource)

## **HE MAHI KI TE KOHATU — STONE TECHNOLOGY**

For Maori, stone was an important raw material, from which tools, weapons and ornaments were made. New Zealand has a wide range of sedimentary, metamorphic and volcanic rock, which was quickly discovered as the first settlers explored the new land.

Specialised techniques were developed for making tools from different rocks.

Adzes were crafted from fine-grained rock such as argillite, basalt and greywacke. These tools were used for cutting wood and took several months to make. They were first roughly cut using other stone implements and then smoothed by sanding against sandstone. The finished tool was polished by rubbing against skin, a favourite occupation of the old. When bound to a wooden handle and thus making an axe, the adze blade was called a toki. Ready made knives were struck from blocks of chert and volcanic obsidian.

Holes were made using a tuwiri (*drill*) that was manipulated with two cords. A hard sharpened stone was used as a drill tip with sand and water being used as an abrasive to aid the process.

New cutting and grinding skills were developed for working tough pounamu (*greenstone or jade*) into weapons, wood-working tools and prized ornaments. These were highly treasured and gained value through associations with the great ones of the past.

When iron tools and new weapons were acquired in the early 19th century the old stone-working skills were soon lost. Today, craftsmen are reviving the ancient art of carving wood with stone tools.

### **Hoanga (Grindstone)**

Because the adze was central to survival, materials used to make and enhance its performance were highly valued. Sandstone hoanga were used to smooth and grind adzes to the desired shape. Different grit-size could be used to achieve a rough or fine finish and small files of sandstone were used to smooth fine details.

# *he taonga maori*

glossary of maori terms



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Aruhe   fernroot	Pataka   storehouse
Harakeke   flax	Potaka   top
Hinaki   eelpot	Pounamu   greenstone or jade
Hoanga   grindstone	Puoro   music
Hue   gourd	Taonga   treasures
Kai   food	Tapu   sacred
Kakahu huruhuru   feathered cloaks	Teka   footrest on ko
Karakia   prayer	Ti ti torea   stick game
Karetao   jumping jack/ puppet	Tipu   shoots
Kete   plaited flax basket	Toki   axe
Koauau   flute	Topuni   dogskin cloak
Kohatu   stone	Tukutuku   woven lattice panels
Korere   funnel	Tupuna (Tipuna)   ancestor
Korowai   tagged cloak	Tuwiri   drill
Kumara   sweet potato	Uhi   tattoo chisel
Kuru   mallet	Waharoa   gateway
Mahe   fishing net sinker	Waiata   song
Mahi   work	Waka   canoe
Marakihau   sea monster	Waka kereru   birdtrap with noose and trough
Marae   meetingplace in front of whare	Whai   string game
Matau   fishing hook	Whai korero   speech
Moko   tattoo	Whakairo   carving
Muka   flax fibre	Whao   chisel
Nguru   nose flute	Whare   house
Pakiwaitara   story	Whare whakairo   carved house
Pare   door lintel	

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