



Whitu: Tikanga

Pepeha

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Pepeha are sayings about a particular people, sometimes an iwi or hapū.

Tini whetu ki te rangi, ko Rangitāne ki te whenua.
Rangitāne on the land are as numerous as the stars in the sky.

“Ngā kākā wahanui o Wairarapa”
The renowned orators of the Wairarapa.

A pepeha is also a way to introduce yourself by identifying your ancestry and landmarks that tie you to a place. A mihimihi is a speech of greeting that can be started using pepeha. Sometimes pepeha and mihimihi are used to serve the same purpose which is to introduce oneself.

An example of a personal pepeha

Ko Kurahaupo te waka
Ko Ruamahanga te awa
Ko Rangitūmau te maunga
Ko Rangitāne te iwi
Ko Ngāti Hāmua te hapū
Ko Marakaia te rangātira
Ko Te Ore Ore te marae
Ko Tiriana Potangaroa ahau

The above is an example. Other variations could include grandparents, parents and siblings.

Pepeha follow the above order because

You put your canoe first because that's how your ancestors came here. For some people it will be a ship or plane.

Then your river because everything comes from water and there is no separation between the ocean and rivers, even if it is through a network of waterways all water flows out to sea.

Then your mountain because it is the most visible identifying/grounding point. Rivers and mountains were here before humans and will still be present long after our lives are over.

Then the founding ancestor of your iwi from the land that you live on eg in the above case Masterton. Every bloodline has to have a beginning so you acknowledge this.

Then your main hapū ancestor descended from the founding ancestor of that place. This may vary from location to location. Remember to acknowledge your female and male whakapapa and not just the man.

Then your prominent slightly more recent ancestor like Marakaia Tawaroa above. For instance Rangitāne could cover the wider Masterton District, Ngāti Hāmua could relate to around Masterton and Marakaia could be your home at Te Ore Ore.

Then comes your marae because buildings can't be established without people and physical structures will be gone long before people and especially mountains, rivers and land.

Then finally you

A mihi for younger children

If it is easier for children to start with themselves, try the following. Although it is not in a traditional sequence it may help the child to learn the basics.

Ko (name) tōku ingoa

Ko (name) tōku māmā

Ko (name) tōku pāpā

Ko (name) tōku kuia

Ko (name) tōku koro

Ko (name) tōku iwi

Kei (placename) tōku kāinga

Ka haere au ki te Kōhanga Reo/kura o (name)

Ingoa = name

Papa = dad

Nanny = nana

Koro = granddad

Iwi = tribe

Kāinga = home

Mama = mum

Kohanga reo = pre school

Kura = school