

Ngā Pūrākau o Tauranga Moana: Pōhutukawa, Mauao

The Legend of Mauao, our taonga tīpuna

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There was once a hill with no name among the many hills and ravines on the edge of the forests of Hautere. This nameless one was pononga, slave or servant, to the great chief Ōtānewainuku the forested peak which stands as a landmark for the tribes of Tauranga Moana.

To the south-west was the shapely form of the hill Puwhenua, a woman clothed in all the fine greens of the ferns and shrubs and trees of the forest of Tāne. The nameless one was desperately in love with Puwhenua. Her heart was already won by the majestic form of the chiefly mountain Ōtānewainuku.

There seemed no hope for the lowly slave with no name to persuade her to become his bride. The nameless one sorrowed. In despair he decided to end it all by drowning

himself in the ocean, Te Moananui a Kiwa (Pacific Ocean). He called on the patupaiarehe, the people with magical powers who dwelled in the forests of Hautere. They were his friends and they plaited the ropes with their magic to haul him from the hill country toward the ocean. As they pulled on their ropes, they chanted their magic chant and hauled the nameless one from his place among the hills from Waoku. They gouged out the valley where the river Waimapu now flows. Waimapu *means 'weeping waters'* and is so named after this journey to the sea. They followed the channel of Tauranga Moana past Hairini, past Maungatapu and Matapihi, past Te Papa. They pulled him to the edge of the great ocean of Kiwa. But it was already close to daybreak. The sun rose. The first rays lit up the summit of the nameless hill and fixed him in that place.

The patupaiarehe melted away before the light of the sun. They were people of the night and they flew back to the shady depths of the forests and ravines of Hautere. The patupaiarehe gave a name to this mountain which marks the entrance to Tauranga Moana. He was called Mauao which means caught by the dawn or lit up by the first rays of sunrise. In time, he assumed greater mana than his rival Ōtānewainuku. Later he was also given another name, Maunganui, by which is now more often known. Mauao *is the sacred tūpuna maunga of the four iwi of Tauranga Moana* - Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Pūkenga and Ngāti Ranginui - and the iwi Waitaha, he is still the symbol of the tribes of Tauranga Moana.

Today Mauao is beautifully adorned with a korowai of Pōhutukawa and as the sun rises over Te Moananui a Kiwa

The patupaiarehe chanted this song and hauled the nameless one from his place among the hills from Waoku.

As they pulled on their ropes, they chanted their magic chant:

Māori

E hika tū ake
Ki runga rā whitiki taua
Hei tama tū
Uea ki te uru
Kumea ki te tonga
Hiki nuku, hiki rangi i arā rā
Ka ngaru e, ka ngaru e,
Toia ki te hau marangai
Kia whakarongo taku kiri
Te kikini a te rehutai
O ngā ngaru whatiwhati
E haruru mai nei
Wī, wī wī,
Wā wā wā,
A! hā! hā!
Horahia ō mata ki a Meremere

Tūahiahi Hei taki i te ara ki a Tangaroa;
He atua hāo i te tini ki te pō

E kokoia e ara e.

English

Arise you who slumber
Prepare ourselves
Prove our manhood
Heave to the west
Heave to the south
Move heaven and earth
It awakens, it loosens, shudders,
Haul toward the stormy east wind
That the sky may feel
The tang of salt spray
Of the turbulent thundering waves

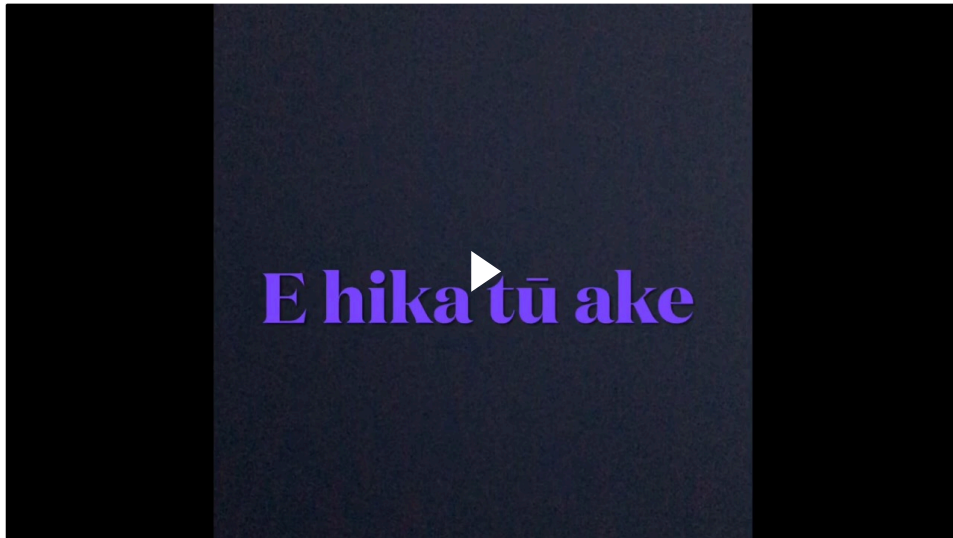
Wī, wī wī,
Wā wā wā,
A! hā! hā!
Cast your eyes heavenward toward Venus, the evening star
To light the path to the ocean of Tangaroa;
The god who lures many into his embrace, into eternal darkness
Alas, the birds have awakened
Dawn has come.

E Hika Tū ake



late in the year you can see the vibrant scarlet red of the Pōhutukawa in full bloom. After much time, he has gained higher mana than his rival Otanewainuku, this once lowly one, is now regarded as a beloved taonga tīpuna.

The Legend of Mauao - Footprints on Tepapa



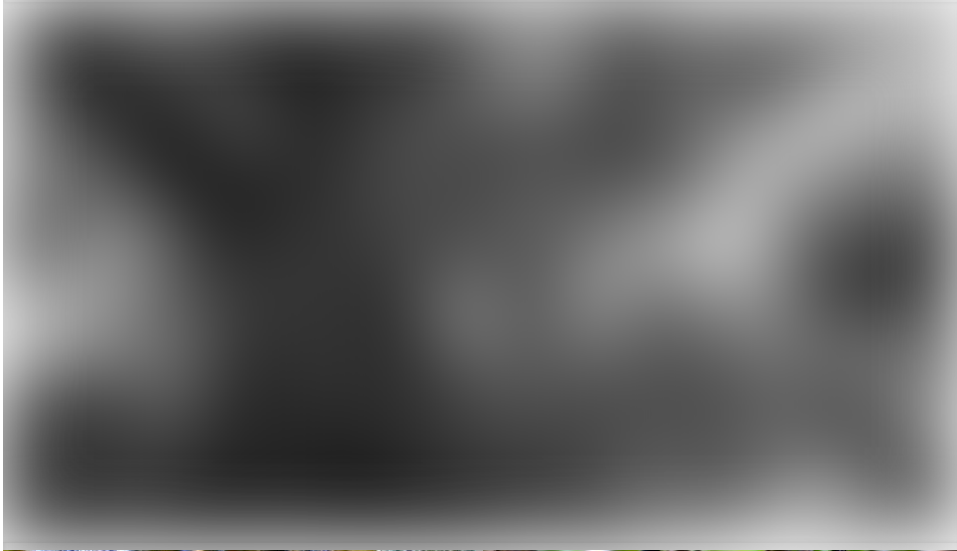
Te korowai o Mauao

Mauao is covered in Pōhutukawa, it is a crucial and keystone species for the biodiversity that thrives above and below the canopy and an important part of the fabric that holds the maunga together. Erosion and land slips are an ongoing concern for Mauao, the best mitigation is to plant more trees.

The biggest threat to Mauao is climate change. Threats of extreme weather events and warmer temperatures which could support exotic species and pathogens like Myrtle rust. Pōhutukawa are particularly susceptible to the effects of Myrtle rust and we are just learning about the potential devastating impact this pathogen could have on this species.

As a partner of the programme Ngā Rākau Taketake, which aims to protect and restore the relationship and connection with our taonga rākau, we have had crucial training for the monitoring and surveillance of the threats that face Myrtle species and Kauri. We have the tools of data collection like GIS and 123 Survey which enables kaitiaki the methods to record observations and data. We also have the networks and expertise we can call on to assist us to disseminate the information and outcomes of our research. The most important component of this is the funding support that allowed our kaitiaki to access technical training, and access to the best surveillance tools. Now we can take a proactive stance in the protection of our Taonga Tuku Iho.

Imagine the korowai of Pōhutukawa on Mauao being wiped out by Myrtle rust. Myrtle rust surveillance on Mauao has been initiated by the Trust that manages the Maunga, with kaitiaki monitoring the spread and recording the data. Unfortunately, Myrtle rust is all over the Maunga with serious infections over many trees, which will only get worse each season. The Trust with Tauranga City Council will be looking at developing a long-term management program for the disease.



Images on Mauao, Myrtle rust surveillance and manu



Mauao