

A Poukai Day, An Important Day!





I'm happy to hear that we, the family are going to the Poukai at Ngātira Marae today.



This is a big event for us, for my people of Raukawa. There are many jobs to do, there are also many people who attend. We also get to see King Tūheitia and his large entourage.



We arrive early in the morning when it's still dark to raise the flags.

TE TIKANGA



People arrive at different times and before long there are plenty of home people gathered around. When the time arrives, we are lined up to practise our words and actions for the haka pōwhiri.

TE TIKANGA



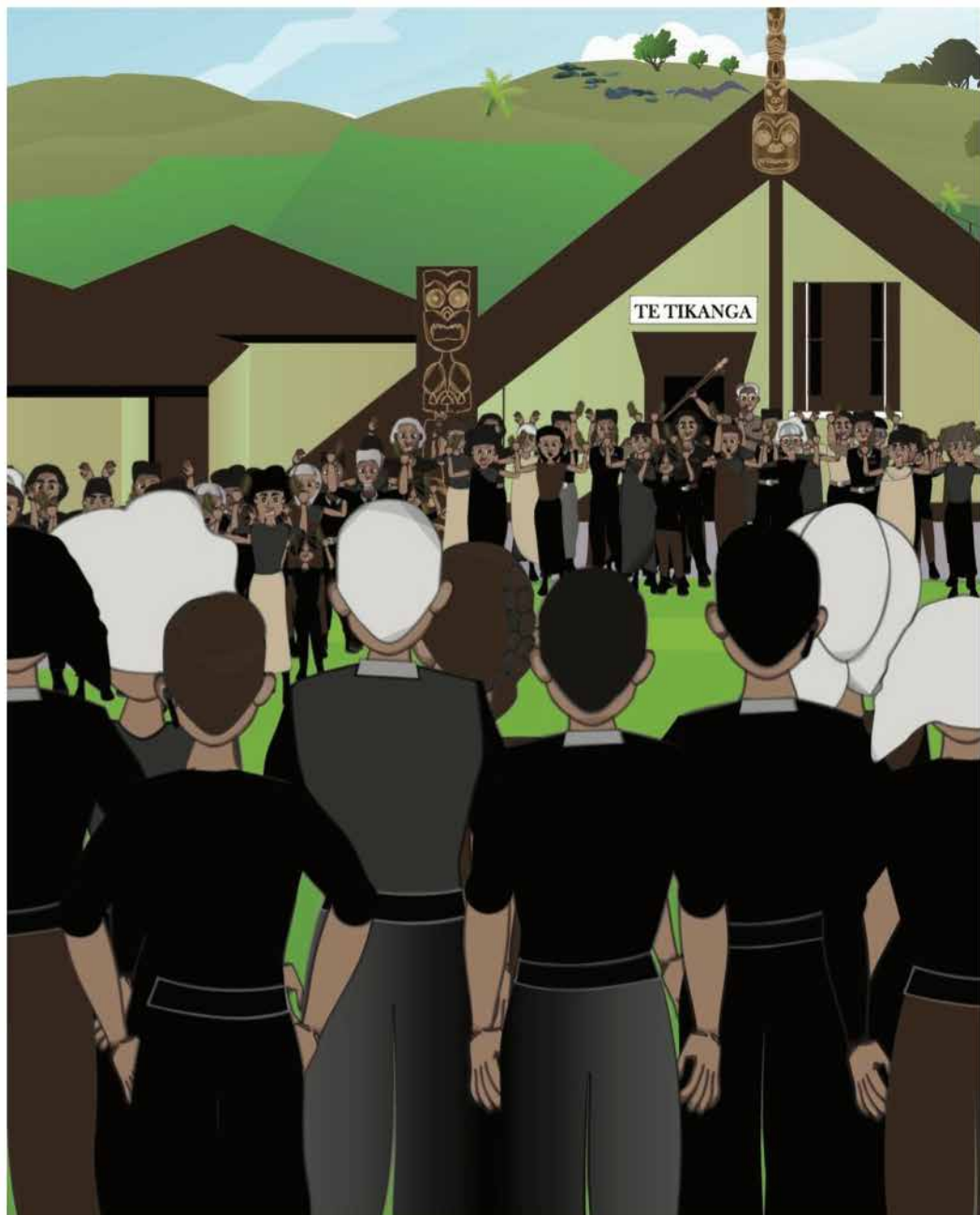
Above and below!
Drag! The canoe!
To the entrance! The canoe!
To the sleeping place! The canoe!
To the resting place where the canoe will lie!

TE TIKANGA

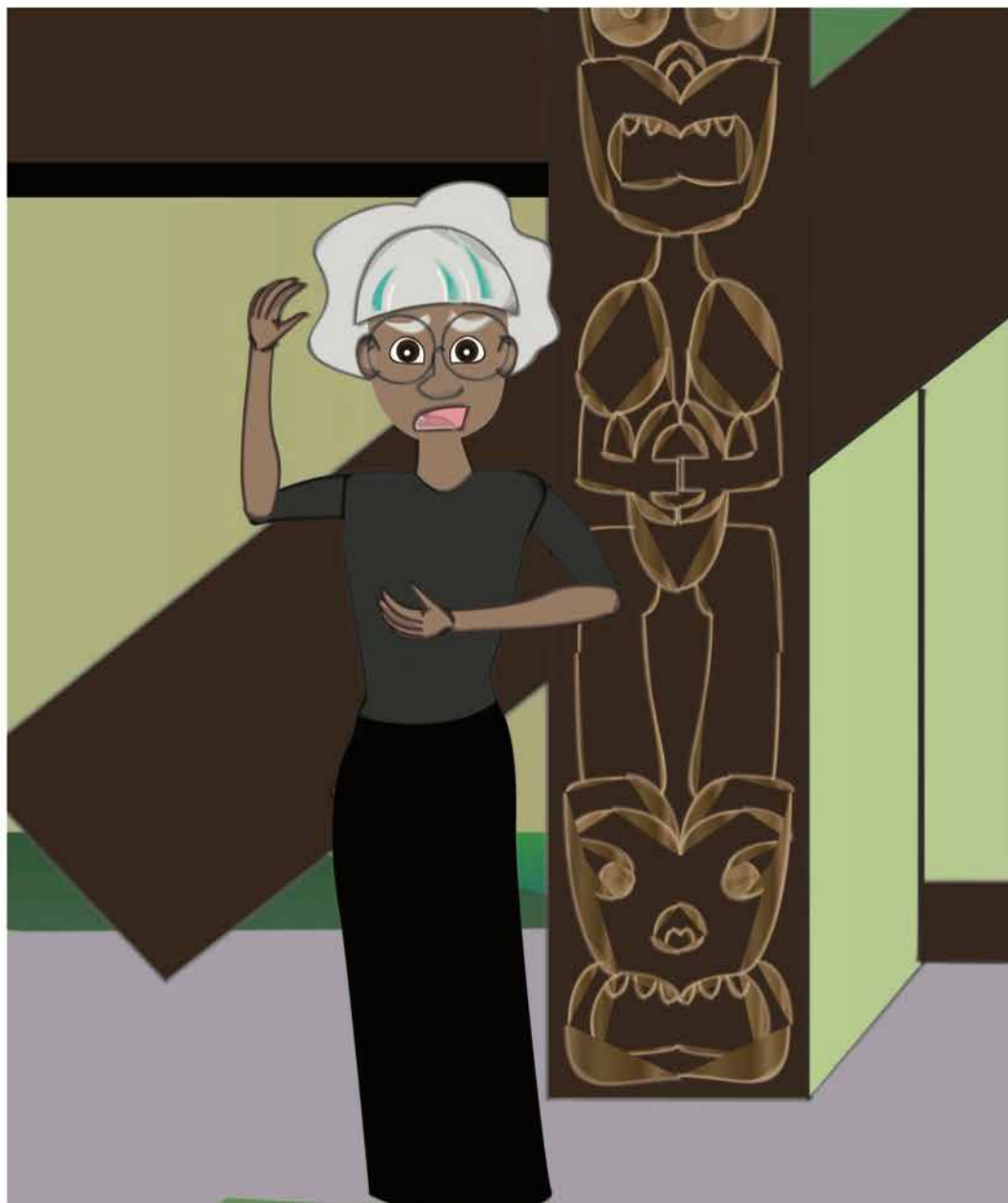


I may die, I may die, I may live, I may live!
I may die, I may die, I may live, I may live!
This is the hairy man
Who captured the sun and caused it to shine
Step by step!
Step by step!
'tis day light!

Descendants of Raukawa roar
I au, au aue ha, hi...!



We practice a few times. 10 o'clock arrives and the visitors move in front of the gate to signal that they are ready.



Then they are called on by the female caller of the marae and the marae is engulfed by the masses. Elderly men, elderly women, young people and babies make up the visitor's group. The King's band is also seen and heard doing what they do best.



At that time the command is given 'Above and below...!' Following that, King Tūheitia and his entourage can be seen nearing the flag pole. The prayer is delivered and the home people and our guests are seated. The King and some of the royal family are seated instead on the porch of the ancestral house.



When the formal speeches commence on the home people's side we all sit in silence. All of the speakers from home are on the speaker's bench. Following the formal speeches the elderly women and mothers sing. I really enjoy listening to the traditional songs from home.



The protocol at Ngātira Marae is tauutuutu. Therefore, someone from here will stand and then someone from the other side will stand, until the last speaker. Today the formal speeches took three hours.



The guests stand to press noses with us. The men lead the people and the women follow behind.

HINE TE KAKARA



Once everyone has pressed noses and greeted each other the people sit and converse, establishing connections and reaffirming ties with long lost friends. Time passes and the call from the dining room is heard and the people start to move. The royal family is followed into the dining room where we sit to eat. This is when people give their donations to the elderly ladies to place in their flax baskets.



The food is delicious and plentiful. Ground cooked food, mussels, sea urchin, raw fish, cooked fern shoots and pudding are all seen in the feast. This is also a good time to talk with your friends on all sides.

TE TIKANGA



The exit is rather slow due to the enjoyment shared by everyone. The people return to the courtyard, however the setting is different now. Firstly, some of the youth cultural groups stand to entertain the people. It is great to see the children performing the haka.

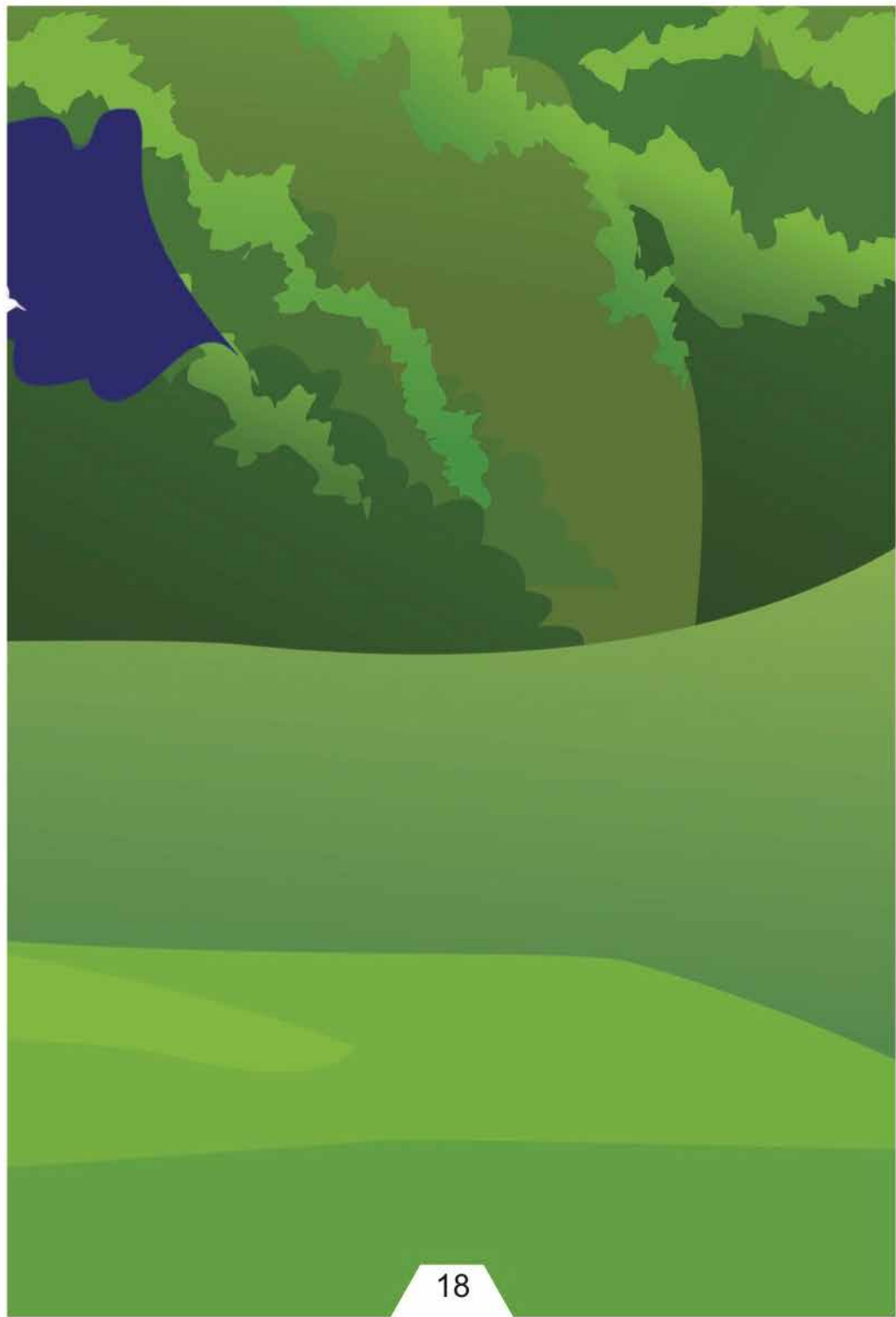


When that finishes, the speakers begin discussing the many issues of the time. Sometimes the topics of discussion are quite light, at other times it's as though a battle of words is raging.



Four o'clock has arrived, which marks the conclusion of the discussions and prayer is once again delivered. The flag is lowered signaling the end of the Ngātira Poukai for this year.

What a beautiful day it was!



Nā Charlie Tepana ngā kōrero
Nā Hākopa Pore ngā pikitia

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