

THE CREATION CYCLE

THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE GODS

In the beginning, there was nothing but an idea. The idea was remembered. It then became conscious. Finally, it became a wish to create. So it came to pass that out of nothing came the power to live and to grow, even in emptiness.

And it came to pass that out of this power to live and to grow came the deep, dark, long, and gloomy Night, a presence felt, but unseen, in the sightless, empty universe.

And it came to pass that out of this power that was the Night came life, in the form of the sky, far-reaching Father Rangi. Father Rangi lived with rosy dawn's pale light and created the moon. He lived with golden morn's warmer rays and created the sun. Then he tossed both the moon and the sun into the deep, dark, and gloomy Night so that they would light the universe and be its eyes. Now there were both Night and Day.

Father Rangi then lived with Mother Papa, the Earth. In love, he lay upon her, and they created land.

Father Rangi and Mother Papa produced many children, who lived in the darkness of the small space that existed between their parents. Mother Papa's body was covered with low planes, and the sea was as black as Father Rangi.

Father Rangi loved Mother Papa and clung to her. No light could come between them. Their first children became tired of living in everlasting darkness, and their six sons met together to discuss what they could do to improve their situation.

"We can kill Father Rangi and Mother Papa, or we can force them apart. For only then will we be able to escape this darkness. Which will it be?"

Tu, the fierce father and god of war-spirited human beings, finally exclaimed, "We must kill them!"

To these words, Tane, father and god of trees, birds, and insects, replied, "No, it would be better to push Father Rangi away from Mother Papa, to live like a stranger far above us. Meanwhile, we could let Mother Papa remain where she is under our feet, so that she can continue to nourish us with the foods that she grows for us."

Tane's words were so wise that even the warrior Tu was quick to agree with his brother's advice. But one brother, Tawhiri, father and god of all winds and storms, stood alone against the others. Now and forever, he separated himself from his brothers, fearing the loss of his own power and regretting his parents' separation. In defiance he held his breach and would do nothing. So it came to pass that five of Father Rangi and Mother Papa's six sons made an effort to try to separate their parents.

First came Rongo, father and god of the sweet potato and other edible cultivated plants. He lacked the necessary strength to separate Father Rangi and Mother Papa. Next came Tangaroa, father and god of all fish and sea reptiles. Tangaroa was stronger than Rongo, but no matter how hard he pushed, he could not separate Father Rangi and Mother Papa either. Third came Haumia, father and god of the fern root and other edible wild plants. However he, too, was unsuccessful. Then, confident in his own strength, Tu, the fierce father and god of war-spirited human beings, grabbed an axe-like tool and chopped away at the tendons that bound his parents together. The blood from these tendons created sacred red clay. However, Father Rangi and Mother Papa remained bound together.

Finally, Tane, father and god of forests, birds, and insects, took his turn. Just as a young tree pushes up from the earth, increasing in strength as it grows, so Tane slowly used his body to force his parents apart. First he tried to use his arms and his hands, but all their might could not move Father Rangi up and away from Mother Papa. Then, he decided to rest his head and shoulders against Mother Papa and to use his feet to push up against Father Rangi. Very, very slowly, Tane's continuous pressure stretched and then tore the tendons that bound his parents together. Despite their anguished cries, he pushed Mother Papa far under him and thrust Father Rangi far above him. So it came to pass that Tane freed all of Father Rangi and Mother Papa's other children from their dark world.

Tawhiri, father and god of winds and storms, had sympathized with his parents' love for each other and had considered their attachment to be appropriate. Living in darkness was also compatible with the nature of his power, whereas living in a lovely, bright world was not. Tawhiri greeted Tane's success with jealousy and anger. Tane had created exactly what Tawhiri dreaded—Day, with its power to push away the gloomy

darkness of Night and light up and beautify the universe. The father and god of winds and storms feared that there would no longer be a place for him in this new world.

So it came to pass that Tawhiri hurried to join Father Rangi. The god of the sky and weather was pleased to have this son's companionship and help. Together, they worked to create many great winds and storms that flew north, south, east, and west, battering those on Mother Papa with their blows. Tawhiri sent winds that delivered fiery blows, winds that delivered freezing blows, winds that dumped rain, and winds that dumped sleet. Finally, Tawhiri came down to his mother's realm as a hurricane. He surprised Tane by tearing apart his forests and leaving his mighty trees to rot away, broken and useless upon the earth.

Having felled Tane's forests, Tawhiri then attacked Tangaroa's seas. Tangaroa loved to live along the seashore, but now he found himself battered by great tides, churning whirlpools, and mountainous waves. Terrified, he ran and hid in the deepest part of the ocean, where Tawhiri would not be able to find him.

Meanwhile, Tangaroa's two grandchildren, the father of fish and the father of reptiles, together with their own children, argued about whether they would be safer on land or in the sea. Shark tried to persuade Lizard and the other members of his family to seek refuge in the sea with the fish. "If you are captured on land," he warned, "you will have to endure death by fire before being eaten!"

"That may be," Lizard replied, "but all of you will be caught and eaten as well!"

And so it came to pass that the children of Tangaroa separated forever. Tangaroa became furious with Tane for sheltering Lizard and his children in the forests, and from that time to this, the god of the sea has been at war with his brother Tane. Tangaroa continues to nibble away at the forests that grow along the seashore, causing Tane's trees to fall prey to his waves. And Tangaroa enjoys chewing the wood from houses and trees that floods bring him. Meanwhile, Tane provides his brother Tu's children with the means to capture Tangaroa's sea-bound children by supplying human beings with wood for their canoes, fishing spears, and fish-hooks, and with flax and other plant fibers for their fishing nets. In response, Tangaroa attacks Tu's children with his waves and rides, capsizing their canoes and claiming their lives.

During the war between Tangaroa and Tane, revenge continued to occupy Tawhiri's thoughts and actions. After he was satisfied with his punishment of Tangaroa, he attacked Rongo and Haumia, the gods of planted and wild food. However, Mother Papa came to their rescue. Knowing that her other children needed the sweet potato and the fern root in order to survive, she hid Rongo and Haumia where Tawhiri could not find them.

Finally, Tawhiri attacked his last brother, Tu, the father and god of war-spirited human beings, and the one brother who originally had suggested that the gods kill Father Rangi and Mother Papa. However, Tu was ready for the assault. He placed his feet upon Mother Papa's chest, where they took their strength from their mother. Thus Tu survived Tawhiri's strongest storm-winds. Tu's victory caused Tawhiri to give up his battle.

Peace had little opportunity to reign on earth, however. Once Tu, the eternal warrior, had proved himself against Tawhiri, he became angry with his four other brothers. Not one of the gods of the earth and the sea had shown the courage and strength against Tawhiri that he had. Tane had been surprised by Tawhiri's attack and had made no effort to stop the father and god of winds and storms from destroying his forests. Tangaroa had avoided any confrontation with Tawhiri and, instead, had taken refuge in the depths of the sea. Rongo and Haumia had let Mother Papa protect them from Tawhiri by hiding them.

Tu was most angered by the fact that not one of his brothers had had the courage and the sense of loyalty to help him in his own fight against Tawhiri. The eternal warrior, therefore, set out to punish the four of them by taking control of their kingdoms.

The fierce father and god of war-spirited human beings decided to attack Tane's children first, before they became numerous enough to outnumber and overwhelm his own children. He fashioned leaves into nooses and hung them cleverly to trap Tane's birds. Once caught, he defiled them by cooking them, and then he ate them.

Next, Tu attacked Tangaroa's children. He wove the flax from Tane's plants into nets and dragged them through the sea to catch Tangaroa's fish. These, too, he defiled by cooking them, and then he ate them.

Finally, Tu attacked the children of Rongo and Haumia. He fashioned a digging stick from one of Tane's trees and wove a flaxen basket from one of Tane's plants. With these, he dug up and collected the sweet potato and the fern root. Once again, he defiled them by cooking them, and then he ate them.

So it has come to pass that, from the time that Tu conquered Tane, Tangaroa, Rongo, and Haumia, the warrior god and his human children have dominated and eaten the children of these gods of earth and sea. To this day, the human family continues to eat Tane's birds, Tangaroa's fish, Rongo's sweet potatoes, and Haumia's fern roots. Tu has never been able to gain power over Tawhiri, but, to this day, he continues to fight him, for Tawhiri's winds and storms remain a destructive force on both earth and sea.

THE CREATION OF HUMAN BEINGS

Before there was man, there was woman, and it was Tane who created the first woman. He molded her from the sacred red clay that had received the blood from the tendons that had bound Father Rangi and Mother Papa together. When he had finished, he blew the breath of life into her nostrils and called her Hine Ahu One, the Earth-Maiden.

Tane loved the woman he had made, and from their love, a daughter called Hine Titama, the Dawn-Maiden, was born. Tane loved Hine Titama as well, and from their love, children were born who became the first men and women.

All was well until Hine Titama asked Tane, "Who is my father?"

When she learned that Tane was her father as well as her husband, she exclaimed, "Because I am so ashamed, Tane, I must now leave you, and our children, and this world of light that I love! I will find my grandmother, Mother Papa, deep in the Underworld, and I will remain there with her from this time forth and forever. I will make a path as I walk, for I know that, in time, our children, their children, and all who come after them will know death and will follow me into the lower world."

In order to be certain that no one attempted to prevent her going, Hine Titama cast a spell of weakness upon Tane and a sleeping spell upon her children. Down, down, down, she traveled from the world of light into the eternal darkness of the lower world.

At the entrance to the Underworld, a guard confronted her. "Return to the upper world, Dawn-Maiden," he advised, "while you still can. Our spirit world is not for one like you! Here it is always black and grim. You would never choose to be here, for this is truly a joyless place!"

"I know that what you say is true," Hine Titama replied. "But it is here that I intend to live, and it is here that I will watch over my children who will be coming to me from the world above."

As Hine Titama turned from the guard to walk through the gates, her eyes fell upon Tane. Despite the deep gloom, she could see that he was tearfully following her.

"Poor Tane!" she cried. "Return to the upper world, and be a father to our children while they live in the world of light. Know that, in time, all of our children, and their children, and their children's children, from this time forth and forever, will follow this path that I have made.

"For death should come to all men and women," she explained, "and then, they should return to the dark world from which they came. That is why I intend to remain here. I want to be a mother to them when it is time for them to join me."

With these words, Hine Titama turned and walked into the Underworld, where she became known as the Night-Maiden and the goddess of Death. From that day to this, the sun begins its morning journey in the east and returns to its home in the west, while Tane follows it on its journey. And men, women, and children follow Hine Titama's path down into the Underworld when Death claims their spirits.

Meanwhile, despite their forced separation, Father Rangi and Mother Papa have continued to feel a great love for each other. In the beginning, Father Rangi cried so long and hard that his tears caused the sea to flood and swallow up most of the land and its people. Most of these people continue to live beneath the sea. Many of them have become so accustomed to living in their murky world that if the sun's rays ever were to touch them, they would die.

Some of Father Rangi and Mother Papa's sons began to fear that the upper world would entirely disappear into the sea unless they could find a way to stop Father Rangi's tears. They decided to ease their parents' grief by turning Mother Papa's face down upon the earth so that she and Father Rangi would not be able to see each

other's tears. Their plan succeeded. The flood-waters that lay upon the upper world subsided, and from that time until this, Father Rangi's tears form the morning dew, while Mother Papa's tears form the morning mist.

Her sons turned Mother Papa's body while her infant son, young Ruaumoko, was drinking at her breast. At first Ruaumoko continued to cling to his mother. Then he fell into the Underworld. In time he grew up. Now whenever he walks around the Underworld, he creates earthquakes in the upper world. Some say that he has become Hine Titama's husband.

THE CREATION OF NEW ZEALAND

Maui, the son of the goddess Taranga and the mortal Makea, was a hero, a trickster, and an inventor. It was he who tamed the sun so that those who live on the earth would have an easier life. However, it was also he who, for a prank, stole fire from those who live on the earth, thereby making life more difficult. And, it was he who first thought of using a barbed spear-point to capture birds and a barbed fish-hook to catch fish.

Maui's success in acquiring food for his wives and children was much greater than the success that his brothers had using traditional fishing methods, and since he never revealed the secrets of his success, his brothers preferred to hunt and fish without him.

One day, Maui overheard his wife complaining that she needed more fish than Maui caught for her. "If you want more fish," he announced, "why don't you simply ask me! You forget my magic powers. If it's fish that you want, I'll catch a fish that is so large that it will spoil before you can finish eating it! And then, I'm sure you will complain about the food that you had to throw away!"

So it came to pass that Maui used a piece of his grandmother's jawbone to create a magic fish-hook. Once he had recited the proper chants over it, he was determined to accompany his brothers on their next fishing trip. He expected that they would set out in their canoe just as the sun set out on its morning journey. He knew that his brothers would be watching out for him, even in one of his transformations, so he decided to hide beneath the planking in the canoe.

The canoe was safely out to sea before Maui decided to reveal his presence. Even then, his brothers were determined to take him home. So it came to pass that Maui resorted to magic. While his brothers were turning the canoe around, Maui so extended the distance between their canoe and land that they decided that it was more trouble to return Maui to shore than to keep him with them.

All was well until the brothers stopped at their usual fishing spot. Then, Maui suddenly spoke up and exclaimed, "Don't anchor here today! There's better fishing farther out!"

So the brothers resumed their paddling and continued toward their second fishing spot. By this time, they were very tired, but Maui was undaunted. "You don't want to anchor here, either!" he told them. "If you really want to catch a boatload of fish, let me take you to the place that I like best!"

Lured by the promise of fine fish, Maui's brothers agreed to paddle further out to sea. Finally, when they no longer could see the land they had left, Maui announced, "Here we are! Throw in the anchor and prepare your lines!"

Just as Maui had promised, fish continually bit their bait and were caught. Soon the canoe was weighted down with a huge load of fish, and the brothers prepared to return home.

"Wait a minute!" Maui cried. "You can't leave just yet! I have to try my own hook!"

"Your own hook!" his brothers exclaimed. "You don't own a hook, and if you mean to use one of our hooks, you can't have it!"

"Don't worry! I don't want one of your hooks," Maui replied. "I have my own right here."

Maui's brothers gaped in astonishment as he reached under his loincloth and pulled out a marvelous fish-hook. At one end of the sparkling, shell shank, a tuft of dog hair waved in the sea breeze. At the other end, Maui had fastened a hook that he had made from his grandmother's jawbone.

Maui found a fishing line in the bottom of the canoe, but his brothers refused to let him use their bait. Therefore, he gave himself a nosebleed and used his blood instead.

"All right now," he told them. "I am ready to fish. Do not say anything, no matter what I say or do! One word from you could make me lose my catch!"

He then threw out his line and recited this spell: "Blow kindly, winds, both you from the northeast and you from the southeast. I have come for my great land. Line, be strong and straight, and lead me to my catch!"

The line suddenly caught, and Maui pulled on it, causing the heavy canoe to tip and take in water. Maui's magic fish-hook had grabbed onto the house of Tangaroa's grandson.

"Let go, Maui!" his brothers screamed, as they frantically bailed out the seawater. They were sure that they would drown, but Maui refused to obey. He was busily using his fishing skill and his magic chants, and he impatiently replied, "What Maui has caught, he cannot set free! He is catching what he has come to catch!"

Meanwhile, Maui's brothers sat in silent terror in their quaking canoe, fearing the tumultuous waves that Maui's fishing had caused. Just when they could endure their fears no longer, they saw a group of thatched, pointed roofs, followed by the houses themselves, and, finally, the great piece of flat land on which the community stood, all slowly emerge from the waves. Maui's "fish" was no creature of the deep. It was a huge island filled with living people who were busily occupied with village life.

Maui tied his fishing line onto a paddle that lay securely in the canoe, and then he told his brothers, "I am going to the sacred place in this village so that I can perform the ritual offering to the gods. Until I have returned to you, you must not eat any food, and you must leave my fish just as it is. If you do not listen to me, you will anger Tangaroa and bring great trouble upon us!"

Despite Maui's warning, his brothers only waited until he was out of sight before they began to eat the sweet fruits of the land. The gods were quick to retaliate. Maui's fish began to thrash about, just as if it were an ordinary fish. Its movements caused the land to become mountainous and, therefore, difficult for human life. When the sun ended its day's journey, the fish finally became quiet. However, the surface of the land had permanently settled into the shape that it has had from that time until this.

Meanwhile, Maui and his brothers paddled back to their home on Hawaiki, where their father greeted them with a song of praise for Maui. "Maui Tikitiki, you are my pride

and joy!" he exclaimed. "You have rescued our ancient land from its burial place at the bottom of the sea. This land disappeared long ago when Father Rangi, being angry over his separation from Mother Papa, helped Tawhiri take vengeance on his brothers by flooding the earth with his rain of tears.

"In times to come," Maui's father continued, "you will become the father of human beings like myself, and not gods like your mother. Some of your children and your children's children will continue to live here in our homeland of Hawaiki, but others will live on the islands that you have rescued from the sea. Therefore, your catching of your great fish will be as important an event to them as the separation of Father Rangi and Mother Papa!

"Your wonderful catch has made you a great hero!" Maui's father concluded. "And for this, you will have everlasting fame! From this time forth and forever, the Maori people will call their fish-shaped north island, 'The Fish of Maui,' their south island, 'Maui's Canoe,' and the cape at Heretaunga, 'Maui's Fish-Hook.'

"In fact," he laughed, "your deed is so great, Maui, that Hawaiki peoples of other lands will also claim that you rescued their islands from the bottom of the sea. And they will call their lands "The Fish of Maui" as well!"