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Hawke's Bay Research Lodge No. 305

A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF MAORIDOM AND FREEMASONRY IN NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY

By the New Zealand Kellerman Lecturer For 2006

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Introduction:

Freemasonry unites men of every country, sect and opinion. It discriminates against no one of good will. It supports the freedom of all regardless of race or religion. It endeavours to help all peoples to live together in peace love and harmony. It helps those who cannot honestly help themselves and its charity knows no bounds. Such is my understanding and observation of what Freemasonry has taught me to aspire to in my everyday life.

When I began researching this paper, I soon became aware of the complexity and scope of the subject material. It has developed into "a work in progress" that will continue beyond the presentation of this, the 2006 Kellerman lecture for Aotearoa - New Zealand.

The term Maori refers to the indigenous people who arrived from East Polynesia approximately one thousand years ago. When the first Maoris arrived in New Zealand they brought with them the story of the deluge, the creation of mankind and the world. They had to adapt to a cooler climate and differences of environment and conditions. Within two hundred years of their arrival, culture for them had altered dramatically.

I intend to cover a number of aspects and compare some Maori and Masonic connections. This connection to Maori culture is not alone but is applicable to traditional societies throughout the world. What makes this type of research interesting is to analyse the close concepts between the two societies, and refer them back to my opening paragraph. Close concepts in relation to Maoridom and Freemasonry include the Great Architect of the Universe, meetings expressed by ritual and symbolism, mysteries and learning, spiritual awareness and life principles. I will conclude with some contemporary observations.

When Captain James Cook¹ arrived in 1769, Maori society and culture still had the characteristics of a Polynesian society; it had developed habits that were particular to Maori. The most important is related to tikanga (custom) that controlled life and day-to-day activities.

The impression that the majority of people are given in the modern day as Maori are the haka at the commencement of a sporting fixture and the tiki purchased in tourist shops. Maori tikanga is general behavioural guidelines for daily life and interaction in Maori culture. Tikanga is commonly based on experience and the learning that has been handed down through generations. It is also based on logic and common sense associated with a Maori worldview. The Maori were aware and in possession of a culture of spirituality that was as advanced as that of Christianity introduced by the Europeans.

Belief in a Supreme Being - Concept of the Great Architect:

This culture and spirituality gave the Maori the qualification that was required to join Freemasonry – a belief in a Supreme Being, an architect and creator of all and everything. For Maori, His name was Io. He was likened to the Jewish Jehovah.

Pei Te Hurinui Jones gives evidence of the strong presence of the Io tradition within the Waikato. In his biography of King Potatau Te Wherowhero², he describes the raising-up ritual for the first Maori king in 1859 and he gives the Io karakia (prayer to the Supreme Being) used by Te Tapihana, whom he describes as 'a High Priest of the ancient Io cult of the Tainui tribes'.

In speaking of the Io religion of the Tainui priesthood, Pei Jones elaborates: “At the outset the declaration is made in the Io religion that the world evolved from Io, the Supreme Being; and his dwelling place is at the apex and centre of Creation.”

Sir Apirana Ngata, in a recorded talk on 'The Cult of Io', recounts how Judge Maning, a resident of Hokianga from 1833, author and judge of the Native Land Court, acquired knowledge of an Io tradition in the North and wrote it down but had the manuscripts burned when on his deathbed. Of interest here is that Maning married the daughter of a well-respected Maori Chief and they had four children

Maning chose to become a follower and he was the only pakeha (non Maori) who made a complete study of the cult of Io. He absorbed it all, including the karakia and was initiated into it. He had to leave and return to London for medical treatment. Subsequently Maning was diagnosed with cancer. While he was dying he wrote down all the knowledge he was aware of relating to the cult of Io.

Eventually his conscience began to prick him because one of the obligations you undertake when initiated in the cult of Io is to swear secrecy. He had taken this oath of secrecy and Maning ordered the housemaid to make a fire and the manuscript was destroyed by fire³. How familiar is this? Was Maning a Freemason? I intend pursuing this in the future.

Early Maori/Freemasonry Connection expressed:

There are many general assertions that a system of signs identical with modern Freemasonry exists within the Maori society. The most precise account is a paper in the New Zealand Craftsman of 8 February 1898, by Brother Henry Stowell⁴, “being a Native of New Zealand on my grandmother’s side, she being an Aboriginal Native” ⁵.

The paper is quoted in its entirety⁶:

“The Maori in their traditions, fangitawhiti (epic poems), and language show conclusively that ages ago there was at Hawaiiiki, a grand temple known as wharekura, at which temple meetings were regularly held and presided over by tohunga (priestly experts), or initiates of a very high order, and wherein was taught and practised a perfect system of principles in an esoteric form, with exhaustive and appropriate rituals, also symbols, signs, and passwords, and that these were kept and preserved on tables of stone, which latter were deposited in the temple. The ritual and symbols were entrusted by the ariki-ranji (divine and supreme head) to the various officers in order to properly carry out the ceremonials connected with these meetings, whereat only those others who were entitled to be present had the happiness of listening to the recitals, and of observing the uses of the higher symbols. Regarded from a Maori point of view this Masonry is neither more nor less than the relation of ‘the main features of creation and the origin and history of the higher destiny of man’, which relation was accompanied with appropriate symbols. Tane was the G.A.O.T.U., and he may or may not be identical with the Chaldean, Oannes. The language in which this wisdom religion was embodied is extremely archaic, but thanks to my having been taught in my youth, by an aged tohunga and relative, some of the symbols and mysteries, I understand many of the allusions and am acquainted with various signs. A knowledge of astronomy, being absolutely essential to a proper realisation of the principles of the order, and its adepts — tohunga-kokorangi — were constantly taught in observatories, its elements and phenomena, to those who were accepted for qualification.

Under the Maori system the two main pillars, together with their chapiters, were represented before the dome of the sky. These were divine. A subordinate pillar was ‘the Pillar of the Earth’; at certain points the nagana, or centre, was traced. These were two great circles which intersected and which had their corresponding circles. The square was taught upon four points of the visible universe. Moral teachings were more or less associated with the Figure of the Ripeka cross, the type of good and evil, or enlightenment and ignorance by two opposing lines. It appears that there is a universal tendency to restrict, thwart, or delimit its beneficial functions. Hence, ‘he waewae tapeka ta ta ara ripeka’ (‘A foot, which diverges from the good or pure to the evil or impure path’). The figure of the triangle, tantora, formed the basis of, or for, the most elaborate calculations in connection with astronomy and geography.

The terms ‘mason’, ‘masonry’, ‘masonic’, are used in the English sense and for convenience. Days

and months were measured by successive phases of the moon, while the year was marked by the heliacal rising in June of the star puanga (Rigel in Orion) due east, this being the star of the Maori new year, and the first sign of the awahio-rangi, or zodiac.

I have no knowledge of the use of such a thing as the 24-inch gauge, but can vouch that calculations of length or distance were worked out with nice exactitude. The signs in use varied from those of the Europeans. Still in some important respects, so far as a mere Master Mason is able to compare, there is astonishing agreement, and the agreement suggests a variation on the European scale, owing to the incorporation or blending therein, of the terms of the Oath. The ordinance of the tapu sanctity (a sacred restriction) was its (masonic) very essence: any infringement thereof, or neglect of its observance, by whomsoever, resulted in sure and speedy death, which was the true penal sign, silent and awesome. Then again 'speculative masonry' was not advanced or urged, and each one appears to have used his enlightenment for the purpose of furthering his knowledge along these ancient lines, which embraced the complete system, offering that fulness of happiness granted to mortals who were enabled to penetrate the very depths of nature, and by revelling in her mysteries attain the threshold of the divine".

Maori Family and Social Structure:

Maori social life was based primarily around the whanau (family) while political activity was practiced mainly at the hapu (sub-tribe) level. Each hapu had a clearly defined territory and was under the control of a rangatira (chief). The various whanau of the hapu lived within this territory. When threatened, or for other political purposes, hapu would join forces under the collective umbrella of the iwi (tribe). All of these social and political units were held together by whakapapa (genealogy) and iwi might be considered as large families. A person's position or seniority in the hierarchy of these arrangements was also determined by whakapapa.

The most dominant whakapapa were those that most directly traced descent in the male line to the founding ancestor of the group. It was usually, but not always, the rangatira of the group that could lay claim to this sort of dominant whakapapa. There were very strong incentives to ensure people behaved properly. Maori customary laws were administered by the rangatira and tohunga. The community had a very strong, religious-based, belief in the power of tapu that the rangatira and tohunga were able to manipulate. Maori spiritual leaders are called tohunga and have specific detailed knowledge of Maori spirituality and culture.

These people play a very important role in a range of Maori cultural forums. Tohunga will often be asked to officiate at tangi (mourning ceremonies), attend to sick people, officiate at the opening of buildings and apply and remove tapu at appropriate times. They tend to be highly respected and somewhat intimidatory members of the Maori community.

The Three Baskets of Knowledge:

Traditional Maori thinking presents us with three sources of knowledge.⁷

- First there is the experience of our senses.
- Secondly there is our understanding of what lies behind our sense experience.
- Thirdly there is the experience we have, particularly in ritual, of our oneness with each other and with the past.

These three sources of knowledge are spoken of as the three baskets of knowledge, brought down from the heavens.

In Maori tradition, tane (the guardian of forests and birds) was given the privilege of travelling through the heavens in search of the baskets of knowledge. After many difficulties, he entered Matangireia, the twelfth and sacred heaven. Here in the treasure house, Rangitea, he was given three baskets of knowledge. These he took home and hung in a house that became the first whare wananga (house of learning).

The baskets contain wisdom and art, religious rites, history and knowledge of war and magic. In traditional Maori society, knowledge is to be shared. Common knowledge is shared every day through

normal activities. Sacred knowledge is given to those with wisdom and entrusted with the responsibility of keeping the knowledge and passing it on. Holders of that knowledge, one way or other, have been entrusted to use it wisely. This knowledge was imparted, by the ancient Maori to the sons of chiefs and priests, as their secret lore, through various schools of learning.

Influence of European Settlement:

In 1792 a group of sealers in Dusky Sound became the first non-Maori to begin settling in New Zealand. Many early British settlers came via New South Wales. They consisted of sealers, whalers and escaped convicts all looking for a new direction in life. The traders opened up the world of commerce to the Maori communities.

Missionaries arrived in New Zealand, introducing religious ideals based on the Christian religion, God and the church. It was strongly believed that Christianity was a civilised way of living, according to European standards, and Maori should be taught this way of life. Unfortunately the Maori schools of learning were closed by the missionaries and replaced with the imposition of the Christian doctrine. Maoris were encouraged to turn away from old traditions and teachings and embrace the new. This resulted in the loss of this knowledge and what was left, subsequently became fragmented and distorted.

Maori spirituality: wairuatanga and religion:

“Perhaps the most difficult problem a Mason has to solve is to bring the power of faith in the unseen order to which the spirit is allied, to bear in dealing with the material world to which his body is akin”⁸.

The Maori worldview is of a three-tiered, inter-related structure made up of the so-called Realm of Ultimate Reality (the gods); the Realm of the Human and the Realm of the Dead. This worldview binds Maori society together as a functional whole, producing a holistic view of life. Mauri (life force), mana (power, authority), tapu (sacred, prohibition, restrictions,) and noa (common, ordinary things, free from tapu) belong at the very heart of Maori religion.

Traditionally for Maori, all things have a type of soul, or mauri, which creates strong spiritual ties to the land. Many Maori do not see their existence as something separate or opposed to the world around them. Birds, fish, plants, rocks, the moon and mist - all living and natural things are genealogically linked to people through rangi and papa (sky and earth). Mana is recognised in many things including people, land, nature, and also man-made objects. Touching objects or beings containing mana, by non-authorised people or objects, can cause the mana and the tapu of the object to be lost.

The history of the Maori world is the history of ancestors or whakapapa (genealogy). Maori identity is found in belonging to a tribal group. Whakapapa is recounted in a complex and rich tradition of mythology, legend, narrative, ritual, song, names and the arts. The supernatural, and the superhuman, feature prominently in many of these ancient explanations. Today, Maori belief and spirituality continues to play an important part in shaping the lives and ideas of Maori people in New Zealand.

The question must now be asked: What does all this spirituality have to do with Freemasonry? The answer I offer is based upon two important parts of our ritual.

- The first degree tracing board is so rich in spirituality that we do not take the time to reflect on it and for many it comes too late:

“... the lodge is in length from east to west, in width between north and south, in depth from the surface of the earth to its centre, and even as high as the heavens [in other words, the lodge is a representation of the universe]... our lodges stand on holy ground — why? — because the first lodge was consecrated — why was it consecrated? — on account of three grand offerings thereon made, which met with divine approbation [which are then specified]... our lodges are situated due east and west — why? — because all places of divine worship are, or ought to be, so situated... our lodges are supported by three great pillars — they are called wisdom, strength and beauty — why? — wisdom to contrive, strength to support and beauty to adorn... the universe is the temple of the Deity whom we serve [we have already worked that out from the foregoing] — wisdom, strength and beauty are about

His throne as pillars of His works, for His wisdom is infinite, His strength omnipotent and beauty shines through the whole of the creation in symmetry and order. The heavens He has stretched forth as a canopy; the earth He has planted as a footstool; He crowns his temple with stars, as with a diadem and with his hand he extends the power and glory. The sun and moon are messengers of His will, and all His law is concord. The three great pillars supporting a freemasons' lodge are emblematic of those divine attributes... the covering of a freemasons' lodge is a celestial canopy of divers colours, even the heavens... In all regular, well-formed, constituted lodges there is a point within a circle round which the brethren cannot err; this circle is bounded between north and south by two grand parallel lines, one representing Moses, [who received the wisdom from God on high] the other King Solomon [who dispensed it downwards to mankind, a nice point of symmetry]; on the upper part of this circle rests the Volume of the Sacred Law, supporting Jacob's ladder, the top of which reaches to the heavens... in going round this circle, we must necessarily touch on both those parallel lines, likewise on the Sacred Volume; and while a mason keeps himself thus circumscribed, he cannot err...

- In the third degree, I was raised and instructed to lift my eyes:

"... to that bright morning star, whose rising brings peace and tranquillity to the faithful and obedient of the human race."

Maori Brethren Association:

A very close relationship between the spiritual aspect, the ritual workings of Freemasonry and the Maori way of life, saw the formation of the Maori Brethren Association.

'A ceremony unique in the history of New Zealand Freemasonry took place at Lodge Otaihape, No 142, on Saturday, 29th March, when a Maori brother was raised to the Third Degree by a team of Maori brethren ... The very many brethren present were much impressed with the dignified rendering of the ceremony, and felt they had been privileged to help in making Masonic history.' 9

To this day what is known as the Maori 'All Black Team' still perform ceremonial workings. Recently at a lodge meeting, the working tools were presented to a newly passed brother. Three brethren took one tool each and explained the symbolism of it with gestures as well as words. The impressive all Maori ceremonies are dignified, unique with oratory and perfect in presentation.

The observations of V.W. Bro Ted Morris of Canada who witnessed the working being performed by the Maori Brethren's Association in a New Zealand Lodge gives an insight into the spiritual aspect.¹⁰

"FRIENDLY SPIRITS WATCH OVER NZ LODGE - HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND:

The Maori Brothers Association isn't a lodge. Like the Caribbean Degree Team in Ontario, the Philippine-Canadians who gather to support a brother, and the Police Degree Teams, the Maori brothers gather in New Zealand for special occasions. In fact, their assembling helps make any occasion special. Buddy Raukua had died some time ago. His son Douglas had died within the past year. Both were Past Masters of Lodge Te Marama No. 186, a country lodge in Taupiri. The village is on the main rail line between the capital of Auckland and Hamilton, New Zealand's fourth largest city.

Norrie Keenan, Worshipful Master of Lodge Tawhiri No. 166 in Hamilton had the pleasure of passing his son, Shaun Jarod Nankervis, to the second degree. These were the reasons why the Maori Brothers Association had chosen to meet here this particular evening and Lodge Te Marama.

WHY NEW ZEALAND?

It was one of those rare February days in New Zealand. I'd left the land of ice and snow and was basking in the summer of the southern hemisphere. Masonic travelling creates coincidences. Two years ago I was visiting Mimico Lodge in Toronto, because my wife was entertaining her book club. Dick Morgan from Hamautari (Sic) Lodge in Hamilton, New Zealand was a fellow traveller that night, visiting his son in Toronto. The following year Dick introduced me to Andy Shearer, a Past Master of Tawhiri, with whom I arranged exchange visits this year. Andy invited George Heath and myself to see a Maori degree in a country lodge, so instead of a snowstorm in Toronto, we were parking the car in a pasture adjoining the country lodge.

THE ASSEMBLY

The brethren came from valley villages and surrounding towns and from lodges in larger cities to share in the work and honor Norrie and Shaun. One by one the Maori brethren assumed the chairs of the regular officers. The work of the evening opened with an invocation from the chaplain, first in English, which I understood, then a different version in Maori, the significance of which I was to appreciate days later when Norrie and I were sipping a tea together.

Each Maori community has a meetinghouse. It is less than a church and more than a cultural centre, encapsulating the tradition of the families and individuals of the tribe in artwork and carving. It is in these buildings that much of the oral tradition of history and music is passed to the next generation, and oh my, is the music beautiful!

NOT REALLY GONE

The ancestors aren't worshiped, but they are remembered and appreciated. Norrie explained that, according to tradition, the members of the community who die do not leave the community immediately. Their essence remains part of the daily life so long as they remain in living memory. This isn't a ghost story, because there are no ghosts and there is no haunting, but there is a benevolent presence.

So when Norrie assumed the gavel to have the Maori Brother pass Shaun, it was understood that Buddy and Douglas, both deceased, would be a welcome presence. Why not? They The Craft in life (sic). But there was a hitch. These friendly spirits don't pass uninvited through doors and walls. They only come where they are wanted. They must be invited (and remember the tyler at the door!). So after the chaplain completed the invocation in English, he addressed Buddy and Douglas and explained that their old friend and Brother Norrie was having a special night with Shaun. Would they care to come in and share the brotherhood they had so enjoyed in life?

All this was explained to me by Norrie, the following week. The traditional supplication is a "Karakia" in which those who have passed on are invited to watch over the proceedings, whether it be a lodge meeting or a birthday party. And when the work of the evening was completed, and a benediction was being pronounced by the chaplain, he spoke a second time in Maori, releasing the special visitors to continue their friendly presence within the community.

ROOM FOR DIFFERENCES

Men of good will form Masonic Lodges. The only demands of faith are that the members hold a belief in a Supreme Being, believe in Divine Revelation, and accept that virtue is rewarded and vice is punished. Any belief beyond these basics is a matter between a man and the Creator, and his brethren respect that relationship.

As Norrie and I were sipping our afternoon cupper, I asked him, "Were Buddy and Douglas really there?"

"Yes. Yes, they were." He paused. "We have spiritual views on all things that are natural. The fact that someone has died doesn't mean he's disappeared. Blood in the living is the continuity of life while they breathe air. Later, their spiritual task is to protect and comfort the people."

Then he threw the question back at me. "You were in lodge. Do you believe they were there?" I recalled the line from Hamlet, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy, my dear Horatio."

"Were they there?" I responded. "I'd like to think so."

Symbolical Aspects:

In 1887 Dr. L.L. Zamenhof created a language, which became known as Esperanto. The intention was to develop an international language that would enable better communicating skills and understanding between various cultures and nations, with the result being a more peaceful world. This never really caught on however. We do have an international language in the world today, one, which has been with us since time immemorial – this is 'the language of symbols.'

We are surrounded by symbols in our everyday lives – when we are driving, the octagonal stop sign, arrows point us to directions of travel, public toilet symbols and information centres to name a few. A stylised ‘M’ representing a pair of golden arches tell us where Big Macs can be found. The meanings of symbols do change over time such as the swastika in India which became used by rulers such as Charlemagne and Hitler and is now associated with evil.

When studying old traditions and folk lore it is evident in many cultures that stone plays a predominant role in teachings and very quickly it becomes apparent that it forms the foundations of those teachings. In Masonic rituals stone plays an important role, starting with an Entered Apprentice, who is instructed to polish the rough stone with certain tools and ending with stone featuring in other degrees. At the completion of the initiation ceremony, the new Mason is placed in an area of the lodge room and told that he now represents the cornerstone on which Freemasonry’s spiritual temple must be built.

In Rotorua (New Zealand), the Geyserland Daylight Lodge No 462 NZC has a logo designed by L.S. (Lew) Vause, as recently as April 1996.

‘Thinking, Learning, Working together in harmony for its worthy objectives is truly a Masonic activity’ - Geyserland Daylight Lodge 462 boldly states these objectives as part of its logo (illustrated above) so that prospective members may gain a professed ideal of our freemasonry. The boiling-hot geyser is the rarest of the hidden mysteries of nature and its sciences. The Geyserland logo is symbolic of the deeper meanings of a substituted secret, which is too sacred to depict, except as an Altar representative of God, or “Te Makawe”.

To the untaught eye “Te Makawe” is a sacred volcanic stone hewn from a local quarry and “dedicated to our Earthly Guardian under divine protection”. It overlooks the Maori village of Ohinemutu and is near to our Masonic lodge room.

To the craftsman mason, his eye is taught to see the perfect ashlar within the rough stone surface. He is taught to direct his life towards a perfecting of the six facets representative of harmony each with the other in respect of freemasonry.

Two fern fronds are founded in a common soil. The raised fronds meet the symbols of God within Freemasonry.

We are all aware of the significance of darkness to light in Freemasonry and a reference based on Maori legend is illustrated in a poem written by Violet May Cottrell, who lived in the Hawke’s Bay area in the 1930s, entitled “Pania of the Reef: A Maori Legend”. Her inspiration came from the statue of Pania on the Napier waterfront, which is regarded as a local landmark. Its Hiawatha-like cadences well evoke emergence from darkness to light.

*Pania, beautiful sea maiden,
Coming from dark depths mysterious
From the ocean’s strange, weird caverns,
Dwelt alone upon the shore.
Well she loved the golden sunlight,
Glinting, flashing on the waters;
Gloried in the noontide splendour
And the rosy glow of sunsets ...*

Contemporary Observations and Connections to Maoridom:

Placed in front of the Master at the Festive Board in Lodge Warner No 2256 in the Province of Essex (England) is a waka taua (Maori war canoe). In 1914, at the commencement of the First World War, the Revd A D Parry was Honorary Chaplain to the New Zealand Forces stationed at Grey Towers Barracks. He knew that amongst the ranks were masons wishing to attend Lodge meetings.

Subsequently six members of the New Zealand Forces were invited, in 1916, to attend a lodge meeting at the Royal Forest Hotel, Chingford. Interesting of note here was that emergency meetings were then held to initiate up to six NZ soldiers at a time.

On the 11 December 1917, the Warner Lodge was presented by the New Zealand Brethren, with an exquisitely carved model of a waka taua, decorated with feathers. This was carved by one of the Maori soldiers in the camp at Hornchurch.

Several members of Warner Lodge became members of Lodge Matamata No 265 NZC and from this initial meeting there has developed a long lasting and friendly relationship which exists to this day between the two lodges. The last living link sadly was severed in November 1980 when R W Bro William Hollis passed to the Grand Lodge above at the age of 90 years.

A set of Masonic gavels and blocks, crafted from whalebone (gavels) and paua (blocks), are in the Kaikoura Museum. Each of them is marked for the respective officer. W Bro James Johnston, a member of Lodge Kaikoura No 60, made them and presented them to Lodge Kaikoura No 60 for their Diamond Jubilee in 1947. Jimmy was one of the people who, in 1926, captured the whale, only the second sperm whale to be taken off the Kaikoura Coast.

The ocean has always been the dominant force for the Maori people who travelled huge distances in their long canoes and lived on the bounty of the tropical waters. They had a great respect for the creatures of the sea and in particular dolphins and whales. The whale with its great size and obvious intelligence played an important part in the culture of the Maori people. Whales were often represented as an example of family love, with mother and calf always side by side and touching at every opportunity. Paua shell is considered by Maori as tapu taonga (which means a sacred gift or treasure). Items crafted from natural materials and presented to a lodge have a very deep symbolical meaning.

In 1996, Lodge Ruataniwha No 172 (Takapau) handed in its charter; however, the honours board for this lodge is now mounted in Lodge Woburn No 25 (Waipukurau), which was its sponsoring “mother” lodge. Bro Russell (Rusty) Allen, an initiate of Ruataniwha 172, was the prime mover in having this carved honours board dedicated to all those Maori brethren who served as members of his lodge. This included his father-in-law, W Bro Tommy Hanita.

The honours board is in the form of a meetinghouse without a window or a door, as these are female symbols and the lodge is a male institution. The head figure represents King Solomon, with his two arms being Hiram Abiff and Tubal Cain. The support pillars represent B on the left, J on the right, whilst the base represents the Freemasons of New Zealand.¹¹

Masonic Lodge buildings have long been a distinctive feature of so many cities and towns throughout the world. They have inspired many conversations as to what occurs behind the walls in a building with little or no windows to the outside. New Zealand fine arts photographer, Fiona Pardington, was intrigued by the parallels she saw between the concept of Lodge membership and her own Ngai Tahu (her iwi) heritage. In her art exhibit, entitled Helping Hands, Fiona identified a connection between the Masonic philosophy of helping hands within the community and the Maori concept of awhina.

Attempting to obtain a definition of the word awhina reveals twenty-four results in the Ngata Dictionary. These include aid, assistance, grant, help, backing, contribution and muck-in. Each of these express Masonic principles, therefore the connection is successfully illustrated. Fiona responded, in photographs and a large mural, to what she saw pertaining to the rituals and traditions of the Masonic Lodge in Wanaka. Some photographs were displayed within the lodge building, but the highlight was the giant photographic mural on the outside of the building, which gave an insight into the work of the Freemasons. The mural was an image of a giant ‘cloak’ of kakapo (a native parrot) feathers, ‘thrown around’ the Lodge building, representing the helping hands that throw the cloak around the shoulders of another, in essence an action that reflects the work of Freemasons.

During the month of September 2004, the Freemasons of New Zealand supported and drove an initiative known as FAME. This was an acronym for ‘Freemason’s Awareness Month Events’. The message and theme was: Freemasonry, You, Your Family, Your Community. I do not propose to comment on the success or failure of this initiative, but comment on the concept.

If you consider the Maori tradition of family (whanau) socialisation and kinship ties, I do not see any issues that are not able to be related to the traditional values and to Freemasonry. Maori tradition links individuals and families intricately with the land and each other. In traditional Maori times, the whanau was the place where initial teaching and socialisation of Maori took place. More than an extended family social unit, the whanau was based on kinship ties and provided an environment within which certain responsibilities and obligations were maintained.

Individuals are traditionally dependent on the whanau for support and sustenance. Collective strength and kinship ties are of prime importance. Children are not just the concern of the biological parents, but the entire whanau community. The raising, care, education and discipline of children are the responsibility of everyone, male, female, young and old. Maori recognise the importance of extended family relationships. As such, there are overlapping and intersecting family relationships which are economically, socially and culturally linked. Maori perspectives on spiritual knowledge in such areas as health, death, punishment, magic, psychic and animistic beliefs are not clearly understood by many people, including Maori people themselves. Those who do have some knowledge are now adapting that (as fragmented as it may be) to preserve and maintain it for future generations. This observation is evident in many societies throughout the world today.

On 10 March 2005 the “Potter Children’s Garden”¹² was opened by HRH Prince Charles, and a distinctive feature is the mythological maze of Maui, which is an example of Freemasonry and Maori traditions working together for the community.

Conclusion:

New Zealand is inherently a bi-cultural society, however, it has swiftly developed into a multi-cultural society and Freemasonry recognises this in all its principles. We should keep uppermost in our minds the de-population of full-blooded Maoris and the increasing introduction of ‘mixed-blood’ generations. More than ever, given these conditions, Freemasonry must play a more important role in expressing its principles and putting them into practice. A clearer understanding of the concepts and traditions of societies is going to be beneficial to all.

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Superscripts:

1. Cook was not a Freemason - according to the argument and compelling evidence of Roy H Clemens

2. Potatau Te Wherowhero was the first Maori King
3. Reported in David Colquhoun's dissertation on F E Maning
4. The GL of NZ records Bro Henry Stowell as being a Native Interpreter when initiated in Lodge Hawera No 34 in 1894
5. Quote from the New Zealand Craftsman, 8 February 1898, p169
6. This paper was in response to an enquiry from the Grand Lodge of Montana which asked if "any of the natives who are said to be quite intelligent, Christianised, and full British subjects, have ever been initiated into Masonry?" (New Zealand Craftsman, 1 January 1898, p145)
7. This subject is very involved and, in isolation, would be a research topic in its own right. I make mention of it in this lecture to indicate that the knowledge was a learned experience undertaken by "proficient teachers" by way of ritual and ceremony
8. Statement made on Thursday 1 March 1928 by the Grand Master, MWBro General Sir Charles Fergusson, at the consecration of Lodge Aroha No 293 (Rotorua). New Zealand Craftsman, 2 April 1928, pp290-291
9. Reported in the New Zealand Craftsman on 1 May 1930 under the title: A Unique Ceremony
10. Reprint from <http://www.grandlodge.on.ca/Traveller/traveller42.htm>
11. Bro Allen put a lot of thought into the symbolism of this carving so that the master carver, Mr Sam Moeke of Tuhoi, could interpret it.
12. The Potter Masonic Trust, which is administered by the Freemasons of New Zealand, granted \$177,000 to the Auckland Regional Council for the construction of an especially dedicated Children's Garden in the Botanic Gardens in Manurewa, Auckland (New Zealand Freemason, vol 33 no.2, 2005, p5)