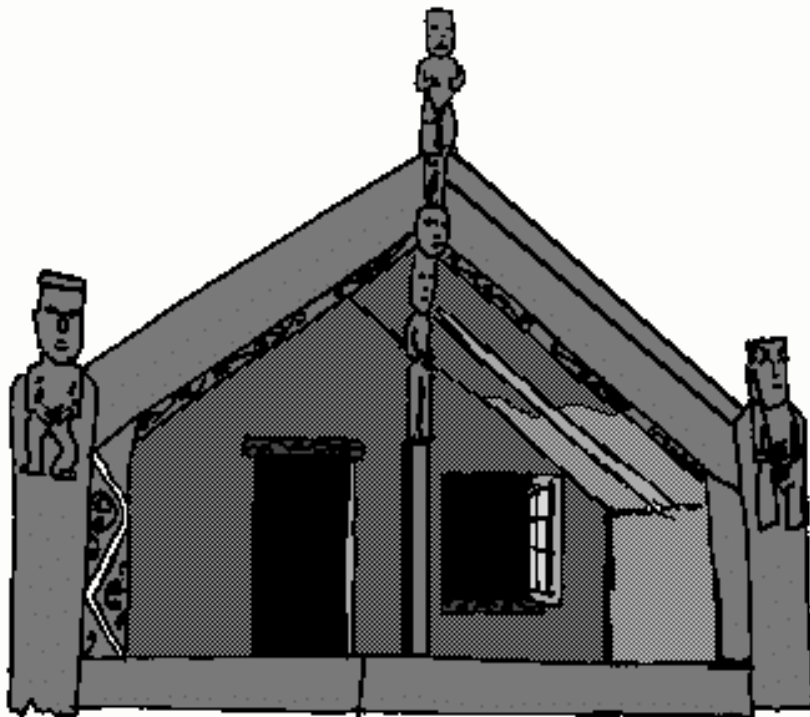


10 Stages of a Pohiri



(Marae Protocol)

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Pohiri - What is It?

The pohiri (powhiri in some places) is the welcome ceremony. It removes the tapu of the Manuhiri to make them one with the Tangata Whenua and is a gradual process of the Manuhiri (visitors) and the Tangata Whenua (Home people) coming together.

There are many variations to a pohiri, but here we will look at the full 10 stages of pohiri.

1. Ko Nga Tangata

'No People, No Powhiri'

Generally there are two major groups of people on the marae.

a) The Tangata Whenua (The Local People)

The local people whom by genealogy and nowadays by association have a turangawaewae (situational identity) to the marae.

Their turangawaewae gives them the right to determine tikanga (procedures) on the marae, to determine functions, to define roles on the marae and to enjoy giving hospitality to others. It also prescribes their responsibilities and obligations to visitors. They have the basic task of preparing for visitors, ensuring that they are well fed and looked after and generally doing all they can to make the hui a success. They contribute to the food supplies, provide the work force for the kitchen, dining room, meeting house and grounds and welcoming visitors. The tangata whenua can be sub-divided into sub-groups based on their prescribed roles although it is true that roles can overlap.

Ko Nga Kaumatua (The Elders)

It is very difficult to know when an elder is an elder in comparison with an adult. It varies from marae to marae, some are exponents of Maoritanga, and others are exponents of the Whaikorero. In some districts where there are very few old folk, the younger group of men and women assume the role of the elders. In other areas where the number of elders are greater, the old leaders are very old and the younger ones have to wait in the "wings" during a formal welcome - whereas on other marae they could be leading the welcome. Their role is to "front" the marae, welcome the visitors, ensure that the tikanga (procedure) is strictly adhered to and generally or specifically pass on their knowledge to the young. They should be chosen by the people, and not by themselves!

Ko Nga Pakeke (The Adults)

These are the people who are the backbone of the marae. They are the ones who organise the catering, are usually the chief ringawera, and organise the setting up of the whare, the laundry work and ensure that the place is upkept.

Ko Nga Matatahi (The Young People)

Their role is to take an active part in the running of hui. Helping in the kitchen, setting the tables, waiting on the tables, clearing away and doing the dishes is a vital role. They also help with powhiri in a supportive role.

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Ko Nga Tamariki (The Children)

This is the first stage in serving an apprenticeship on a marae. It is at this age, with guidance from the other three groups that the tamariki learn the boundaries of the marae.

b) The Manuhiri (Visitors)

Visitors comprise the second main division in the marae encounter situation. As visitors they take their lead from the established tikanga of the tangata whenua to avoid offending and to show reciprocally the respect that people have for one another. Recognising the reciprocal nature of the marae encounter and the costs such encounters incur, the manuhiri make their contribution not only in respecting local patterns of behaviour but also in the form of a koha (support money given by the manuhiri to the tangata whenua).

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2. Ko te Inoi

The Maori people have always had a strong spiritual belief. Before the start of the main powhiri, each side should say an inoi, asking for guidance to ensure nothing goes wrong. Normally the manuhiri wait at the tomokanga (gate entrance) of the marae with women and children flanked closely by the men. This indicates to the tangata whenua that they are ready.

The tangata whenua group wait in front or at the side of the marae. As many of the tangata whenua as possible should do this as an expression of their welcome.

3. Ko te Wero

Wero literally means - 'to cast a spear' and the purpose of the wero was to find out whether the manuhiri came in peace or in war. The wero is always issued by a tane, who should be the best in weapons, as the mana of the marae rests on his shoulders.

The taki is the name given to the challenge dart, which is placed before the manuhiri. It can be a twig, a carved dart or a weapon. If the taki is a weapon, the person picking it up must be careful not to pick it up by the handle as this would indicate war-like intentions to the tangata whenua. Since Tohu and Te Whiti, the Taranaki people usually put down the Raukura, the white feather that is a symbol of peace. A wero may be issued to a wahine of rank but the taki must always be picked up by a tane of her party.

On a full ceremonial occasion, there are three challenges, the first is the Rakau Whakaara (warning challenger), the second is the Rakau Takoto and the third is the Rakau Whakawaha. Those that have been chosen to do the wero for their marae or their people, should be well versed in the implications of the wero before they ever take part in one. The full significance of the wero stems from the traditional need of the marae to determine the intent of their manuhiri. This was done without any physical contact between the tangata whenua and the manuhiri, but it was done through a spiritual awareness of the actions of people and their responses.

4. Karanga

Normally a woman from the host side, Kai Karanga calls first to indicate to the manuhiri to move forward on to the marae. This is normally answered by a woman's response from the manuhiri, Kai Whakaatu. The purpose of the karanga is to weave a spiritual rope to allow the waka of the manuhiri to be pulled on. It should never be broken and the sound should be continuous, each side weaving in and out of each other. The karanga also opens the tapu of Te Maraenui Atea o Tumatauenga to allow safe passage across for the manuhiri. A wahine must never karanga if she has her mate wahine, or if she is hapu, for at those stages of her life she is incapable of opening the tapu of Te Maraenui Atea o Tumatauenga.

The karanga is not just a call of one person to another. It is a spiritual call that has been heard in Aotearoa for generations and generations and it provides the medium by which the living and the dead of the manuhiri may cross the physical space to unite with the living and the dead of the tangata whenua. It can also be an identifying call from the manuhiri indicating where the group has come from. At a tangihanga where groups follow one another this becomes more crucial.

The karanga awakens the emotions. It brings an awareness that what is happening is not just a simple act onto a marae - there is a presence of people, both physical and spiritual. The whole procedure of coming together is based upon a tradition that is as meaningful today as it is in the past.

Manuhiri Movement (Call) While the host will stand during the karanga, the manuhiri move forward to the puku (centre) of the marae.

5. Haka Pohiri

After those doing the karanga have woven the rope, the haka pohiri pulls on the canoe of the manuhiri, hence the reason 'Toia mai te waka' is used at so many powhiri. Often at a tangihanga those doing the powhiri will hold greenery in their hands. The greenery should be specially chosen ensuring that the leaves have a light side and a dark side, representing light and darkness or life and death. The leaves remind us that life is linked with death, that life and death are interwoven.

The call of the haka pohiri likens the arrival of the group of visitors to the safe arrival of a canoe, with its paddlers and passengers, to the shore. The canoe is dragged safely to a resting place onto the shore. Likewise the voices of the haka pohiri symbolically represent the rope by which the visitors are pulled safely onto the marae. So, from the gates the rope platted voice of the Kai Karanga intertwines and twists to give greater strength to the voices of the haka pohiri, strengthened still further by the Kai Whakaatu. As long as there are people and the marae, the rope represented by the voices of people is a rope that ties and pulls people together. It stretches from the past, appears in the present, and disappears to serve future generations.

Acknowledgment to those who have passed on Once the manuhiri have approached the puku, they pause and with the tangata whenua bow their heads for two or three minutes in remembrance. Immediately after, at a given sign, the manuhiri move to take up the seats provided with the speakers sitting in the front row of seats.

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6. Mihi

There are two methods by which the speakers interact.

Whakawhitiwhiti mai / Tu atu utuutu

Speakers alternate, with the tangata whenua beginning and finally ending after the speakers have alternated.

Paeke / Pa Harakeke

All the tangata whenua speak and then all the manuhiri speak. The very last speaker is always the tangata whenua. In both methods the tangata whenua will have the final say.

Below are some of the areas in which each style is used:

Paeke	Tu Atu Tu Mai
Nga Puhi	Te Arawa
Ngati Whatua	Ngati Tuwharetoa
Ngati Awa	Ngai te Rangi
Tuhoe	Ngati Raukawa
Whakatohea	Waikato
Te Whanau a Apanui	Ngati Maniapoto
Ngati Porou	Ngati Maru
Rongowhakaata	Ngati Paoa
Aitanga a Mahaki	*
Ngati Kahungunu	*
Taranaki	*

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7. Oriori - Waiata

The oriori is a chant which 'makes or breaks' the speech. Sometimes it is referred to as a relish or a garnish of a speech. It should uphold the mana of the speaker and the group.

Each item should be chosen with care - the manuhiri should never chant to the tangata whenua a chant with the words "Haere Mai" in it. The reason for this is that Haere Mai means welcome and it is not appropriate for the manuhiri to welcome the tangata whenua! This also applies for every other occasion, you would not chant a happy chant at a sad occasion, nor a sad chant at a happy occasion.

Nowadays, people tend to sing items that have modern tunes, which are called waiata. However, it is often at our Tangaihanga, the richness of Maori can be heard, calling through the ages in the traditional items.

8. Koha

Normally the last speaker on the manuhiri side presents the koha. In present times koha is normally given in monetary values. In the past, koha would often consist of korowai, taonga, food or local delicacies. In the instance where food was to be the koha, it was not laid on Te Maraenui Atea o Tumatauenga because of the rules of tapu and noa. In these times where koha is money, it is used to offset the costs of accommodation, food, electricity, laundry expenses, breakages and an additional amount for any further development the local people may wish to make on the marae.

It is normally the prerogative of the manuhiri to decide how much to give and an assessment can be made based on much it costs to accommodate people per day for the number of days they are staying. It is also the obligation of the manuhiri to lay a koha down no matter how long the visitors remain, even if it is only for one or two hours. The moneyed society around the marae is not built on aroha and the marae requires financial support to maintain it.

Many people have not appreciated these points and consequently local people have had to take from their own pockets to offset the costs. To increase the mana of the manuhiri it should be remembered that the assessment of the size of the koha should err on the liberal side.

The koha, in an envelope, is laid down in front of the manuhiri on the marae. This the first contact made by both sides. Ensure that it has coins in it so it will not blow away. Do not put your prized mere down on it, as has been done, because you are presenting the mere as well to the marae.

A local person will pick it up. This is normally accompanied by a karanga.

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9. Hongi

It is now that the tangata whenua will indicate to the manuhiri to come in a certain direction, in line, to shake hands and to hongi.

This practice originates from the dawn of time and is a symbolic reference to the first breath of life that was issued to Hineahuone by the Guardians - 'Tihei Mauri Ora' and shows the 'coming together' of the two groups to be united as one under the umbrella of the Pohiri.

It is the mixing of the mauri of both the tangata whenua and the manuhiri, it is the first physical contact.

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10. Kai

This is the final stage of powhiri. The sharing and partaking of food lifts the final tapu (sacredness) of the Powhiri ritual.

As with the amount of koha given, the amount and types of food that is prepared for the Manuhiri show the mana of the Tangata Whenua. An Iwi who live by the sea would usually specialise in placing kai moana (sea food) on the table, while an Iwi who live inland would usually place delicacies from their area on the table.

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Terms Used in Pohiri

Maori	English
Tangata Whenua	Home People
Manuhiri	Visitors
Tangata	People
Kaumatua	Elders
Pakeke	Adults
Rangatahi	Young People
Tamariki	Children
Inoi / Karakia	Prayer
Wero	Challenge
Karanga	Call
Mihi / Whaikorero	Speeches
Waiata	Song
Koha	Gift
Hongi	Traditional Greeting
Tihei Mauri Ora	Behold there is life
Hui E, Taiki E	Gather as one
Hui	Gathering
Roopu	Group
Ka Huri	Your Turn