

‘Tane and the baskets of knowledge’

When Tane decided to climb up to the heavens to seek the baskets of knowledge for mankind, his brother Whiro was angry. Whiro thought he had more right to the baskets than Tane because he was the elder brother.

The two brothers struggled for power, but it was Tane who was favoured by Io, the supreme power, so Tane could ascend to the twelve heavens. His task was made more difficult by Whiro who sent plagues of insects, reptiles and birds to attack Tane. But Tane with the aid of the winds, was able to proceed until he reached the summit of all the heavens. Here at Toionga-rangi, he was welcomed by Io and received the three baskets of knowledge and the two sacred stones.

The baskets, or kete were - the kete-aronui which held all the knowledge that could help mankind. The kete-tuauri which held the knowledge of ritual, memory and prayer and the kete-tuatea which contained knowledge of evil or makutu, which was harmful to mankind. The stones, or whatukura held the power of knowledge and added mana to the teaching of knowledge.

*On his return journey, Tane was again attacked by Whiro and his allies, the birds and insects. Tane would have been defeated if the winds had not once more, come to his rescue. The winds blew the birds and insects back down to earth where they remain today. When Tane finally reached earth again he placed the baskets and stones in a special house of knowledge- whare kura, which he had built before his journey to the heavens. Whiro was back on earth too, and he demanded that **he** should be the one to take care of the treasures. But Tane and his supporters refused Whiro's demands and Whiro was eventually banished to the underworld where he still lives and continually tries to cause trouble for gods and mankind.*

Tane-te-wananga-a-rangi (Tane, bringer of knowledge from the sky) was left to maintain order on earth.

Purakau sourced from:

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