



## - The legend of Rahi -

### Or how Ki-o-Rahi, the game of Rahi, came into being

Rahi Tutakahina had a beautiful wife named Ti Arakurapakewai. One day *patupaiarehe* kidnapped Ti Ara and cast a spell on the neighboring forests causing the vegetation to become dense and impenetrable, so that nobody would be able to track where Ti Ara was being taken.

Rahi was determined to find Ti Ara. With the help of his family and tribe he constructed a huge kite, named *Manu Tangata*. Before setting off on his journey, Rahi prepared several *kī* (flax bags) filled with large Moa eggs, for nourishment during his journey.

Tawhirimatea, the god of wind, blew Rahi and his kite high in the sky. On his flight some of the moa eggs fell from his *kī* into a Hokioi (giant eagle) nest providing food for the young chicks. Rahi then landed gently in the surrounding bush.

As Ti Ara was being taken away through the forest, she secretly folded back leaves of the silver fern, exposing the silvery underside of the leaf. Rahi was then able to follow the silvery trail left by Ti Ara. Ti Ara's abductors eventually became aware of Rahi's approaching presence. The *tohunga* of their tribe cast another spell, which caused a second hot scorching sun to appear in the sky. This sun was the sister of Ra, the regular sun. Immediately the green luscious forest dried up in the heat, and its brown withered leaves fell like snow onto the once green forest floor. A strong wind followed, blowing away the dried remains of the forest, leaving nothing in its wake but a vast sandy desert (*Field Reference: Te Ao*).

Surrounded by desert, and with no silver trail to follow, Rahi was unable to determine in which direction to continue. Very soon he became dehydrated in the searing heat. A large yellow rock (*Field Reference: Tupu*) came into view, and Rahi sought protection in its shade. He sensed that this rock was part of his *tupuna* (*Field Reference: Te Wairua*). As Rahi sat, the rock slowly began to change color, and from yellow it gradually turned to a cool green color.

Just at this moment, Namu, a friendly Hokioi (giant eagle) that lived near Rahi's pa arrived, and perched on top of the rock. Gently the giant eagle trickled water from her beak onto Rahi's face.

Suddenly, however, an enormous charging *taniwha* appeared. The *taniwha* tried to charge, but was unable to approach near enough to the rock owing to a double force field created by both the rock and Rahi's *mauri* (*Game Reference: Represented by Kioma*).

Frustrated, the *taniwha* changed its tactics. It began relentlessly circling the rock, its huge tail thrashing all the while, uprooting rocks, stones and sand.

The persistent circling and thrashing of the lizard eventually produced a deep canyon which surrounded the rock, and which soon filled with refreshing spring water (*Field Reference: Te Roto*). The giant lizard transformed into a huge *taniwha* called Utumai.



Rahi now found himself marooned on an island (*Field Reference: Pāwero*). And, as if this was not enough, the *tohunga* of Ti Ara's abductors cast another spell that made the two suns disappear, producing a cold dark night. Namu, Rahi's friend the giant eagle, was still perched on the rock. Although she was so cold that she was in danger of freezing to death, she tried to warm Rahi by blanketing him in her feathers, as the night continued to become steadily colder.

Just then Rahi, looking up, and saw the seven stars of Matariki (*Field Reference: Ngā Pou*) aligned in the sky. He realised that his father, Eru, had cast a spell from the top of their *maunga*. As Rahi watched, a narrow ice ramp formed to join the island to the shore (*Field Reference: Te Ara*).

Summoning all the force that remained within him Rahi lifted Namu onto his back, and slowly began to edge his way across the narrow ice walkway towards the shore and to safety. Just when Rahi and Namu were on the point of reaching the shore, the *taniwha* rose up out of the waters. In anger it lashed at its own head, sending ice formations like razor sharp teeth flying through the air like spears, aimed at Rahi.

Fortunately the spear like teeth hit the ice at the edge of the walkway, causing no harm to Rahi and Namu. With the constant lashing at his head, Utumai, the *taniwha* eventually broke his own neck, and sank lifeless to the depths of the water filled canyon.

As if to celebrate the sun came out once Rahi reached shore. In the healing sun rays, Namu was soon warm enough to fly home. Rahi was able to join his tribe, who had been desperately searching for him, and altogether they headed for the mountains to free Ti Ara. Rahi and his tribe eventually arrived at the entrance to a cave, situated at the foot of the mountains, where they remained, hurling menacing threats to Ti Ara's abductors inside the cave.

After a while, Rahi and his tribe used a number of heavy boulders to block the thermal steam vents and hot pools which covered the thermal mountain. Very soon the temperature inside the mountain began to mount, discharging fierce billows of hissing steam. Ti Ara's abductors were forced to flee the cave in panic - Ti Ara among them.

As Rahi and Ti Ara fell into each other's arms earthquakes and shockwaves began to take place all around, forcing everyone to flee to safety. The next day an enormous explosion took place, hurling the mountain high into the sky.

Te Puhuru, the *tohunga* who cast spells during the abduction of Ti Ara, had remained inside the mountain. When it exploded Te Puhuru was blasted into the heavens, where he now remains, continuing to play out his mischief.

The two tribes gathered on the shores of the lake where Rahi had been marooned, and decided to make peace. The *taniwha* Utumai was cooked, and for many days the two tribes ate and discussed together (*represented by the act of **Tatu** – discussion of the rules by both teams prior to playing*). They came to the conclusion that it was quite possible to live peacefully in harmony, without war.

It was here, on these shores, that the two tribal councils invented a means to ensure lasting peace forever. They created a game representing the attempted abduction of Ti Ara, which the tribes played together – keeping the peace. This is how the game of Ki-o-Rahi came into being.