

Karakia

The following Ngāi Tahu karakia was recited at the birth of a pēpi. The repetitive use of the word “uha” (femininity) references the cervix, birth canal or vagina as the pēpi transcends completely out of their mother’s body. The term “Ka pō te uha” (the femininity is darkened) is used, which suggests that post birth the cervix begins to close, and the birth canal becomes dark. It seems that this karakia is addressing the pēpi, calling the pēpi into being, into the realm of Te Ao Marama (the world of light) (Morgan, 2020; White, 1887).

Mohura, mowairaka
Ka pō te uha, te uha
Me paka ki whea
Te piro, te uha
Te rae, te uha
Te uru, te uha
Te tukemata, te uha, Te ihu, te uha
Te konohi, te uha Te taringa, te uha Te waha, te uha
Te kaki, te uha
Te keke, te uha
Te u, te uha
Te poho, te uha
Te kaokao, te uha Te tuara, te uha
Te pito, te uha
Te hope, te uha
Te papa, te uha
Te kumu, te uha
Te tinana, te uha
Te io, te uha
Te pona, te uha
Te waewae, te uha Mohura, mowairaka Ka pō te uha

Traditional Kai Tahu