The Maori’s wealth is—besides the land—his possessions. Taonga, as they are mostly called, presumably properly means something weighty, significant, as the word seems to be derived from tao “weigh down.” In a certain passage, diseases are called “repulsive taonga,” but this is quite an isolated turn of phrase, otherwise the word everywhere has a splendour about it of greatness and glory. Taonga are such things as fishing lines, baskets, clothes, feathers to be used as ornaments and boxes in which to keep them, ointment, canoes. The crop of the field is also taonga, and finally such cultural goods as e.g. tattooing and dancing.

Supreme among all taonga are the treasures, manatunga. This word has obviously something to do with memory and reminiscence (manatu), and whether they are regarded most as something always kept in mind, or something charged with reminiscences, the connection is easily understood when we learn about the penetrating relationship between the Maori and his treasures.

3. E.g. White 1888b: 86.
The treasures are often objects made of greenstone prepared with great skill. They may be weapons, such as the short flat club (mere pounamu) or ornaments. When all is said and done, it is, however, less the rare material or the fine workmanship which makes a thing a treasure. What actually constitutes its value is its history. History of course means what the Maori understands by history. It may be a legend which reveals the particular significance of the treasure. Such a legend is attached to the famous Te Awhiorangi, an axe which was recovered under dramatic circumstances in 1887. It is one of the two axes which Tane used as the creation of the world, when he separated heaven and earth. Furthermore, the Maori can report in great detail who has possessed each treasure, which canoe brought it to New Zealand, and the like. This most recent part of the story is even for most treasures the most important, for it shows how the treasure is associated with the kinship group. Treasures may even enter in the line of ancestors in the genealogies. The Maori who said, “This is your ancestor’s club, the famous club, Kahotea,” in these words said the essential thing.

The point of a typical story about a treasure is the connection with the kinship group, often kinship group in the widest sense. The significance of this is emphasized by the way in which a widely ramified kinship group arranges the concrete aspect of the possession. About such a treasure we learn: “For some time it is possessed by one of the clans of the tribe, and when this has lasted for some time, it is taken by those who are in possession of the treasure to some others of the descendants of the ancestor in whose possession the weapon originally was; this is how the club is exchanged to and fro.” In this way, the treasure constitutes a fixed point which keeps the kinship groups together, as expressly stated in the continuation: “One of the purposes of this is that of consolidating old peace.”

A similar case was the possession of a treasure, a heitiki, which originated from Marutuahu: “It has been handed down from generation to generation, being alternately in possession of his Taranaki and Hauraki descendants.”

---

6. A number of famous weapons are grouped in Andersen 1942: 45 ff.
8. Tautahi and Taipuhi 1900: 229.
14. Stack 1877: 87; a similar case is found in Skinner 1934: 114.
This prolonged cherishing of the treasure by the kinship I gives it a value of quite a different kind from the impersonal money. Here, again, we may call upon a Maori chief to speak, who after selling his land to the Europeans, at a meeting with these struck an axe into the ground before the commissioner’s feet, saying: “Now that we have for ever launched this land into the sea, we hereby make over to you this axe, named Paewhenua, which we have always highly prized from having regained it in battle after it was used by our enemies to kill two of our most celebrated chiefs. Money vanishes and disappears, but this greenstone will endure as a lasting witness of our act, as the land itself which we have now, under the shining sun of this day, transferred to you for ever.”

The treasure stands as a fixed point in the kinship group. Around it human beings are born and die, but it stands firm with its history so rich to the Maori—which concentrates on its position in the kinship group; therefore he rejoices in it. He can express his feelings the picturesque words manawareka and manawaru, which express sweetness in the breast and inner stirring, respectively.

The delight in the treasure is peculiarly and intensely expressed in some lines of a song in which the poet mentions a greenstone club (mere) named Te Heketua:

I fasten Te Heketua’s strap (round my wrist).
Indeed, you are not very large,
(Still,) the skin is clasped (as) at night by the woman’s legs.

The treasure not only arouses joyous feelings; it is a true source of fortifying and inspiration. An occurrence like the one reported by Gudgeon brings this out very finely: “When the warrior-chief Tapuae invaded Poverty Bay, and desired to keep his presence unknown until he could deliver his attack, his men were debarred from roaming about in search of food, and as a natural consequence were nearly starved. In this extremity, Tapuae ordered the Kura-a-Tuhaetoa (a very celebrated and sacred heirloom) to be exhibited to the war-party, and, said my informant, as they gazed upon it the desire for food left them, and they were marvellously invigorated.”

The conchs had a similar effect when they were blown in war in order to encourage the fighters.

17. Smith 1910: 175.
19. E.g. Best 1925b: 634.
So great is the effect of the treasure, so firm does it stand through the changing generations that we may rightly ask: what is greatest, human beings or treasures?

Fortunately, this question has at least once been asked by the Maori himself. The Ngapuhi had besieged the fortress of Te Totara without success. Then they sent a deputation into the fortress which requested the chief to give the Ngapuhi a famous treasure “Te Uira” and thus make peace. With a reference to the human lives that might be spared in this way they said: “Is this treasure more than human beings?” We may imagine the answer as the chief handed over Te Uira and made peace. This peace, however, was broken by the Ngapuhi’s guile with a disastrous result for the fortress. Later, when the defeated tribe found themselves to be reft of their treasure and decimated themselves, they thought characteristically with the greatest bitterness of the loss of Te Uira. If they recovered that, they would not think much of the rest. The whole appraisal of the treasure is expressed in one in this exclamation: “Human beings stink when they have died, but Te Uira, Te Uira never dies!”

This worship is only the culmination of the fervent relationship in which the Maori stands to his possessions. If we have realized this, we shall hardly feel tempted to coarsen the Maori when learning that man in his eyes grows with his wealth. It is not as in Europe a cold and impersonal splendour which emanates from wealth. It is actually a sign of what we may call true greatness. Man and his property are seen together, therefore the Maoris may say about a man that “he was a nobleman by virtue of his wealth (taonga), namely the food he cultivated with his hands; it was abundance for his friends.” In the word nobleman (tangata rangatira) all a Maori’s virtues are understood, beauty, strength, courage, and openhandedness. It says literally that a man becomes noble by being wealthy. When a woman sees such a man, whose nobility is revealed by his wealth, it sets her heart throbbing. It cannot be wondered at that she should like to marry him and herself participate in the warming strength emanating from his possessions.

The value of the treasure is so great that the Maori is ready to risk his life for it. Tarewai was a man who through a stratagem had been caught by his enemies. Eight men held him against the ground and they began cutting him

23. Grey 1855: 120.
open, but at the first cut he gathered all his strength, shook off his tormentors and fled to the wood, where he hid. He had narrowly escaped death, but in spite of this and of the gaping gash, he still in the evening risked returning to the enemy because his club had remained in their possession. He found them around the fire engaged in admiring the club, which passed from hand to hand. Boldly he sat down on the fringe of the circle, where it was half dark and asked to see the weapon, too. As nobody had recognized him, they handed it to him; but no sooner did he feel his dear weapon in his hand than he jumped up and fled back to the wood, while his heart rejoiced in his recovered treasure.24

The relationship to the treasure can be compared with one thing only, viz. the relationship to a kinsman. A lost and recovered treasure is received with a solemnity and affection which is hardly surpassed by anything else. Only read this report of an old heirloom which had been found by a European in the middle of the last century. “A native gave the European £30 for it, it was then taken in state to the high chief Te Wherowhero, and handed over to him. Great numbers of natives assembled to greet and weep over the venerated heirloom. The chief Te Kawau, of the Auckland district, sent a deputation with £100 in cash, and many other gifts, as a mark of esteem. The weapon was conveyed to the home of Te Kawai, where it was received with volleys of musketry and loud wailing. It was then carried to other places, and received in a similar manner.”25

The whole relationship of the Maori to his possessions, in particular the treasures, can be concentrated in one word, manaaki. Uenuku got some whalebones and made a comb out of them. It is said that the bones “were manaakiied by Uenuku as his comb.”26 In another text, there is a statement of “the valuables (taanga), the greenstone clubs (mere), and the other things that were manaakiied by the old-time noblemen.”27

Manaaki is the undivided action of honouring and using the things in contrast to conditions in European civilization, which has a great tendency towards either honouring things by placing them in a museum or using them very unsentimentally as is done now during industrialism. All the traits we have adduced show how intimately the Maori lives with his things; manaaki

25. Best 1924b: 2, 225 (according to the Southern Cross Newspaper, 27/1 1857). Other similar cases are the findings of Te Awhiorangi (Tautahi and Taipuhi 1900: 230 f. (Kauika)) and of some less well-known treasures: Rangi Hiroa: 1950 378 f. and Shortland 1882: 64.
27. White 1888b: 146.
only rounds off the picture by putting the treasures on a line with the kinsmen. A little drastically, but not very wrongly, we may say that he loves a kinsman forth in the treasures.

The word manaaki, however, is also significant because it refers to the intimate living together in which the fellowship, mana, is found. Without being able to give quotations to that effect, I think we may dare to fill in the picture and say that the Maori in general possesses the mana of his possessions. Apart from the mana of the country, we only hear that he possesses the mana of the kumara. If it is not mentioned that he possesses the mana of his canoe, his fishing line, and the rest of his movables, this is presumably due to there having hardly been any reason for mentioning it. He only occupied himself with the possession and took it as a matter of course that it included the mana.

On the other hand, we hear of very important treasures that they possess mana themselves. One of these sacral objects was a staff called Te Whakaitupawa. Once when a man carried it on a ritual errand, he proceeded extraordinarily fast; “it was the mana of his holy staff . . . namely Te Whakaitupawa, in connexion with his karakia which carried him so that in this way he went from Waitotora to Kawhia as fast as in one day.”

The more important canoes had mana and we hear about a greenstone club which was famous for its mana, only that unfortunately we do not learn how this mana manifested itself. Therefore it is of greater interest to hear about some treasures with particular powers, even though we cannot always know with complete certainty whether they had mana. However, there is hardly any doubt that Gudgeon rightly attributes mana to a sword (taiaha) about which he tells: “This weapon was always consulted by the Ngatiporou tribe before they ventured to engage in battle with another tribe, and this fateful ceremony was held in the presence of all the leading warriors of the tribe, in order to ascertain their chance of success. If the omens were favourable, the taiaha would, I am informed, turn itself over as it lay on the mat, in such a manner as to be seen by all. It was, however, in single combats that this weapon shone with its greatest lustre, for then it never failed.”

Omens are a frequent manifestation of the mana of the great treasures. “Matuakore was a famous sword (taiaha); it was a sacred sword and the mana of its sacredness gave forth omens and death to human beings (he mana no

29. Best 1925a: 32; Tiniraupeka in Graham 1943: 58 (Te Rauparaha’s son).
The omens are a natural consequence of the mana of the treasure, because they signify that the treasure has life in it which extends into people and land and therefore has a share in the life in which events take place; here is the rational basis of its power to give omens.

Gudgeon tells about a head-dress which was born by the chief in war that “if it glowed with a rosy crimson, success was assured; if, on the other hand, its hue faded to a pale pink, then certain defeat could only be avoided by a hasty retreat until such time as the kura regained it colour and the omens were favorable.”

The mana of the treasures is also the basis of applications and measures which should be discussed in another connection and therefore will only be hinted at here. They may be used ritually because of the intense life they contain, but on the other hand this very fact also requires a restriction in everyday use. When Puhihauia was offered the treasure of the kinship group, Kahotea, a club, she refused on the ground that nobody should be able to say, if it should once give ill omens, that it had been contaminated by a woman’s hand.

Presumably the noble treasures were often hidden from the younger generation until the time had come for displaying them. Tamatekapua thus on his death-bed showed his sons a greenstone ornament which he had kept hidden under the window.

In such cases as these, mana is the essential element about the object, therefore it may—like the chief—be called simply mana.

The distance from the treasure to the sacral object is not great, but there is the difference that sacral objects (e.g. mauri) owe their value to mana alone and therefore are completely withdrawn from everyday life and only used in ritual situations. Therefore, it is best to mention the sacral objects together with the rites.

There is another aspect of the Maori’s life with his valuables which must absolutely be discussed, viz. the gift.

It will be immediately obvious that the life which is in things must necessarily endow the gift with a special character. Perhaps this is nowhere

32. Gudgeon 1906a: 36.
33. E.g. White 1887c: Eng. 21 f.
34. White 1888a: 131; cf. 132. According to a text in Graham (1943: 60) a greenstone club would be shattered by contact with a profane being, e.g. a woman!
36. Kahui Kararehe 1893: 188.
brought out more strikingly than in cases when the gift consists of food. With food one can eat oneself into a new nature. An instance of this has already been adduced (p. 84), how a tribe got a canine sound in their speech after consuming a dog, and this was due to the dog’s mana. Exactly the same thing is involved when the Maori declares that their gods said that “they were not to eat bodies of men who cried from fear of death, lest it should make them cowards.”\(^{37}\) If Taylor is right, the victorious chief acquired his enemies’ souls and increased his mana by swallowing their eyes and drinking their blood; but an actual confirmation of this assertion is missing and furthermore Te Rangi Hiroa has criticized it convincingly.\(^{38}\)

Sorcerers know how to utilize the fact that food may carry something alien with it; it is one of their standing tricks to bewitch food.\(^{39}\) Man is so sensitive to influence in this way that no other time is better suited to use sorcery against a man than the moment while he is eating.\(^{40}\)

In the latter case, it is cooked food which carries an extraneous essence with it; but the uncooked food, too, may contain a mana which may be injurious, this not being due to an inherent character as in the case of the dog or the cowardly person, but rather originating from previous owners. When a tribe receives food from a strange tribe, the priest of the receiving tribe generally performs a rite, takiwemua, over the food. As usual, the ritual text is difficult to understand, but the mana of the food is obviously an important point.\(^{41}\)

Thus the food eaten must correspond to one’s nature; therefore the Maoris felt much relieved the first time they saw the Europeans eating the food which was served for them and said, “Perhaps they are not ‘supernatural’ beings (tupua) like the Maori gods, since they eat the food of the human world.”\(^{42}\)

Food can give a new nature since it can introduce a new kind of life into the eater; but then it also has a possibility of drawing man into a strange fellowship. When Hutu went down to the underworld for his beloved Pare, Hinenuitepo warned him against eating any of the food of the dead since he would not then return to the earth.\(^{43}\) The same has been confirmed by others

---

37. Taylor 1870: 575.
40. Best 1924b: 332.
41. Best 1902e: 95 f.
42. White 1888b: 106.
43. White 1887b: 160
who have returned from a journey to the realm of the dead.\textsuperscript{44}

The eater is not only bound to the givers, but they on the other hand recognize their own life in the guest who has eaten and respect this, perhaps even in spite of their previous intentions. This is the basis of the procedure used by \textit{Moki} in order to protect his brothers-in-law who came secretly to him although his kinship group was hostile to them; for he asked his wife “to bring the travellers in, and to prepare some food at once for them, but not to make their arrival known to the \textit{pa} till the morning. Marewa (his wife) knew how important it was for her brothers’ safety that they should take food under Moki’s roof, because it would insure his protection in the event of their meeting with persons inclined to kill them.”\textsuperscript{45}

Undoubtedly, it is of importance for the value of this protection how great the man is of whose food the guest partakes. Humble people can hardly impart the same life with food as the great ones. In a few passages it is emphasized during the mention of occurrences similar to the one quoted that the host was the \textit{tohunga} of the tribe, the priest, thus a man with a great \textit{mana}.\textsuperscript{46}

The description of kinship and honour will also have shown that many circumstances can outweigh the regard for the individual human life; the protection involved in the food fellowship is not absolute, either; but this much may be said that it was considered very wrong to kill strangers who had partaken of one’s food, even if they were prisoners of war whose lives might safely have been taken before the meal.\textsuperscript{47}

The meal thus is an important means of creating fellowship and hence to \textit{manaaki}. It has entered—only without particular emphasis—into our previous considerations (pp. 28 and 63).

The food which, by imparting the giver’s life to the eater, creates a bond of fellowship between them, is only a particularly effective gift, for every gift has the same effect, even though, as is easily understood, not quite so decisive, since other gifts may be given and received falsely, whereas the food and hence its life actually enters the receiver by the meal.

In certain cases, the effects of the gift may from a superficial point of view seem to be quite the same as if it were a question of money in Europe; but it is evident that individual cases cannot be isolated; they must all be realized within the civilization to which they belong. For that matter, we shall later

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{44}{Shortland 1856: 152; 4; Shortland 1882: 45 f.; Best 1905a: 232; cf. Taylor 1870: 158.}
\footnotetext{45}{White 1887c: Eng. 209 (Stack).}
\footnotetext{46}{Best 1901b: 143; Stack 1877: 70.}
\footnotetext{47}{Taylor 1870: 563; Best 1925b: 603, cf. Cowan 1910: 283. This must be on the assumption that the food originated from the same oven; cf. p. 195.}
\end{footnotes}
come across a number of cases which clearly show the difference between the Maori gift and a payment.

The gift forces the receiver from within; this is a Maori truth which is actually at the bottom of a peculiar proverb: “Property is indeed knitted brows (he tukemata ano te taonga).” It is explained by Grey as follows: “As a warrior’s terrible eyes gain the victory for him, so the influence derived from wealth gains men what they desire in the world.”48 This proverb is presumably the origin of the use of tukemata “knitted brows” to denote a gift brought by the guest for his host.49 Another name for the same thing is koparepare derived from kopare “shade or veil the eyes.” The simile is the same, only from the opposite angle so that it expresses that the host’s eyes are softened. There is a commentary on this term in an account of Te Rauparaha’s conduct when some people had been impudent to him and therefore had got a beating; for the narrator says, “They were not acquainted with (Te Rauparaha’s) army. If they had brought their valuables, greenstone clubs or greenstone needles (tara pounamu), the eyes of the chief of the army would have been softened.”50

The softening of the eyes is due to the fact that the bellicose thoughts are effaced, or it may be even more correct to say that the gift brings a vitality which excludes their being thought at all, that is, if it takes effect.

The gift conforms an old relationship between human beings or creates a new one. In the story about Ponga and Puhihuiua there is a whole scene centered in a treasure that has been presented by Puhihuiua’s father to Ponga’s rival and which the rival tries to give to Puhihuiua in order to win her favour. She rejects it because she knows that it will bind her to him, the man whom she does not love, and in a fascinating dialogue she evades his attempt at persuading her; at last he says some words that emphasize the twofold effect of the gift, as he explains that he had wanted her to receive the gift “in order that there might be something (between us) so that I could protect you.”51 In other words, the gift will not only bind the receiver to the giver, but also vice versa. There is not, of course, anything curious in this, considering that the gift creates fellowship, mana, thus binding both parties.

The fellowship of the gift involves peace. The gift may confirm old peace, and this was just the purpose of the treasure mentioned above which was presented to Ponga’s rival, and which through generations had passed to and

49. Williams 1932.
50. White 1890: 16.
51. White 1888a: 133.
fro as a gift between two kinship groups in the tribe. Therefore the rival may accuse Ponga, who carried off Puhihuia; for in this way Ponga also violated the fellowship created by the treasure.52

Sometimes the gift created peace in quite a dramatic manner. There is a scene which occurs several times with little variation, and which therefore, will be represented by a single instance here. The situation is a fight ending in the flight of one party. In this story, Potiki pursued and overtook a man, Kauhu, with a small child. “Potiki was about to slay Kauhu with a blow of his patiti (iron hatchet), when the latter produced the prized greenstone mere named Te Heketua, and handed it to his captor, saying, ‘Friend! Do not slay me with your common weapon. Here is a weapon for you to kill me with, that I may gently feel its blow.’...But Potiki rose to the occasion. He took the prized blade and gave Kauhu his hatchet in exchange, saying: ‘Here is a weapon for you. Go! Be strenuous to save yourself and child.’”53

Here the peace is, indeed, restricted to the two men who exchange gifts, but it might also be the nucleus from which peace between the kinship groups crystallized.54

Otherwise, it was chiefs who exchanged gifts at conclusions of peace when they wanted to make the peace permanent. Old kinship treasures of course by virtue of their mana had special powers to create a strong bond of fellowship which made the peace firm and permanent. A treasure which makes peace may therefore be called “everlasting peace,” tatau poumanu, literally “the greenstone door.”55 At a conclusion of peace between Englishmen and Maoris, at which gifts were exchanged, the latter were given a clock which was called Maungarongo “the conclusion of peace.”56

As a rule, the great treasures imbued both parties with a permanent will to peace; still, there was a possibility that the life of the treasure could not assert itself; and indeed, we have seen above an instance of such a peace being violated by one party (p. 94); but the terrible bitterness felt by the other party shows that this must have been an exception.

In the fellowship created by the gift, it is the giver who dominates; it is his life which now inspires the others. In one word, the mana is that of the giver.

When a Maori of high rank is married, the wedding is celebrated by a wedding feast at which the kinship group of the bridegroom give him gifts. He

52. White 1888a: 145.
54. Smith 1904: 164.
55. Williams 1932; Best 1925b: 664.
does not, however, keep these but passes them on to the bride’s kinship group. “The mana is enough for the two (the newly-married couple) (kati ki a raua ko te mana).” This does not in itself show unambiguously that it is especially as givers that the newly-married couple win mana. Still, there is hardly any doubt that the passage is to be interpreted to that effect. We have not only seen how fundamental an active attitude is to the Maori, but it may also quite concretely be shown that this lies behind his attitude towards the gift.

As a matter of fact, it is more important for the Maori to give than to receive. It is a point of honour with him to be the liberal person; but this is tantamount to saying that it is the giver who wins mana, for this cannot be separated from honour. It is reported about a chief whose wife had come from another tribe that he took something with him when he visited his wife’s family, “as a present for her people, as well as to maintain the credit of his name and rank as a chief among the Ngatimaru, his wife’s people.”

From among some episodes in Maori history which bring out the necessity of liberality very clearly we may adduce an event like this: A chief, Taipari, had had a carved house built and had been assisted by some experts in the art of carving from another region, Bay of Plenty, famous for its fine workmanship in this craft. When after three years the house was finished the experts who had been called in refused to accept any other payment than the food and the gifts they had received now and then during the work, after which they went home. But Taipari was not glad; he said that the tribe had not maintained its old reputation for liberality. Therefore he sent his daughter-in-law after them and she made them receive £1000 in single bank notes.

It may happen that a competitive spirit may arise as to who can give most. The competition is based on the fact that he who gives most does not make a mere gesture, he wins something real, viz. mana. Once, when two chiefs gave successive feasts for each other, at which they constantly tried to surpass one another, it ended in one of them being unable to provide food and therefore, rather than be considered the inferior one, he presented extensive lands to the other.

For it is particularly humiliating to be unable to give one’s guests plenty of good food. We saw at the discussion of mate what a terrible and destructive shame may arise from that situation, so at this point we shall only round off

58. Graham 1922: 191 (translated from Maori by Graham, the text not given).
60. Downes 1914: 120; cf. the two chiefs at conflict who is to provide a meal for a big assembly: Pine 1888: 416.
the picture with a few traits.

The shame incurred by being a poor host is not only a phenomenon which may occur; it is so substantial a fact that one may operate with it as in the amusing story about Tutamure and his brother-in-law. Tutamure had boasted of his rich sources of food. With characteristic Maori jealousy of his honour the brother-in-law felt humiliated by this and tried to put Tutamure to shame by visiting him in order to eat him out of house and home; he did not succeed, however, in spite of staying as long as he could in decency.\(^{61}\)

People who had unexpected visitors whom they were unable to entertain felt as if they had been driven into a corner. The extremes to which one, although rarely, might carry things appears from the story of Te Kanu, who was visited by guests of high rank, but who to his horror discovered that he could not offer them anything but fern-root. He and the others in the village considered the matter, but they found only one expedient, viz. that of drawing lots as to who was to be served. The lot fell upon an old man who then gave his life for the honour of the kinship group.\(^{62}\)

In such circumstances, there must of course be something which prevented the constant occurrence of such situations, and indeed such a regulator occurred in Maori etiquette, which prescribed that a messenger should be sent beforehand if a chief wanted to visit another so that the hosts were warned in time to gather supplies.\(^{63}\)

Every time the Maori’s liberality is appealed to he feels it as a kind of challenge as well. Te Ranoi Hiroa, e.g., tells about a chief who in that situation rather than refuse would give away a canoe which he did not possess.\(^{64}\) Indeed, it is a defeat if he cannot fulfill the expectations of gifts made to him, and so we also understand his fear of such a situation; for a defeat which touches one’s honour is pretty nearly the most ghastly thing known to a Maori. This is the key to our understanding of the following event:

In former times there was a noted gourmand named Te Reinga, who lived in a pa called Tinotino.... He was of such a greedy disposition that any one passing up or down the valley with fish or other articles of food, was always hailed by him, saying, ‘I am very fond of that food.’ This was a direct asking for it, and so of course the food, whatever it was, was given to him. The people of the district became tired of this at last, and to end his begging propensities, sent a war-party against Te Reinga’s pa.

---

63. White 1888b: 54.
64. Rangi Hiroa 1927: 40.
Raymond Firth, who quotes this story, wonders a little at it and remarks: “One is almost entitled to conclude from this that in old Maori days true politeness demanded that one should slay a man sooner than hurt his feelings by refusing him a request.” Firth may be right in this case, although only with a certain reservation. The pivot on which it all turns is not the receiver’s feelings, but the giver’s honour; for this does not suffer by the shameless importunate fellow being killed, but only by his wishes being refused.

A challenge to liberality need not be expressed; it is often involved in the situation only, e.g. that of being a host. But the guest, too, is in that situation, for it was a custom to bring something for the host. “Will you with empty hands proceed before my ancestors’ face in the fortress to which we are sailing?” asks the young son of the chief Puhihuia in justified wonder. It is impolite to appear without a gift for the host; but it is also dangerous for one’s own prosperity, a hidden defeat. Very significantly, Best has included this gift by the guest, koparepare, in an article on omens, saying that it serves to ward off an aitia (ill omen).

A situation of this kind occurs not least for everybody who has received a gift. One should not onesidedly insist on the giver’s wish for a counter-gift; the receiver’s wish to give it perhaps is even greater, because to him it may be a question of his whole existence. We have already above mentioned a man who fled to America because he could not pay (i.e. give a counter-gift) for a canoe (p. 47). In Maning there is quite a pathetic story of that kind, a man who could not pay a few shillings he owed finally going before his creditor’s house, where he called him out and shot himself with the words: “Here is your payment!” The conditions that the coming of the English created, those of natural economy giving way to money economy, could not, of course, exterminate all at once the old thoughts of the gift.

The giver of a gift has a hold on the receiver, even at a very sensitive place, too, viz. his honour. And the old Maoris understood very well how to utilize this fact. “In my more inexperienced days,” tells Shortland, “a present was once actually forced on my acceptance, in order that the donor might found thereon a claim to something in return which he desired, but knew no readier mode of

65. Smith 1897: 44 (from White 1874).
66. Firth 1929: 405.
68. White 1888a: 131.
69. Best 1898b: 234.
70. Maning 1906: 163
obtaining.” 71 An amusing story tells how the tribal chief Waka Nene forced a small chief Ngahu to submissiveness with a gift. In a conflict with a fellow tribesman Ngahu had taken the latter’s horse and refused to return it at the order of the tribal chief. Waka Nene then sent his own horse to Ngahu with the message that if he really wanted to start a conflict in order to get a horse, he had better get Waka Nene’s. Humiliated Ngahu returned both horses to their owners. 72

The thought of the counter-gift may thus make the Maori unwilling to receive a gift. When Rangirarunga’s daughter had won a people’s devotion by manaaki-ing them and they then came with rich gifts, Rangirarunga said anxiously: “O maid! We are embarrassed (mate) by you and your people; did you not remember, that if no proper return is made for such gifts that unpleasant remarks are made?” 73 Here it is said downright that a gift is a mate, a weakening, to the receiver if he cannot assert himself by counter-gifts.

As a traditional refusal of an invitation to a feast a song is used which plays on the same view:

I cannot go there.  
I have no counter-gift (paremata),  
With which I can go. 74

These anxious Maoris who cannot pay back, should not, however, line up in the foreground and conceal the proper picture. They are exceptions who underline an important aspect of the Maori’s experience with the gift; but the basis of their situation is indeed that gifts were given and received to a great extent, and that the ordinary thing of course was that both parties rejoiced in it. 75 Several aspects of the exchange of gifts contributed to this.

In the first place, they were an important part of the feast, a fact which indicates the splendour inherent in the gifts. Next, the exchange

---

72. Bastian 1881: 203, from White 1874.
73. Best 1927b: 246, translated by Best from text 21 (Best 1927b: 255).
75. Mauss 1923-1924: 169 has offered some fine and otherwise unchallengeable reflections on the exchange of gifts among the Maoris, though with a single exception. His interpretation of the Maori proverb “Ko Maru kai atu, ko Maru kai mai, ka ngohengohe” is very doubtful. In Best (1925b: 329), it is used about vengeance—not about gifts. Mauss’ remark that Maru is “le dieu de la guerre et de la justice” will probably not hold water, either. The proverb has been handed down partly in Taylor (1870: 297), partly in Grey (1857: 53). Grey’s comments on it run like this: “Maru was a hospitable man, who always fed those well who had entertained him, and led an easy and comfortable life.” Thus nothing about Maru being the god of the same name.
of gifts in practice effected the distribution of the rare greenstone, particularly fine cloaks, etc. and brought about a welcome variation in the bill of fare. As there is in Firth\(^76\) an excellent treatment of the economic aspect of the matter it is superfluous to discuss it in more detail here.

Finally, it may be said that the gift not only gives honour to the donor, but at the same time he honours the receiver. He who receives gifts is greater than the one who does not get any; this is said point-blank by the Maori and should be taken literally.\(^77\) Only apparently does this contradict the preceding statements. The Maori likes to give and receive presents; only he always wants to be the person who gives most.

Considering the counter-gift in particular, we shall not, of course, doubt either that he who expects a counter-gift is interested in it, even though he stands in a less tense relationship to the counter-gift than he who owes it. On the one hand, he is not, of course, blind to the value of the counter-gift, but on the other hand, it is perhaps still more important that the \textit{mana} which the gift provides for him must manifest itself in the counter-gift as well. A receiver who does not give a counter-gift steals a little of the giver’s life instead of making it penetrate into him. The Maori says that he \textit{kaihaus}\(^78\) the gift, which should probably be interpreted to the effect that he “consumes” (\textit{kai}) the gift as a \textit{hau}, i.e. an object which connects a person with others in a ritual situation, so that he, as it were, drains the giver’s life. As according to the ordinary custom, a certain time passed between gift and counter-gift, it will of course only be after this time—five years are mentioned in a text\(^79\)—that it can be said definitively that no counter-gift will arrive. If so, the giver proceeds to bewitch the false receiver. A ritual used on such occasions has been handed down:\(^80\)

The giver first invokes \textbf{Heaven} and \textbf{Earth} (Rangi and Papa), presumably because these powers are everywhere equally close to the receiver:

(1) Heaven! Look down!
(2) Earth! Look up!

Next he says:

\(^76\) Firth 1929: 386 ff. The author also describes the important difference between exchange of gifts and barter, which was practically non-existent among the Maoris (loc. cit. 403 f.).
\(^77\) White 1888a: 97.
\(^78\) Grey 1857: 105.
\(^79\) Smith 1921: 175.
\(^80\) Grey 1857: 105.
The salient point in the interpretation is the relation to the receiver. I suppose that in line 5: *nau ra e te taonga* his name was inserted and that it has dropped out by the communication in the abstract; it may have been understood only.

A more complicated case is made out by a Maori in the form of an explanation of the word *hau*. Having emphasized that he does not talk about the *hau* (wind) that blows, he develops the imaginary case that a gift is given, which is passed on to a third person, who gives a counter-gift. This counter-gift is the “*hau*” of the first gift. It is not correct, he explains, to keep this counter-gift; it should be passed on to the first giver; if you retain it, you will fall ill or die.

Marcel Mauss offers a *spirituel*, but in certain ways arbitrary comment on this statement. As I can unreservedly subscribe to Raymond Firth’s criticism, I shall not dwell on it. But it is natural to look at the meaning of *hau*, as it is obviously of importance for the understanding of this passage.

Now, *hau* is a word which offers considerable difficulties as there are no doubt several homonyms; therefore the following remarks are only to be taken as a modest proposal for an explanation. We have in part obtained the background to the understanding in the proceeding chapters, as we have seen that the Maori experiences his life as a whole. He can only with difficulty view it differently, because he experiences it like this. Just as a weakening on a single point has always a possibility of dragging down the whole human being or of being conquered by a deed done perhaps in quite a different respect, so a man’s life as a whole may be influenced by the life which is in a single one of his possessions.

There is a large group of applications of the word *hau* which are generally discussed together, and which may be united in the point of view that *hau* means a part of life (e.g. an object) which is used ritually in order to

---

81. *Taonga*, thus literally “property, anything highly prized”; the meaning here, however, is no doubt “the gift”.
82. Cf. a similar case in Best 1929a: 53, which shows that the Maoris did not always insert a “*meamea*” for “so and so.”
83. Downes 1909: 441.
84. Mauss 1923-1924: 46 ff.
85. Firth 1929: 412 f.
86. E.g. Best in Best 1900a: 195-199 and Best 1922a: 32-34.
influence the whole. If the discussion of hau has to some degree been abortive, it is due to the fact that it has always been taken for granted that hau meant life or the soul in a certain respect, “the vital principle” or the like, whereas, as far as I can see, it is the ritual situation or the destination for it which define hau. It may be some earth from a footprint which is used for sorcery, a sacrifice, or one of the objects in which the Maori joins e.g. his mana and that of the forest, i.e. what he calls a mauri. Mauri means a concentration of life and may function in the same way as hau, but is decidedly a different concept.87

If we return to the passage quoted in which the word hau was explained, it must be said at once that the Maori in question undoubtedly thought that hau means counter-gift, simply what is otherwise called utu; for his explanation is the introduction to a passage about hau as a sacrifice to the forest at bird-catching, and the point is that the sacrifice (hau) is a counter-gift to the forest for the birds. There is, however, a trait in his explanation which has not been properly explained, viz, the introduction of the third person. Marcel Mauss notes it only as an unnecessary complication, but otherwise leaves the problem open.

Actually the explanation of the hau of the gift looks more than anything like a tradition to the effect that when three persons exchanged gifts and the intermediary person failed, the counter-gift which had stopped with him might be hau, i.e. it might be used to bewitch him. As such an application is not obvious, it might be intelligible that there was a special tradition about it. On the other hand, it would not be necessary in the simpler case in which only two persons exchanged gifts. Here, indeed, the original gift existed as a connecting link, the use of which as hau is obvious. Then only a tradition was needed about the ritual which was to be used at the bewitching as stated above.

However, a certain uncertainty is involved in all these considerations and it seems doubtful whether we shall ever attain to actual certainty as regards to the meaning of hau.

The counter-gift was necessary to both parties. A niggardly person alienated himself from the exchange of gifts and the expansion of man involved in it when the gifts knitted their network of fellowship. There was a man, Tuahumahina, who asked for a dogskin cloak, but who against custom was refused it. This gave rise to the following characteristic comment: “Is Tuahumahina a man who gives presents to people? The fact is that he is a

87. Cf. Firth 1929: 268 ff., where Firth, on the contrary, advances the view that hau and mauri are almost synonyms. J. Röhr’s article (1917-1918: 263-71), on the whole gives only a summary of Best’s contribution, though encumbered with an original misunderstanding of the Maori texts.
stingy man; this is evident as the dogskin cloak was not given to him.”

He does not get any gift, therefore he must be stingy! One notes the method of reasoning; this is how people think in a community in which gifts are a constant accompaniment to human fellowship between the kinship groups.

Within the extended family gifts played a very little role, the fellowship in an outer as well as an inner sense would hardly offer the gift an occasion for being effective. Apart from rare occasions there was no practical need for gifts, and the life found in human beings and things was of the same kind, so the gift in that respect, too, was rather pointless.

88. White 1888a: 97.
89. Firth 1929: 395 f.