

Meaning of Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa, n.d.[c])

Our Māori name, 'Te Papa Tongarewa', literally means 'container of treasures'. The name is made up of two classical expressions used in Māori poetry and song. Each expression has more than one meaning.

Papa

'Papa' can be used to describe:

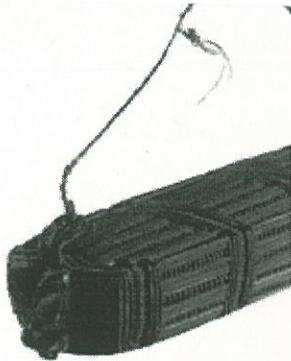
- Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) – including New Zealand, where the Museum is located
- a papahou (carved Māori treasure box) and also the beloved homeland – te papa kāinga.

Tongarewa

'Tongarewa' refers to:

- a type of greenstone, such as the mauri (life force) stone on The Marae
- any other kind of treasure, such as a well-loved chiefly person.

A fuller interpretation of the name Te Papa Tongarewa is therefore: 'our container of treasured things and people that spring from Mother Earth here in New Zealand'.



Papahou (treasure box); 1800
Puhi; Northland; Unknown; H
from native wood.; wood; woc
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