

A Celebration of Origins

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Once or twice a generation the people of the Domain of Wai Brams come together to participate in the largest religious event in their ceremonial system: the *gren mahe*. It focuses on a small group of ritual leaders who struggle to hold the celebration despite the absence of the leader of the community, who died after initiating the rituals.

Many of the principles which order community life in Wai Brama are manifested, including those governing relations between men and women, human beings and the deity and spirits, and the clans and houses of the community confronts and responds to the changing social, religious, economic, and political milieux of life in a modern nation-state. The film is thus also about the ways in which a community struggles to reconcile the demands of a tradition which has served it well with the demands of modernizing polity and the catholic church.