

Dimensional Autophagy: Taha Tinana

The Body as Archive, the Body as Integration

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Abstract

This article presents the theoretical and clinical foundations of Tinana Autophagy — the fifth and final dimensional autophagy intervention within Te Poutama Ora (TPO). Tinana Autophagy is positioned last in the sequence by both clinical necessity and indigenous wisdom: the body holds everything, and it releases most completely when the relational, spiritual, identity, and mental-emotional dimensions have been addressed. The final month of the programme is simultaneously the most physically grounded and the most integrative — the body becomes the site at which all five dimensions converge and complete.

This article articulates the body as archive: the specific ways in which whakapapa patterns, wairua wounds, tuakiri assault, and hinengaro accumulation are stored somatically and require somatic release. It presents the biological autophagy process in full, examining how fasting activates cellular autophagy and why this physical practice is clinically meaningful within a holistic Māori wellness framework. It addresses Taha Auaha as the healing instrument through which all five dimensions are expressed and integrated at completion. The four-phase healing model and Tūāpapa trinity are applied to the tinana dimension, and the completion of the full five-month programme is framed as emergence into a new whakapapa: the whakapapa of what is passed on next.

Introduction: The Body as the Final and Complete Archive

The body is not merely one dimension among five. It is the dimension in which all others are stored, expressed, and — ultimately — either perpetuated or transformed. Every relational pattern from the whakapapa dimension has a somatic signature. Every wairua wound has a physical location. Every year of identity assault accumulates in posture, chronic tension, and nervous system state. Every unprocessed emotion from the hinengaro dimension moves into the body when it cannot be processed as thought or feeling.

Van der Kolk's (2014) foundational insight — that the body keeps the score of what has not been metabolised — is empirically supported and clinically essential. But the body keeps not only the score of the wound. It also keeps the score of the healing. When the prior four dimensions have been genuinely cleared, the body responds. Posture shifts. Chronic tension releases. Nervous system states that were fixed become fluid. The cellular environment changes. The conditions for

physical regeneration become available in ways they were not when the body was still carrying the structural weight of unmetabolised relational, spiritual, identity, and emotional material.

Tinana Autophagy is therefore both a physical clearing practice and an integration practice. It is the dimension in which the work of all five months is consolidated in the body — in the cells, the tissues, the nervous system, and the physical patterns of how a person inhabits and moves through the world.

Theoretical Framework

Tinana in Te Ao Māori

In te ao Māori, tinana — the physical body — is understood as the vessel for all other dimensions of being. It is the manifestation of wairua, the expression of whakapapa, the site of identity and emotional life. The health of tinana is therefore inseparable from the health of the other dimensions; Māori health frameworks consistently resist the Western tendency to treat the physical body as a separate domain amenable to isolated physical intervention.

Taha Tinana in Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1998) is one of four walls of the house — structurally load-bearing but inseparable from the others. Te Poutama Ora extends this understanding by positioning tinana as the fifth and integrative dimension: the place where all prior clearing work becomes embodied, and where the transformation that has occurred across all dimensions is consolidated into how the person physically exists in the world.

The Body as Somatic Archive: How Each Dimension Is Stored

Each of the four prior dimensions has a specific somatic signature that Tinana Autophagy addresses:

Whakapapa patterns in the body: Relational trauma and toxic loyalty patterns are held in the nervous system as attachment patterns, in the musculature as chronic bracing and tension, and in the autonomic nervous system as dysregulated baseline states. The hypervigilance of an unsafe relational childhood is a body pattern, not merely a mental one. The body prepared for danger that is no longer present continues to prepare. Tinana work helps the body receive the signal that the relational field has changed.

Wairua wounds in the body: Spiritual shame and religious trauma are stored in the breath — in restriction, shallowness, and the specific quality of holding in the chest that accompanies chronic spiritual suppression. They are stored in the solar plexus, where the body holds the unresolvable weight of feeling fundamentally wrong before the divine. Tinana work releases these holdings somatically, completing what the wairua autophagy began spiritually.

Tuakiri assault in the body: Forty years of identity performance, code-switching, and structural self-erasure accumulate in posture: the specific way the body holds itself small, makes itself

less visible, presents a version of self that is not the authentic one. The body of someone who has performed their identity for decades is held differently from the body of someone who inhabits it. Tinana work reclaims embodied identity — the posture of someone who stands in themselves.

Hinengaro patterns in the body: The mental and emotional patterns that were addressed in Month 4 have somatic residues that the cognitive and emotional work did not fully reach. Suppressed emotions live in specific locations: grief in the throat and chest, rage in the jaw and shoulders, fear in the belly and legs. Tinana work completes the emotional clearing by releasing what the body retained after the hinengaro work.

Biological Autophagy: The Cellular Foundation

The biological autophagy process is the direct physical mechanism at the heart of this dimension. At the cellular level, autophagy — from the Greek, ‘self-eating’ — describes the degradation and recycling of damaged cellular components through the cell’s lysosomal machinery (Mizushima & Komatsu, 2011). This process is activated by caloric restriction, including fasting, and plays a critical role in cellular health, immune function, disease prevention, and longevity (Bagherniya et al., 2018; Levine & Kroemer, 2019).

Fasting activates autophagy through several mechanisms: the reduction of insulin and mTOR signalling, which are the primary inhibitors of autophagy; the activation of AMPK, which promotes autophagic activity; and the reduction of inflammatory cytokines, which creates a cellular environment more conducive to repair and regeneration. The clinical significance of this biology for the TPO programme is straightforward: the physical fasting practice in Tinana Autophagy is not metaphorical. It activates real cellular processes of clearing and renewal that parallel, at the cellular level, the clearing and renewal that has occurred across all five dimensions.

The Maramataka as Temporal Spine

The Māori lunar calendar — te maramataka — provides a temporal framework for the tinana practices that integrates indigenous knowledge with the rhythms of cellular biology. The maramataka identifies specific lunar phases as more or less conducive to planting, harvest, rest, and activity. The lunar cycle corresponds to documented fluctuations in human physiology: cortisol rhythms, sleep architecture, and cellular repair processes all correlate with circadian and ultradian cycles that te maramataka observes.

Fasting aligned with maramataka phases — particularly fasting during the waning moon and rest during specific high-tide periods — integrates the biological fasting practice with indigenous temporal wisdom. This alignment is not merely symbolic; it is the recognition that human biology is embedded in natural rhythms that pre-colonial indigenous knowledge systems mapped with precision.

Taha Auaha: Creative Expression as Integration

The ninth dimension of TPO — Taha Auaha, Creative Wellness — is the healing instrument through which metabolism is expressed and integrated across all dimensions. In the Tinana dimension, Taha Auaha serves a distinctive function: it is the channel through which the body's experience of five months of clearing finds form, is witnessed, and becomes permanent. Creative expression at the completion of the programme is not celebratory performance. It is the body's testimony — the making-legible of what has been metabolised.

The biological parallel is apt: just as cellular autophagy produces new proteins from recovered amino acids, the creative expression at programme completion produces new narrative, new imagery, and new relational forms from the materials of the clearing. The wounding becomes the work. The trauma becomes the teaching. The five months of metabolism become the whakapapa of what is passed on next.

What Blocks Tinana Wellness

Stored trauma: the somatic residues of whakapapa, wairua, tuakiri, and hinengaro wounding held in the nervous system, musculature, fascia, and cellular memory.

Disconnection from the body: living in the head, ignoring body signals, treating physical symptoms as inconvenient rather than informative. Often a learned response to a body that has been carrying intolerable material.

Metabolic accumulation: years of stress-biology, inflammatory food patterns, poor sleep, and the physical consequences of chronic psychological load accumulating as chronic illness, pain, fatigue, and metabolic dysfunction.

Inherited somatic patterns: epigenetic transmission of trauma responses and health vulnerabilities through the whakapapa. The body carries the lineage's history in its regulatory systems.

Symptom-focused physical interventions: attempting to address physical patterns through physical means alone, while the relational, spiritual, identity, and emotional conditions that generate those patterns remain unchanged.

The Four-Phase Model Applied to Tinana

Te Tūāhuatanga — Recognition: Developing the capacity to listen to the body without pathologising it. Scanning honestly for where tension, pain, and disconnection are held. Mapping the somatic residues of each prior dimension. Acknowledging the body's intelligence: the illness was a teacher, not a betrayal.

Te Kāwhatitanga — Breakdown: Initiating the physical clearing through fasting, movement, breathwork, and somatic practices. Allowing the body to break down what it has been holding. This phase can produce physical discomfort, fatigue, and emotional material surfacing through the body — all signs that the breakdown is working.

Te Whakahuatanga — Metabolisation: The cellular autophagy activated by fasting is the biological metabolisation of the physical dimension. Alongside this, somatic practices process the stored emotional and relational material that the body retained after the hinengaro work. Kai as medicine supports the cellular rebuilding phase. The body metabolises, physically, what has been metabolised across all five dimensions.

Te Tuku — Release and Integration: The body releases what it has been holding across the full five months of work. Physical patterns shift. Chronic tensions resolve. The nervous system recalibrates. Taha Auaha expresses the integration. Me Heke ki Mua: the person returns to their physical life changed, inhabiting a body that no longer carries the structural weight of unmetabolised material across five dimensions. This is emergence.

The Tūāpapa Trinity at Programme Completion

The Tūāpapa trinity completes its movement in the tinana dimension across the full five months:

Recognition — extended across all five dimensions: the person has named the whakapapa wounding, the wairua disconnection, the identity assault, the emotional accumulation, and the somatic holding. Nothing remains unnamed.

Reclamation — completed in the body: the person has reclaimed their relational sovereignty, their spiritual authority, their cultural identity, their emotional intelligence, and now their physical being. The body is inhabited as home rather than carried as burden.

Restoration — the establishment of a new whakapapa. Not a return to a previous state — the programme does not restore what was. It creates what was never present: the whakapapa of metabolised experience, of wisdom composted from suffering, of patterns that are now chosen rather than inherited.

Conclusion: Emergence

Tinana Autophagy is the completion of a five-month programme that has moved through the foundational architecture of human experience: whakapapa, wairua, tuakiri, hinengaro, tinana. The body, which held everything across all five dimensions, becomes the site at which everything is integrated and released. What the programme produces is not a person without wounds. It is a person who has metabolised them — who carries the wisdom of the wound without carrying its weight, who stands in identity without performing it, who relates from choice rather than obligation,

who meets the sacred with authentic encounter, and whose body now supports transformation rather than storing trauma.

The closing formulation is not aspiration. It is description: the person who has completed this work is, in the deepest sense of the Māori framework, tau. Settled. And when they are settled, te Ao Mārama is settled. The work of five months becomes the whakapapa of what is passed on to the next generation. That is not a small thing. That is the whole thing.

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