

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

**WAI 2700
Wai 1196**

IN THE MATTER

of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER

of the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry
(Wai 2700)

AND

IN THE MATTER

of a claim by Merle Mata Ormsby,
Daniel Ormsby, Tiaho Mary Pillot and
Manu Patena for and on behalf of
themselves as members of Ngāti
Hikairo iwi, Ngāti Tamakōpiri, Ngāti
Hotu of Tokaanu, Otukou Marae of the
Okahukura Whare Tupuna, and
Papakai Marae of the Rakeipoho
Wharepuni

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF TIAHO MARY PILLOT

Dated: 9 August 2022

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Waitangi Tribunal

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Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

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MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL

MIHI

1. My name is Ko Tiaho-o-te-maramatanga Mary Patena-Pillot but my preferred names are Tiaho Mary. I was born at Taumarunui Hospital on 1 November 1956 and grew up at Tokaanu, the location of the last Ngāti Hotu settlement. I currently live in Tauranga with my partner Kerry.
2. I am a named claimant for the Wai 1196 claim in the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry. We affiliate to Ngāti Hikairo, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Te Aho, Ngāti Ruakopiri, Ngāti Tamakōpiri and Ngāti Hotu, now known as Ngāti Hikairo by Ngāti Tuwharetoa since the early 1960s. This brief of evidence should be read in conjunction with any evidence presented by my sister Maata Merle Ormsby (nee Patena) and my nephew Daniel Ormsby.
3. At the outset, I would like to acknowledge three influential people in my life:
 - a. my grandmother, Tiahuia Ruby Te Ahuru (née Tohi Raukura) (“**Tiahuia**”);
 - b. my mother, Rauaiterangi Mary Patena Mariu (née Te Ahuru) (“**Rauaiterangi**”); and
 - c. my father, Te Taawhi Patena Mariu (“**Te Taawhi**”).
4. They are why I am presenting and sharing their oral history and their recollections through my eyes. I will be focusing on the significant role that Ngāti Hotu women and their daughters practised daily within their clan prior to colonisation and traditions that have been passed down since pre-fleet times.
5. To begin, I would like to discuss the following topics:
 - a. Whakapapa;
 - b. Significant Ngāti Hotu wāhine;
 - c. Spiritual relationship of wāhine as custodians with their local mountains, rivers, and streams;
 - d. Role of wāhine in the whānau;

- e. Knowledge and healing gifts inherited from our tīpuna.
6. I will be including examples to clarify and support my understanding.

WHAKAPAPA

7. Through our lines of descent, we whakapapa to pre-fleet clans Ngāti Tamakōpiri and Ngāti Hotu, and also Tuwharetoa. My pepeha is:

Ko Tongariiro te maunga

Ko Rotoaira te moana

Ko Motuopuhi te pa

Ko Te Wharerangi te tangata

Ko Ngāti Hotu te hapu

8. Through my mother, I whakapapa to Te Wharerangi, a prominent Ngāti Hotu chief, and to Rangikowaea, a chieftainess who is a direct descendant of Kupe.



9. Through whakapapa, our whānau have always been humbled by our Ngāti Hotu heritage. Referred to as the pre-fleet people, Ngāti Hotu were the original human inhabitants of much of the land at the southern end of Lake Taupo. When I was young, my father told me that I needed to go to the top of our Maunga Tongariro and once there focus as far as the eye could see—first looking north, east, south and west. I actually completed the hike in my later years and when I got there, I gazed out across the vast expanse of surrounding land. It was then that I realised the extent of Ngāti Hotu lands my father was referring to when he traversed them on his horse while continuing his traditional role as kaitiaki.
10. Some people say that Ngāti Hotu was conquered and then annihilated. I have always known myself to be Ngāti Hotu. I grew up having to listen to oral history shared by Tiahuia, Rauaiterangi, and Te Taawhi. When I was about 13 or 14, I discovered that I was also Ngāti Tūwharetoa as well, however, my strongest association has always been with Ngāti Hotu.
11. We grew up hearing about Ngāti Hotu all the time from our parents and others. Our Koro Patena and Kui Maata identified strongly with their Ngāti Hotu side. My father, Te Taawhi, used to ride his horse around the boundaries of Ngāti Hotu. When I was young, he would go away on horseback for a few days and when I asked mum where he was going, she replied, "*[h]e is going to see our people, the Ngāti Hotu people*". When I talked to my father about it, he always said, "*[Y]our people are there. They never left.*"

SIGNIFICANT NGĀTI HOTU WOMEN

Tiahuia Ruby Te Ahuru (1895-1971)

12. Tiahuia was my grandmother. She was born in 1895 and died in 1971. Tiahuia was Kie Kie Matuaahu's last surviving daughter and, like her older sister, she had inherited nobility. Tiahuia's people loved and respected her for her thoughtful, spiritual and considerate opinions or advice. I could never understand why, whenever we travelled with Tiahuia, extended family would come up to her and begin to cry, as they would guide her away from us to talk to her in private. My mother would later explain to me that the elders loved talking to Tiahuia reminiscing how Te Wharerangi and his people, were attacked and killed, and how they loved her great-

grandfather Matuaahu. After all those years, these elders still loved and mourned those ancestors every time they met Tiahuia.

13. Another occasion where I witnessed scenes of love and respect for Tiahuia was in 1967, when she met with her Uncle and Aunt from her Sullivan family, at their home in Te Harato. Te Raroa and his sister were the younger siblings of Kie Kie; they had been hoping to finally meet Tiahuia for what would be their last time. I remember listening to their exchange of soft-sounding, humble voices with laughter. My mother was concerned when I asked her why those white; blue-eyed people including Tiahuia spoke a foreign language that included a few familiar Māori words. Many years later, I tried unsuccessfully to research the origins of the Hotu language. No such language exists on Google; however, from memory I found the Celtic Indo-European languages as sounding similar to what I had heard as a twelve year old. Once again, I was impressed by the admiration and respect for each other that day: such gentle, noble souls.
14. Although Tiahuia was born 55 years after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, she was an oral historian who shared much of what she knew through stories. Hinekapa, Rangikowaea Te Wharerangi (née Raeroa), and Te Maari II were three women whom Tiahuia would sometimes mention. I loved listening to these stories about our tīpuna, who were "spiritually gifted", respected, and of noble heritage.

Hinekapa

15. Hinekapa was the Ngāti Hotu chief of a population of approximately 300 people at Tokaanu. Tiahuia describes this ancestor as being fair-skinned, blue-eyed, and with long white flowing hair which almost touched the ground. However, she was born with golden-red coloured hair. Hinekapa was a distant cousin to Tara (Whanganui-a-Tara). Across the Tokaanu Stream from my home were two thermal pools called "Hinekapa's puia". Depending on the level of Lake Taupo, one thermal pool would be hot while the other would be warm.
16. It was common knowledge that those pools were sacred but, despite this, two young local lovers decided to use those pools. They chose one of the days when Hinekapa and her servants would not be there. Without anyone in the village noticing, they ran toward the forbidden pools carry clothing

and some food. After an enjoyable afternoon, the young lovers decided to return home to their families before anyone noticed their absence. During the night, the young lovers become ill with a fever and soon begin frothing at the mouth. Each of the parents asked their child where they had been during that day and, when they understood what their handsome son and beautiful daughter had done, they were shocked and started panicking. Everyone knew what would happen if sacred places were disrespected. Nevertheless, being their only children they thought Hinekapa would forgive these young people and let them live. However, by the time they arrived at Hinekapa's home, a male relative was running toward them to tell the parents that their children had passed away. When Hinekapa's servants and the parents arrived at the pools, they found some hair floating in one of the pools and food crumbs scattered around both pools. Today, the sacred pools are covered with gravel, pumice, boulders and toxic waste now a part of reclaimed land used to divert the stream's natural flow to the lake.

Te Mimi a Tara

17. This is my grandmother and parents' story:
18. One day a noble elderly Polynesian chief arrived in Tokaanu with his entourage. He introduced himself to the Ngāti Hotu people as Tara from Tahiti. His father Whatonga (from Hawaiiki) had asked his son to explore further inland from Poneke for land where their people could settle. Tara was disappointed to find that the southern end of Lake Taupo area already had several villages. He asked to see the chief and the locals told Tara that Hinekapa and some of their people had gone to help extended whānau at Waiouru, who were being attacked by Polynesian invaders. Tara told the locals that he would wait for their chief to return, and he found a place for him and his people to sleep and rest. For several days the young men would watch this old man sitting quietly whilst holding on to his powerful looking walking stick. They began taunting and teasing Tara about his manhood and his white hair, in general being disrespectful.
19. One day, a group of local women returned to Tokaanu annoyed because they were not able to wash their hair properly at their special puia that only women could use. They complained to their men that the thermal water

was not flowing out from the spring under the rock fast enough and how it was taking them far too long to wash their hair. The water always left their hair so clean and shiny, and they wanted the water to flow faster. These men were the very ones who were being disrespectful to Tara. They knew that they could not make the water flow faster, and, embarrassed, they turned to ask the old man with his walking stick if he could do better, thinking he would fail.

20. Angry, Tara stood up and with his walking stick asked the women to show him to their thermal spring. When he reached the place, he walked up to the spring and saw the thermal spring water was slowly rising up from under the rock face. He walked closer to the rock, pointed his walking stick at the rock and with the tip of it raised his right arm in the air and hit it with the strength of a young man. A hole appeared above the old spring and the hot water started flowing faster than ever. The women were shocked when they saw how strong the old man was and ran back to their homes and told the young men what happened. When Tara arrived back, the men apologised and asked for his forgiveness. He replied, "Yes, I'll forgive you for your ignorance but from now on I will call the spring Te Mimi a Tara and from now on your women will be washing their beautiful hair in my piss." Then he left heading north. Meanwhile their elders and their wives disciplined the men. Young men being disciplined by their mothers in front of their people who were now laughing at them, was an embarrassing lesson learned about being respectful to your elders.

Hinekapa's burial ground

21. When Tuwharetoa warrior Rereao and his warriors decided to invade the pre-fleet settlements around Lake Taupo, Hinekapa remained in Tokaanu with some of the surviving servants. She lived the remainder of her life as a respected prisoner of war. Her bones were placed in a cave and the entrance was sealed at the turnoff to Waihi Village. During road construction from Turangi to Taumarunui in the early 1960s, the Ministry of Works decided to use more explosives to remove the remainder of the rocky hillside where Hinekapa's bones remained. My father and I watched from our homestead as the workers drilled holes into the exposed rock face and placed the explosive sticks inside. My father later received a message from his uncle Hepi Te Heu Heu, asking him to tell the very confused

workers to stop what they were doing. After two failed attempts to ignite the dynamite my father had explained to them that it was a tapu area and a Ngāti Hotu burial ground and that is why they could not blow up the remainder of the volcanic rock.

Hinemihī (circa 1650 – date unknown)

22. My parents shared the story of Hinemihī, another prominent wāhine who forms part of the history of my people. She lived around the mid-1600s, and came from Whakatane. After tasting the native pigeons from Rotoaira she decided to travel there after being told about a Ngāti Hotu chief named Tutetawha, who was known for the tasty pigeons he would catch and preserve. Hinemihī ended up falling in love with Tutetawha and decided to live with him. After a while, the Ngāti Hotu people fell in love with her: not only was she helpful in food-gathering but also, she was very happy to share her weaving skills. Even though she was a high-ranking person, she enjoyed their company. Tutetawha would become so jealous because his people loved Hinemihī more than him that he would physically punish her. Hinemihī would escape by walking over the Ponanga hillside to stay safe with her son Te Rangīta at his marae for a few days. The Ngāti Hotu people felt sorry for her and decided to improve the track making it easier for her to escape. When I was young, my parents took me for a walk down a small part of what visibly remains of that track, now known as "Hinemihī's Track."
23. The mountainous area used to be rocky and barren. Hinemihī was popular among her people for the sweet smelling herbal aroma in her little satchel around her neck where she carried a dry arrangement of scented flowers. The satchel was made from harakeke which allowed the aroma to permeate the person and the area around her. Hinemihī had a great love for birds and for flowers. The birds would follow her scent and brought flowers to the area. You can see her trail with the Clematis flowers that are there to this day.
24. Also loved and respected by her own people, in 1881 Chief Āporo Te Wharekāniwha had a whare built for Hinemihī and named it after her: "Hinemihī o Te Ao Tawhito (Hinemihī of the old world)."

Rangikowaea Te Wharerangi (née Raeroa, circa 1798 - circa 1886)

25. Rangikowaea is my great grandmother (x7). Rangikowaea was a rangatira tohunga (matakite) married to Te Wharerangi. She was a wife, mother, and humble mentor for her people who loved and admired her. She is a direct descendent of Kupe and Kuramarotini and well respected because of her inherent mana that came from her whakapapa. With all the stories I heard about her, I grew up to love her even though I did not know her.
26. Prior to colonisation, chiefs' daughters were important as "gifts of peace" to prevent any further bloodshed among warring tribes. During times of conflict, it was important to have supportive tribes on your side. Personally, my understanding is that when it came to promising a chiefs daughter to another chief's son, it was because of her noble heritage. During those days, maternal and paternal lines of descent carried mana or noble ranking. For example, Rangikowaea's marriage to Te Wharerangi was because of her nobility. Acknowledged as a chief in her own right, Rangikowaea and Te Wharerangi would create a high-ranking aristocracy. Rangikowaea had three husbands, from two of whom I am a direct descendent.
27. It was easy for me to understand Rangikowaea's mana because that tradition ran through my parents. There was no issue around her being a woman and having control. Like her husband, Rangikowaea would be shown respect for her decision-making. The same was true for my parents: whenever we went to any marae around the Lake Taupo or other parts of the North Island, once people understood Rauaiterangi and Te Taawhi's whakapapa, greetings always ended with acknowledgement and mutual respect, with the exception of Ngāti Maru. My sister Maata Merle has her own personal story about meeting two Ngāti Maru elders who asked Merle about her whakapapa.
28. Ngāti Hotu lived as a collective unit and even though there were times when Te Wharerangi had his own role with his spiritual followers in prayer, Rangikowaea and Te Wharerangi worked together when there were decisions to be made or having the opportunity to use their spiritual abilities as matakite, for example respectfully calling on Mount Tongariro to send his spiritual cloud down to Motuopuhi for Te Maari II.

29. In Tūwharetoa history, Rangikowaea is known only as the woman who sat on top of her nephew Te Rauparaha who was hiding in a food pit. However, to Tiahuia, her great-grand-mother (x5) was admired and respected for being involved in saving her nephew's life from some Waikato scouts who were responsible for helping colonial soldiers track and then attempt to kill him. Tiahuia's story relates that, after Te Heu Heu refused to protect Te Rauparaha, he was told to go and ask his relative Te Wharerangi at Motuopuhi to help save Te Rauparaha. When he arrived there, Te Wharerangi was reluctant to help for fear of endangering his family and people. The problem was that Te Wharerangi knew that Te Rauparaha's enemies would be arriving at Opataka marae soon; there was no time to lose.
30. Te Wharerangi asked Rangikowaea to help save her nephew and asked him to hide in one of the cool, dark food storage pits. Te Wharerangi then asked some of his people to put some "wooden boxes" in front of the entrance. Some were stacked, and one or two were not. Rangikowaea chose one of these boxes to sit on and wait. As the soldiers and scouts arrived, the scouts told Te Wharerangi that they followed Te Rauparaha's tracks to Opataka, on the North side of Lake Rotoaira, and they knew he was hiding there somewhere. Some Māori scouts noticed a woman sitting on a box and start walking towards her. One of them rudely asked her why she was sitting there. As she looked up at them, the scouts suddenly stopped in their tracks when they realised to whom they were talking. They were afraid and turned to return to their group, informing the colonial soldiers that no one was hiding in the food pit, which contained only food.
31. Meanwhile, from inside the food pit, Te Rauparaha watched the scouts walk towards his aunt and suddenly stop as he saw the look of fear in their eyes. While Te Rauparaha was watching, he became afraid thinking that he was going to be caught and killed. So, he started calling out "I die, I die." But then he quickly realised that, although he could see those men, they could not see or hear him. It was as though an invisible shield had covered the entrance protecting him. Suddenly he watched the scouts and soldiers turn to leave, and a very relieved Te Rauparaha started to call out, "I live, I live". When the army were safely out of sight, Te Rauparaha saw that the spell had been lifted and he was free to walk out of the food pit. He

thanked Te Wharerangi first for saving his life and then his aunt Rangikowaea.

32. On that day, Te Rauparaha understood and witnessed the meaning of sacred women. Rangikowaea's mana and spiritual ability were derived from her whakapapa. Her role as a Rangatira tohunga was not specific to any gender. There was no question about her rangatiratanga or her ability to protect her nephew in that time.

Archaeological excavations of the food pit

33. In 1971, Archaeologist Trevor Hosking had completed excavations at Opataka marae. He contacted my parents, asking if they could perhaps take Tiahuia there to confirm if the food pit he had discovered recently and excavated was in the correct location and that its structure was as Tiahuia remembered. A few of the local Tūwharetoa elders were beginning to complain about his work, which did not support their knowledge of pre-fleet history in general and especially the book: *Tūwharetoa: A history of the Māori People of the Taupo District* written by Tiahuia's cousin Sir John Te Herekieke Grace. My sister, Merle, remembered listening to our mother discuss the unusual shape of the food pit and asked, "So Rangikowaea was sitting in front of the food pit and not on top as is written in the *Tūwharetoa* book?" Tiahuia's reply was, "Rangikowaea was a woman of high ranking; Te Rauparaha was a leader of high ranking too. Why would she want to belittle him?"
34. Merle's son Daniel was five years old and I was eleven when, with Tiahuia's permission, we were allowed to step inside the food pit. I remember having to walk down three dirt steps and being able to stand inside. The temperature was so cool and had a calming effect on me. The structure was exactly how Tiahuia remembered during her childhood.

Te Maari II (1817 - 1829)

35. One of Tiahuia's stories was about her great-grand-aunt (x4), Te Maari II ("Te Maari"). Te Maari was Te Wharerangi's daughter. Our oral histories have her living a short but worthy life between 1817 and 1829. To her family members, she was born a spiritually gifted tohunga.

36. From birth, Te Maari was given the role of Tongariro's custodian by high-ranking religious officials. Te Wharerangi adored his daughter and would call her his "beautiful flower". By the age of twelve, her spiritual connection with Tongariro had grown; she called Tongariro her grandfather. The small crater located on the North-East side of the mountain is known as Te Maari's puia. The bath was named after her grandmother, Te Maari I. Whenever Te Maari wanted to take a bath in her grandmother's puia, she would respectfully call out to her grandfather Tongariro. Te Maari and her people could see a thick white plume gradually floating down from the mountain towards Motuopuhi, landing softly at Te Maari's feet, covering them. She would be carefully lifted and transported from her marae, rising high above and across lake Rotoaira and even higher across mountainous vegetation until she arrived at her bath. We now know this action as levitation. Despite their cultural beliefs, there would always be those who would challenge those spiritual experiences. For example, the story goes that one day four young warriors decided that they should trek up the mountain to Te Maari's bath to bathe their tired bodies in its thermal healing waters. Their joyous moment soon turned to pain, suffering, and death. Their lifeless bodies were later found by their grieving parents and relatives, lying beside the sacred bath with white foaming saliva coming out of their mouths. Te Maari's bath remained sacred. The day she was killed with her people on Motuopuhi, Te Maari's bath/crater erupted. My understanding is that Tongariro was grieving for his beautiful Te Maari.
37. Te Maari was a Matakite like her parents. She was loved by her people as well. Respect among the people seems to be a general theme across Ngāti Hotu wāhine rangatira. Her mana was rooted in her abilities and her whakapapa.
38. Te Maari was eventually killed on Motuopuhi with her people when they were attacked by Ngāti Maru. Her father, Te Wharerangi, had dreamt of the attack and warned his people to leave Motuopuhi and get to safety. She could have escaped with her mother and brother to Whanganui. Instead, she stayed behind with her father, Te Wharerangi, and her people. She stayed because of her love for the people and the mountain.

SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP OF WĀHINE AS CUSTODIANS WITH THEIR LOCAL MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, AND STREAMS.

39. Ngāti Hotu clans existed as a collective society, living in close proximity to each other, managing both land and resources. Tiahuia always referred to her ancestors as being clan leaders of higher-ranking families. Within the Hotu community, both men and women shared their roles as custodial mentors for their people. Ngāti Hotu did not hold land; they just managed their environment according to their respectful beliefs. Female Rangatira were respected as mentors and decision makers for their clans. Kaitiaki ensured that those decisions were followed and respected. Everyone knew how to be respectful of each other and the natural environmental resources they depended on for their survival. Challenging those sacred laws and beliefs usually did not end well. Problems were discussed and solved as a clan.
40. Tiahuia never talked about land boundaries, but she mentioned the clan living off the land around them. Tiahuia would say that, as kaitiaki, we have no boundaries. In my mind there has to be a boundary but, for Tiahuia, they did not exist. She always said “The land does not belong to you. You look after it.” In that same spirit, we would share resources with neighbouring hapū. With that understanding, it makes sense why Ngāti Hotu never fought amongst each other: because it was not their land to fight over.
41. Chores were sometimes shared between clans during seasonal harvesting. Tiahuia mentioned that there would be times when Ngāti Hotu men and sons would be hunting or helping other local Hotu clans who were at war with invading Māori colonisers, or otherwise helping with local harvesting. Tiahuia talked about how they went from one clan to another to help each other. That is how they lived their lives: after they finished doing their harvesting work, they would go and help the others. It was always mutual assistance. This included the men and the women. Tiahuia experienced this in her lifetime. Tiahuia lived with her great-grandfather Matuaahu from birth until the age of six when he passed away. When she was three years old, he would often take her to the peninsula of Motuopuhi where he would talk to his great granddaughter or sometimes just watch her amuse herself (she thought he was boring). Her father Tohi would care for his daughter

after Matuaahu's passing. Tiahuia would go with her father and all the elders to help the other clans. There were people who remained at their settlement to look after the elderly while everyone else was away. Every mother and daughter helped one another with some of their men's chores. This tradition goes all the way back to Rangikowaea's times. During these times, the social ranking or roles were not as important as teamwork was.

42. One example of sharing land and resources with other clans goes back to the days of Hinekapa who was a Ngāti Hotu rangatira for Tokaanu. When Ngāti Hotu settled there, the existing "supernatural people", Patupaearehe, shared their knowledge of the land and resources with Ngāti Hotu, ensuring their survival. Hinekapa learnt where the resources were, where the Ngāti Hotu clan could and could not go for food and hunting, and things that had to be respected. She passed that knowledge onto her kaitiaki. The kaitiaki then shared that knowledge with the people, and it became common knowledge as Ngāti Hotu clans adapted to their environment. In many cases, it would be the wāhine transferring the knowledge, but it seems like the men also knew that knowledge. The men shared their knowledge with their sons and the women shared their knowledge with their daughters. In some cases, it was shared amongst both. For example, fishing and foraging were a collective chore.
43. Ngāti Hotu clans practised Animism. The land was respected as it provided sustenance. Like our tīpuna before us, my grandparents were kaitiaki and passed that role on to my mother and father. It was amazing, the knowledge they had which had been passed from generation to generation. It was normal for women to be kaitiaki even back in the day. My parents Rauaiterangi and Te Taawhi were a team and they shared their roles. They shared everything.
44. My parents started teaching me animism when I was a young girl. I remember I wanted to take gecko to school for "show and tell". I asked my parents and Te Taawhi said, "You can take one, but you can only have it for one night and then you have to take back to the exact tree where you got it from." He took me to a punga tree and said, "You see where the gecko is. You put hand on the tree and thank the tree." I was confused but I thanked the tree and I asked Te Taawhi if it was OK to take the gecko. Then the gecko came onto my hand. So, Te Taawhi said, "It must be OK for you to take it but remember it's for only one night." I asked my father

“why is it for only one night?” and he said, “because she has a family to feed.” I took the gecko to school and shared my knowledge about the gecko. My father was also teaching me how to understand the flow of the stream and how to manage the natural food resources it supplied for our people. I was blown away by the knowledge my parents had passed down to them as kaitiaki. Te Taawhi was preparing me and Daniel for that role as kaitiaki. In tikanga, it did not matter that I was wāhine.

Harvesting Mutton-birds

45. When it came to food resources, men and their sons were skilled hunters, fishermen, and gatherers, while women and their daughters were also skilled at doing some of their men's chores, plus family chores. However, there was one specific chore which could be performed only by eleven or twelve-year-old girls of high status: harvesting mutton-birds on the Western side of Tongariro during the autumn season; a chore Tiahuia detested.
46. Because of their whakapapa, Tiahuia and her daughter, Rauaiterangi, were chosen to go and collect mutton-birds off the mountain. They were mentored and had knowledge passed down from the old people on how and when to get the birds. Wāhine were respected as mentors to pass on this mātauranga. Rising before dawn, Tiahuia and her father would join the group of girls with some adult women as guides. Whether rain, wind, hail, and sunshine, they had to go. It was important that, during this journey, those women did not have their menstruation. Tiahuia and my parents said it was because virginity was a sign of purity.
47. The group rode their horses most of the way from Otukou until they would reach halfway, then walk the rest of the way to the birds' breeding grounds on the Western side of Tongariro. Only Tiahuia and the girls were allowed to collect the mutton-birds from their burrowed nests, as instructed by the women. Harvesting numbers were limited, ensuring next year's harvesting would be just as good. Rauaiterangi would be the last young teen chosen to collect mutton-birds for her elders, in about 1930. Like Tiahuia, she did not enjoy this job at all. On one particular day, the weather was warm and sunny until they arrived. As they started trekking up the rocky mountainous side of Tongariro, the weather turned cold, windy, wet, and foggy. Even though Rauaiterangi was ready for extreme weather, her wet, muddy arms and drenched rolled-up sleeves made the rest of her day miserable.

Rauaiterangi managed to collect a few mutton-birds before returning home, cold and wet. The following year, European settlers also discovered how tasty the birds were and eventually hunted them to extinction.

Food preparation for Te Wharerangi

48. Another example of chores that could be performed only by wāhine was food preparation for Te Wharerangi. I whakapapa to Te Wharerangi as my great grandfather (x7). Before every meal, the women would collect flax leaves and weave a food basket and mat for him. When the meal was ready, a virgin girl would be given the honour of delivering his meal from Opataka marae to Motuopuhi and feed him with a newly cleaned sharpened twig. Being a young female prior to puberty meant spiritual purity. Mothers were proud of their daughters who were chosen to serve their leaders; it was a lifetime honour for them as parents. This would be the young girl's role until she reached puberty. Arriving at Te Wharerangi's home, she would prepare his meal for him outside, choosing a place to place the mat where he would kneel down holding his hands behind his back and be given food on the end of a sharpened twig. Te Wharerangi was tapu and therefore untouchable. The young female would become ill if she touched him or any food particle that had fallen on the mat. When Te Wharerangi had finished his meal and had returned to his family, the girl would fold the mat, making sure that every single crumb had been collected as no one else could touch the remainder of his food. Once arriving at Opataka she would hand the folded mat and its contents over to her mother.

49. There is a place nearby, now buried by the Ponanga Saddle Road, where the mats would be buried after blessings had been said. Water was supplied by the Wairehu spring nearby; the "Saddle Road" now separates the spring from the Wairehu stream although the two underground streams flowing into it from the north have not been affected. The other name for Motuopuhi is Virgin Isle. It was and is a spiritual place where Te Wharerangi, his family, high priests, and their families lived. The only other people permitted to go there were the young girls who took the food and did some house chores. Tiahuia described Motuopuhi as a spiritual paradise for her Hotu people.

ROLE OF WĀHINE IN THE WHĀNAU

50. Apart from household chores, most chores within clans were shared. In general, as a collective society, being respectful of each other meant avoiding being accountable to the rest of the clan and their chief. Children were cared for by parents, older siblings and sometimes extended family.
51. Knowledge was shared between parents, but certain issues were shared only between mother and daughter. Mothers mentored their daughters about personal hygiene, household chores, motherhood, and birthing practices. Family values and skills were important to know as future reference for everyday life within the clan. The daily chores women practised, including personal hygiene, were all important aspects of family life and wāhine contributions as mentors and "multi-taskers" were well respected within a collective society. Customs around birthing, menstruation, and the women who provided support meant that wāhine were to be treated with respect for the duration of their birthing and menstruation cycles. There was even a structure built away from the close-knit group specifically for these important occasions. In general, wāhine health issues were easy to talk about among women because some issues were "sacred."
52. The mana of wāhine did not only come from their ability to have children. My great-great-grandfather, Kēpa Te Ahuru/Rangataua, was a Ngāti Hotu chief who had two wives, but his first wife was not able to have children. His second wife was able to have children yet the status of the first wife remained the same. She held mana and was respected as his first choice despite not being able to have children.
53. The mana of wāhine is reflected in naming practices as well. In pre-fleet times, women's names held their own mana. Ngāti Hotu and Māori ancestors on both sides of my parents' families were either given or asked to accept names in remembrance of ancient ancestors that they whakapapa to. They were names that reflected the mana of that particular ancient ancestor. It was only with colonialism that wāhine had to take the name of their husband. One example of people being given names in remembrance of our tīpuna is Te Ahuru, which was the name of an ancient noble ancestor who was loved by his people but wrongfully killed. Tuhoe elders passed this name on to my great-grandfather in remembrance. This

name was passed on to my grandfather. His siblings were also each given different names of ancient noble ancestors.

54. I did not hear much about the violence that might have happened prior to colonisation like men being abusive. It is possible there were abusive men among the old people, but Tiahuia did not talk about Ngāti Hotu males disrespecting women. However, my parents told me about Hinemihi's people protecting her from abuse from her husband. Tiahuia also told me that Patupaearehe men often fell in love and kidnapped Ngāti Hotu women, always causing conflict between their husbands or lovers. She said that said the Patupaearehe were there before Ngāti Hotu, so Ngāti Hotu had to live alongside them as peacefully as possible.
55. In one of the stories, one of the husbands saved his wife from being kidnapped and she ended up having an offspring from a Patupaearehe man. In the story, the child becomes a problem because he sleeps during the day and is awake at night and so it was difficult for the child to be accepted by his mother's people. The child had to go back to his Patupaearehe father. For me, being kidnapped and forced to have another man's child would be considered sexual abuse, but for Tiahuia it was just part of life then. During her lifetime, it was common for them to come across Patupaearehe. She never talked about the wife as being degraded because in this situation the husband continued to love and respect her. But Tiahuia did not talk about how the husband cared for or treated the son.

KNOWLEDGE AND HEALING GIFTS INHERITED FROM OUR TĪPUNA

56. Knowledge-wise, I can describe the intellectual intelligence of the high-ranking Ngāti Hotu people only as gifted encyclopaedias. This has carried through the generations since pre-fleet times. Like her ancestors, Tiahuia could recite her family's history in chronological order as well as share her knowledge of the future. For their part, my parents were avid readers on practically every topic of interest. But what was more important was their daily dedication to their spiritual beliefs and connections with ancestral mountains, lakes, rivers, and streams. The Ratana religion would also become important in their lives.

57. I still ask myself, "How did they know certain worldly things that are happening now, and I am reading about during my generation?" From Tiahuia's stories, I understand that only certain women of high-ranking status through their whakapapa inherited the gifts of knowledge.
58. These spiritual gifts are something that have been passed through the generations in my family. I was born second sighted too. My parents told me it is a gift that is inherited from Te Wharerangi, Rangikowaea and Te Maari II. Both my grandparents and my parents were also gifted. My grandfather, Tamamutu Te Ahuru, gave me my name when Rauaiterangi was only 3 months pregnant with me. Despite being told by his father inlaw, Te Taawhi thought I was going to be a boy and had boys' names lined up for me. My father even had a leather football ready for me, but my grandfather knew. My grandfather named me Ko Tiaho-o-te-maramatanga, which means bright light to show the people the way. As I grew up, I started hating my name and wanted to change it because my mother kept reminding me that it is a spiritual name. She kept saying "one day you'll know", and I did not want to know.
59. In my family, Rauaiterangi inherited her spiritual gift from Tiahuia. I remember watching Tiahuia and Rauaiterangi conversing among extended family and people at meetings, sharing their knowledge, or sometimes using their diplomatic skills during heated discussions, bringing peace among themselves until next time. Tiahuia respected all people that she encountered. She would sit and listen to them. She never differentiated those with high intelligence and those with other roles in the community. For her, they were same. They all had different roles and they were all gifted in those roles. Now, I can understand why, during the Māori Wars, chiefs from warring tribes chose their daughters as a "peace offering."¹
60. Merle, Daniel, and I all inherited gifts from our tīpuna. I like to think we are all gifted, it is just that some had a different gift. Daniel is gifted in whakapapa and ancestry. Merle and I were gifted in helping people. As a child, I used to do a lot of healing mahi with my Uncle Kapi. Uncle Kapi Adams, who went blind as a young man, would often come to stay at our home where our people would spend all day receiving his herbal treatment

¹ Māori Wars were also referred to as the "New Zealand Wars" or the "Land Wars" from 1845-1872 and occurred very soon after te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed.

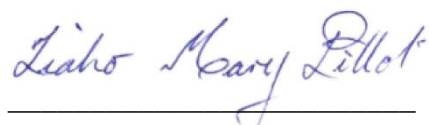
and spiritual guidance after spending several hours on his copper coil box with healing abilities. As a child and teen, Kapi would often ask me and my parents to travel with him to various local areas where he would ask me to locate historical places that were affecting some of his patients on their travels. My father would always be by my side, his job was to bless the location with Uncle Kapi. Uncle Kapi had amazing spiritual healing gift for a blind man. Some of the work I used to do with Uncle Kapi to heal people was finding the cause of the problem and then telling them what type of Māori medicine they can take and where to go and get it in the forest. With treatment, there is a lot of spiritual healing and praying. After Uncle Kapi passed away when I was thirteen, I did not go out to do that kind of healing mahi anymore, but the gift was still with me. I could not understand or handle it. When I my father died, I lost it because I could not understand it. I tried to run away, and I moved away from home for a while as an adult. I did not know you cannot run away from a gift. Since I have been home, I still have those kinds of gifts but differently. I sometimes use it today without realising: helping people and just sharing knowledge with them.

CONCLUSION

61. In conclusion, Hotu women and their daughters had a major role both physically and spiritually in their clan and within the whānau. Animism was the centre point of how they lived their lives and women were sacred. From the examples I have shared, it is clear that, in certain circumstances there were certain chores that the men could not perform, and others that they could share. It is an honour for me to say that my parents also passed on some of their spiritual skills to me; it is always a blessing for me to feel a part of nature.
62. Young females were seen as spiritually pure and were given the honour to serve their leaders. People of high rank served an entirely different role as custodians: Te Wharerangi and his family, the priests who had predicted his leadership before his birth, and their families reinforce that role. Te Maari and her spiritual connection with her grandfather Tongariro; Rangikowaea, and her role in saving her nephew are remarkable aspects of their spiritual gifts.

63. Women's significant custodial relationship with the management of land and food resources provided the people with enough food for everyone. As a child, Tiahuia had never heard of her people ever starving or becoming stressed and violent within families; the only time loud voices could be heard was when parents had to discipline their children.

DATED at TAURANGA this 9th day of August 2022



Tiaho Mary Pillot