
**KEI MUA I TE AROARO O TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I
TE TIRITI O WAITANGI****BEFORE THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL****WAI 2700****WAI 2925****WAI 2930****WAI 3029**

IN THE MATTER OF The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975**AND****IN THE MATTER OF** the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry**AND****IN THE MATTER OF** a claim by Sir Edward Taihākurei Durie, Kaa Kereama and Anne Kendall on behalf of the New Zealand Māori Council (Wai 2925);

a claim by Pauline Vahakola-Rewiti for herself and Rongopai Māori Committee of Otara (Wai 2930); and

a claim by Grace Hoet (Wai 3029).

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF MERETI TAIPANA

21 July 2022

RECEIVED

Waitangi Tribunal

22 Jul 22

Ministry of Justice

WELLINGTON

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E TE KAIWHAKAWĀ, TĒNĀ KOE.

Introduction

1. Ko Mereti Taipana ahau.
2. I am the daughter of Kahu Hurihia Durie (nee Taipana/ nee Clarke) her mother was Kahurautete Matawha, her grandmother was Mihi Ki Turangi, and her great grandmother was Wharekiri. Our Ngati Toa and Rangatahi Links come from WhareKiri. My Father is Te Hape Taipana of Kaati Mamoe, Arowhenua Te Waipounamu. I have two children my mataamua Te Whiu Reuben and my tamaahine Ngaio Mereti. I live on my mothers' land at Aorangi, which is Tahuriwakanui of Ngati Kauwhata on my mothers' paternal lineage.
3. This joint brief of evidence is filed in support of the following claims:
 - a) Wai 2925, a claim by Sir Edward Taihākurei Durie, Kaa Kereama and Anne Kendall on behalf of the New Zealand Māori Council;
 - b) Wai 2930, a claim by Pauline Vahakola-Rewiti for herself and Rongopai Māori Committee of Otara; and
 - c) Wai 3029, a claim by Grace Hoet.
4. This brief of evidence gives our kōrero about two of my tupuna wāhine rangatira; Wharekiri and Mihi-ki-Tūrangi Matawha.
5. Wharekiri is my great great-grandmother, and Mihi-ki-Tūrangi is my great-grandmother.

The Life of Wharekiri (Whango/ Paki/Cootes)

6. Wharekiri was born in Kawhia approximately 1828.
7. It is thought that Wharekiri travelled South from Ohura with some of the Ngati Raukawa some time after the famous heke to Ōtaki, (Te Hekenga mai i raro) moving later to live in the Porirua area.

8. Wharekiri and Ngati Rangatahi lived alongside Ngati Toa on Kapiti Island for a while.
9. During this time I'm not sure if Wharekiri was involved with taua of Rangatahi that joined with Te Rangihaeata and his combative excursions to the South Island especially around Te Wairau.
10. Around this timeline, Wharekiri met a Whaler by the name of Hemi Kuti (James Cootes) an English whaler who lived amongst the Ngati Toa people at Kapiti Island. She (married) and took his name and in 1836 she became pregnant with Mihi ki Turangi.
11. Sometime after the return of Ngati Toa/Rangatahi taua from Te Waipounamu she and her people of Ngati Rangatahi moved to Heretaunga in the Hutt Valley under the mana of Te Rangihaeata
12. In 1836, Mihi Ki Turangi was born in the Hutt Valley.
13. In 1839 there was much disruption to Maori life and land ownership due to the unscrupulous activities of the NZ Company and this was to eventually affect Ngati Rangatahi's settlement in the Hutt.
14. By 1846 and after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), Ngati Rangatahi was forcibly evicted from the Hutt valley without any compensation for their land loss, their dwellings, belongings or cultivations. In fact everything they owned was burnt or destroyed including their cultivations. Efforts to negotiate alternative land failed.
15. With their Rangatira, Kaaparatehau, and under the mana of Te Rangihaeata the tribe had to uproot everything they had and leave the Hutt Valley. They walked all the way from the Hutt Valley to other areas looking for a place to settle.
16. Their journey was marked with trauma, near starvation and death as they kept to high ground, having to travel along the hill ridges away from attack. They managed to get food from some of the Ngati Raukawa kainga on the way through. While others of Ngati Toa refused to help them. Once in Ngati Raukawa territory they were able to descend from the hills and fish from coastal waters to feed their group.

17. It has also been noted in historical records that a number of children were left behind because they did not have their parents. Their parents likely to have been killed by soldiers during the sacking of their pa and homes. The group were unable to take them as the journey was long and arduous on foot and over mountainous country. What happened to them is unknown.
18. The rest of the Ngati Rangatahi people walked on, stopping for rests and a longer rest at Poroutawhao. Eventually they made their way to Reureu in the now known Rangitikei area. Wharekiri and her people eventually settled on the southern side of the Rangataua stream, and in 1868 built their whare named, Miria te Kakara.
19. In 1968, Wharekiri would have been in her 50s (approximately) Mihi Ki Turangi would've been about
20. Miria Te Kakara was decimated by flooding so the people moved to an upland plateau of land and built a new whare named Te Hiiri o Mahuta.
21. Te Hiiri o Mahuta still stands today and is used by the people of Ngati Rangatahi and their kin Ngati Matakore

Mihi Ki Turangi

22. As far as I know, and what seems to be the most likely, Mihi Ki Turangi was born in the Heretaunga area of the Hutt in 1836.
23. Mihi ki Turangi would've been about 10 when she ran with her mother and her people from the Hutt Valley to eventually settle in the Reureu Valley.
24. Some of the Ngati Rangatahi group dispersed further north. Mihi Ki Turangi and Wharekiri stayed.
25. Mihi-ki-Tūrangi was born into a changing, tumultuous world. At the spearhead of colonisation. Her people had suffered huge land loss from other encroaching neighbouring tribes in the north, and then from the colonising forces in the South. Her most recent experience being their forced ousting from the Hutt. Everything they couldn't take with them, was destroyed.

26. She survived the Influenza pandemic of 1918, and the Tuberculosis epidemic 1928. During the time when the level of illness in Te Reureu was at its worst with no medical care and no access to medical in town. In some cases not being allowed out of their area to get care or advice.
27. Mihi-ki-Tūrangi lived with her people at Te Reureu, first at Miria Te Kakara then much later at Te Hiiri , Kakariki. Te Hiiri was her main home for 70 years.
28. Regardless of the extreme hardship her people faced, she would've been brought up around her own people, living in their own way and in an industrious community. Setting up cultivations, using the streams as a way of preparing certain delicacies like kaanga piro and toroi. Fishing, planting kumeras, potatoes, corn and harvesting harakeke, raupo and pingao for weaving. Many women from Te Reureu carried their skill with them
29. Mihi ki Turangi learnt how to do all of the above and was to teach her daughter those same skills. And then her daughter (Kahurautete) would later teach her daughters how to grow and cultivate, harvest harakeke and weaving amazing things out of that material
30. Either as an adolescent or a young woman Mihi Ki Turangi got her Moko Kauae. It is in the design of Maniapoto, she had her lips done and has a line above her top lip.
31. Mihi ki Turangi as a young woman had two husbands Matawha and Keremete Riwai, her children from these men were Kahurautete Matawha (my grandmother) and Pita and sister Kaanga Keremete
32. I know from my own korero with whanau that Mihi Ki Turangi has many descendants. I have many cousins and second cousins (male and female) we are all descendants from WhareKiri and Mihi Ki Turangi
33. Her daughter (Kahurautete Matawha) married Hoani Meihana te Rama Apakura (Durie) from Tahuriwakanui Ngati Kauwhata when she was about 17. When Mihi Ki Turangi became elderly she stayed at the Durie Homestead in Aorangi.

34. Every time we would visit, we would always be reminded that Granny Mihi used to stay in the whare next to the house.
35. My mother's korero of Mihi Ki Turangi was that she was a gentle kind woman and I got the impression that Granny Mihi was a primary role model for mum in her child years. Because Mum had similar traits.
36. Right up to our generation (my sister and I) we had a Māori bread bug passed down from Mihi-ki-Tūrangi. It gave the Maori bread a distinctive taste that after it died, we have never been unable to recreate with another bug.
37. At the time of her passing, she was the oldest known member of the Ngāti Rangatahi and Ngāti Toa tribes. She had more than 100 descendants.
38. In the newspapers of the time, she was described as a chieftainess, as the "last direct link between the West Coast Māori and the noted Chief Te Rauparaha". Mihi-ki-Tūrangi passed away in 1939 and buried at Kakariki. She was 103 years old.

The Status of Wāhine at the time of Wharekiri and Mihi-ki-Tūrangi

39. Even though it was a tumultuous time of upheaval and extreme change the status of wahine Maori at the time of Wharekiri and Mihi-ki-Turangi did not seem to be obviously different. Even in towns when the women from Reureu came to town on the train, they would be the talk of the town probably part fear and part fascination. They spoke te reo the whole time, they usually wore black and were very personable. Some probably smoked pipes as my ggrandmother did. They would buy their provisions and look around and then catch the train back to Te Reureu valley. They still had their autonomy as women. They didn't really have the name 'mana wahine', it was simply known to be who they were, they just lived it. They were the embodiment of mana wāhine.
40. The main sign of the changes on the status of Maori women in my grandmothers' time were that they were more often being drawn into land issues. What may have been left up to the chiefly men was now also the fight of their women. The treaty was signed in 1840, but that made no difference to

the NZ Company agents. And many of the chiefly men were either hunted down and arrested, or they had to leave the areas they once inhabited.

41. The women (as had the men) were now exposed to the unscrupulous tactics of the land agents, being plied with alcohol (beer) so they were easier to convince to sign over their land. And this happened many times. In many incidences the women never consented to signing any forms but would be drunk from a drink they had never had before. This was the beginning of efforts to denigrate the mana of Maori women of that time.
42. Those women and sometimes they were elderly (Kuia) were quite confident in taking on men in the courthouse, feeling that it was their right to speak on issues of the whenua. The pākehā men were not used to this boldness from the wāhine.

Rangatiratanga

43. Mihi-ki-Tūrangi was someone who held her authority. And I think the Rangatiratanga she and Wharekiri held was due to their lineage and perhaps their close ties to Te Rauparaha and Te Rangihaeata.
44. Im not sure about Wharekiri, but the fact that she travelled from the Hutt to Te Reureu with her daughter on foot, and still able to be a part of setting up their new kainga (Miria te Kakara) shows her strength, determination and rangatiratanga. And as far as I know James Cootes left her to fend for herself.
45. Mihi Ki Turangi survived one world war a pandemic (Influenza 1918) where there was no vaccine until the 1930s and an epidemic of Tuberculosis. And this was during a time of no medication, when people were dying around her and not being able to leave the area to get any help. That is someone that is quite amazing, someone that was well looked after.

Wāhine and Tāne

46. Tane and wahine had specific roles, but they were complementary. They worked together, for the benefit of the hapū. Cultivating food, looking after the children and the household. It was a very equal relationship, one where women were respected for having their own mana. And men for theirs.

47. Both men and women were gatherers of kai, it was mainly the men who set the traps. This was more the realm of the tāne. More up to the women to prepare the food, but with hāngi it is the men who dig the hole. It was a very egalitarian society.
48. I really saw that flowing on to my grandparents. They truly respected each other, although my grandmother did always have the last say. They respected each other's mana, neither ruled the relationship, it was true partnership.
49. The Māori world view is that there are two entities, both on equal footing. There was room for both. Christianity, on the other hand brought the belief that the woman comes from the rib of a man. This reflects the story of Adam and Eve. Which is a primary myth of origin for the European, the status of women is below that of men. That was the case during the Victorian era.
50. During the time of colonisation of NZ, the belief around gender differences of the European was that women and children were possessions, chattels for men.

Atua

51. When you look at our atua, our myths of origin, we have male and female entities. Papatuanuku (female) and Ranginui (male) our primal deities. There is balance in the way we live modelled in our myths of origin and purakau.
52. Atua play a major part in Maori beliefs and values to this day. They have a place in nearly every area of our lives.
53. Atua represent different parts of the environment, of nature and they dictated how we interacted with nature.
54. Atua and the worship of Atua and the spiritual realm was considered heathen or pagan by the Colonisers, and so a lot of effort went into destroying those beliefs and practices.

Status of pregnant wāhine

55. As far as I know a pregnant wahine was valued. The woman provides the next generation, (Whare Tangata) and children were well looked after and loved. My

mother always spoke of Mihi ki Turangi with fondness and said she was kind and gentle. Her life was one that was dotted with trials and trauma and yet she was a lovely person. This almost shows that she was well loved when she was a child and into her adulthood. A pregnant woman would've meant the continuation of the whakapapa and more descendants. That is quite an important value to Maori, the continuation of whakapapa.

Takataapui

56. There were Takataapui in the days of my kuia, I can remember meeting an old kuia who in her younger days built her own house. She lived with her whanau and they looked after each other. I will never forget the fact that it must've been so hard to do, and yet she did it..
57. I am not sure about how Takataapui were treated in the days of my kuia. But I have read that they were usually accepted as part of the whanau, and therefore the hapu.
58. I know that today takataapui whanau members are accepted as part of the whanau and people are more educated about diversity than they have ever been.

Dated at Wellington this 21st July 2022



Mereti Taipana