



Essay

TŌKU HAERENGA / MY JOURNEY

Roka Hurihia Ngarimu-Cameron

Te Kāranga – (Ceremonial Call)

Hirini Melbourne
- Kōauau/pūtōrino (flute)

Karakia – (Prayer)

He hōnore he korōria ki te atua
He Maungārongo ki te whenua
Whakaaro pai ki ngā tangata katoa
Āke, Āke, Āke, Āmine....

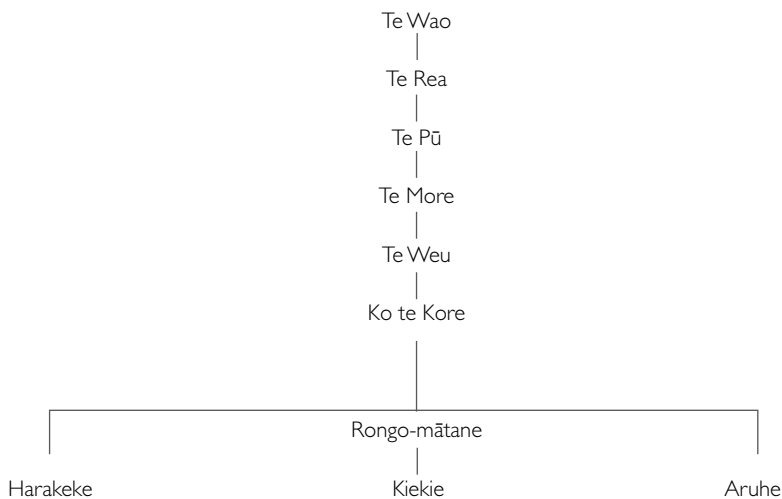
He Tohu aroha ki ngā kaumātua o ngā mahi toi - (Dedications)

Rāina o te Rangi – great grandmother, Roka Kehu Hōtene – grandmother, Te Oti Hōtene-Ngarimu – mother,
Ani tokina Haimona – Kuia,
Rongo Belmont – Kuia, Hinehou Campbell – Kuia, Te Raita Ngamoki – Tāua, Tāua Doreen – Emily Schuster,
Kath Brown, Erenora Puketapu-Hetet and the recent Kelly Davis.

Mihi – (Introduction)

Ko Rānginui te maunga, Ko Hawai to awa, Ko Te Harāwaka te Tūpuna, Ko Te Whānau ā Apanui te Iwi, Ko
Mataatua rāua ko Horouta ngā waka, engari tetahi o uku waewae kei roto ia koutou, Ngāti Porou, Ngāi Tahu,
Ngāi Tai, Te Whakatohea, Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tuhoē, Te Arawa, Tuwharetoa, Ngāti Airihi

Whakapapa o te Harakeke – (Geneology of the flax - phormium tenax)



Whakatauki – (proverb)

“Hutia te rito o te Harakeke – Kei hea te ko mako e ko?”

Ko Emma Rogers raua ko Dannie Poihipi, Te Whānau ā Apanui.

Figure 1, previous page: Roka Hurihia Ngarimu-Cameron, *Korowai Puketeraki*, detail, 2006 (photograph courtesy of Craig McNab).

AUTHOR'S HISTORY

I was born in Opotiki in the late 40s and lived with my kuia (grandmother) Roka and mother Te Oti at Hawaii. I was raised in a ponga whare (house) at Hawaii on the pa (village) in the rohe (district) of Te Whanau a Apanui. Our whare had a dirt floor, no electricity, no running water, a single door opening and an outside toilet. Roka was in her late 70s when she was caring for me. She was tūturu Māori, which meant we lived by the ways of our ancestors. She could not speak English and so all of my communication with her was in Te Reo Māori. We survived on the tolls of hard work from the land, growing kai (food) – kūmara, riwai and kamokamo – and from the sea, which provided us with kaimoana (seafood): crayfish, kina, ngeangea, paua and ika (sea eggs, eel, abalone, fish). My mother and kuia were master divers and they knew where all the traditional kaimoana rocks were. Nanny Roka was a staunch member of the Ringatū Hāhi and walked the many miles, by beach at low tide, to the various twelfths held at the neighbouring marae (village). She is well known for her journeys from Hawaii to Te Kaha. She was truly a servant of God. Nanny Roka wore a moko (tattoo) and this depicted her ranking within her hapu (tribe), Te Whanau a Te Haraawaka and her iwi (people) Te Whanau a Apanui. The tohunga (master tattooist) performed tā moko (face tattoo) on my kuia at the Kokohinau Marae, Te Teko in the rohe of Ngāti Awa. My nanny Roka was a survivor of the Tarawera eruption during the late eighteen hundreds and it is where my name comes from. Rokahurihia means the tumbling turning rocks. I proudly carry her name and dedicate the mahi (work) that I do to her.

TE WHARE PORĀ

My entry to Te Whare Pora, the house of weaving, was through my kuia and mother Te Oti. My induction into Te Whare Pora was brought about by necessity, the necessity to survive. Our survival depended upon the produce made from harakeke (flax) and the application of raranga (weaving) techniques within our environment. We required rourou (plates) for cooking kai and kete (baskets) for gathering berries and kai moana. Kete riwai are baskets for carrying potatoes; kete kūmara are baskets for carrying sweet potatoes;



Figure 2: Ponga whare, (image courtesy of the artist).

whāriki is a general term for woven mats and korowai for clothing.

The humble and earthly beginnings that I experienced enabled me to be in touch with Papatūānuku (earth mother), and her offspring, Tāne Mahuta and Tangaroa. Erenora Puketapu-Hetet, in her book on Māori weaving, states that “Te Whare Pora can be described as a state of being. The weaver is initiated into Te Whare Pora, the house of weaving with karakia (prayer) and ceremony.”¹¹

Her or his level of consciousness is raised and they become clear-minded and relaxed so that their spirit, mind and physical being are totally in tune with each other. They are in a state of optimum readiness to receive and retain knowledge. As Elsdon Best noted in 1898, in *Clothing of the Ancient Māori*, “The Whare Pora was a house specially set aside for teaching the art of weaving in its various branches, and in it were performed the ceremonies connected with the installation and teaching of the taura (student).”¹² Te Whare Pora does not necessarily require a physical structure as the word ‘whare’ implies. Traditionally, the taura underwent an initiation ceremony to enter Te Whare Pora. Very few of today’s weavers experienced this initiation ceremony. One of the reasons for this is that many traditional ceremonies were viewed by the Christian missionaries as being anti-Christian acts. They were discouraged – not forgotten by Māori, just not practiced.

The missionaries held the idea that Māori should be Christianised or ‘spiritualised’. However, Te Rāina o Te Rangī (Figure 3) symbolises the arts of whakairo, our written language and our books. The three fingers in the carving of Māori figures sometimes commemorate the historical happenings of ancestors, but the much older spiritual significance have often been overlooked. Te Rāina o Te Rangī is there to remind us of the spiritual side. I wish to put at rest the minds of some of us who wrongly believe, because of the writings

of ethnologists and historians, that the Māori were worshippers of stone idols and wooden images. On the contrary, the Māori of old believed in God before Christianity was introduced. They knew how to pray; during drought they prayed for rain; when fishing they prayed that fish be plentiful. There were prayers for everything pertaining to living. To clarify the question of the three fingers, one can refer to the carving of our ancestors before even the historical migration of some 600 odd years ago. Our carvings teach us:

FROM HAWAIKI NUI, HAWAIKI ROA,
HAWAIKI PĀMAMAO''

Here by ritual I prepare my self to face the universe.

By the ritual of the earthly realm

By the ritual of the heavenly realm

By the ritual of which enabled our ancestor

TĀNE – NUI – A – RANGI to ascend the firmament
even into the heaven of heavens.

There he met:

IO-MATUA-KORE: God the Parentless(1st Finger)

IO-NUKU: God of Earth (2nd Finger)

IO-RANGI: God of Heavens (3rd Finger)

From whom came the three baskets of knowledge?

TE KETE TŪĀURI:

the basket of Good or Evil (1st Finger)

TE KETE TŪĀTEA:

the basket of Material Knowledge (2nd Finger)

TE KETE ARONU: the basket of Spiritual Knowledge
(3rd Finger)

These were brought down by our ancestors TĀNE-
NUI-A-RANGI and planted upon Papatūānuku
unto this world of form, unto this world of light,
behold the principles of life. It is a coincidence that
when our European brothers and sisters introduced
Christianity to us they also brought three baskets.

THE FATHER: God of the parentless (1st finger)

THE SON: Son of God (2nd Finger)

THE HOLY SPIRIT (3rd Finger)

Christianity brought three other baskets as well:

FAITH or WHAKAPONO(1st Finger)

HOPE or TŪMANAKO(2nd Finger)

CHARITY or AROHA (3rd Finger)



Figure 3, left: *Turirangi*, sculpture 78 x 40cm, 2006, tikumu, paua shell and piupiu harakeke, custom board, Otago Museum (photograph courtesy of the artist).

Figure 4, right: Roka Hurihia Ngarimu-Cameron, *Kupenga*, 2000, harakeke, emu feathers, 170 x 126cm (photograph courtesy of W Tilley, Opotiki).

All the things brought by Christianity are recorded by the carvings of our ancestors. There are many treasures recorded by our carvings that are also recorded in the Holy Bible. It would take volumes to present them. I would like to leave this thought: It is coincidental that when the Holy Bible arrived amongst our people it was already written into our carvings.³

I would like to also make reference to our Poupoumanawa, *Turirangi* from Tunāpahore, 1851 (Figure 4), housed here in our Museum, Te Whare Taonga o Otago in Dunedin. This Poupoumanawa came off one of our whare at Hawaii, my Tūrangawaewae. Also, I make reference to Te Whare Taonga o Otago for housing our whareniui Mataatua for many, many years. This comforts me and my whānau (family) here in Te Waipounamu. The whareniui Mataatua has returned to Ngāti Awa te kainga tūturu.

Long ago, Nanny Roka taught me to have respect for my environment and our creator and embraced me into Te Whare Pora, through love, aroha and guidance. The need for her to weave and work hard was paramount as our sustainability depended on it. This work ethic has been instilled in me as I strive to work earnestly in everything I do. I make reference to Nanny Roka as her instilling of this work ethic in me has led to many projects, and has guided my tōku haeranga, my journey.

KUPENGA

Here, I make reference to my work *Kupenga* as it also represents the three-finger Kaupapa. I created the cloak for the *Fibre and Fleece Competition*, held in Opotiki in 2000. This project provided an opportunity for my mum and I to share our skills, tell our stories, laugh our laughs and cry our cries. The competition was entered into to support the event and because it had a Māori Art Section. The *Kupenga* was judged winner of the Māori section and also chosen as the supreme winner of all the sections.

This achievement aroused much delight amongst my hapū and iwi. Before long people were requesting that I teach them the skills of raranga. Wānanga (workshops) on traditional whatu korowai (cloak making) were conducted on the thirteen marae in our

rohe. This had not happened for fifty years. There was huge interest and our marae were full of industrious people harvesting, preparing, extracting fibre and developing the skills of whatu korowai.

At the completion of these wānanga the people wanted more. By now I had started raranga programmes under the Whakatōhea Māori Trust Board in partnership with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. My ties with my whanau, hapū and iwi were all strengthened and we were involved with many projects in our community and we modelled these for Te Whanau Arohanui in Waitati.

WHARETOI

During this time a new whareniui was built by my brothers. Stage one of the papakainga housing projects was completed and a new Whare Toi erected on our marae.

As I worked on the tukutuku panels for the Arai Te Uru Marae Whareniui, I was filled with the wonderful memories and precious times that mum and I shared completing the tukutuku panels for our Whareniui Ranginui. My mother featured in Mick Pendergrast's book *Te Tahi* (2005), which shows some of the panels that we worked on. Sadly mum passed away. Moe mai e te whaea moe mai moe mai.

The Whare Toi will house the skills of Toi Māori Raranga – Whakairo and Rauangi. Our aim is to provide an opportunity for people to learn the skills of their chosen discipline, to establish an art co-operative and to provide an opportunity for Green Tourism.



Figure 6: Tukutuku Panels (image courtesy of Mick Pendergrast's book *Te Tahi*).

Our coastline is so beautiful and many thousands of tourists are finding out more and more how beautiful it really is. We plan to provide them with a completely Toi Māori experience and one where they will be taught basic raranga skills as part of their package.

Our Whare Toi holds much meaning for me as it has been built on the site where my kuia's ponga whare stood. It will also be our Whare Taonga, a place to display the treasures of our own master weavers from our own rohe – of those weavers who have not gained the recognition that they deserve.

I am a current member of Te Roopū Raranga Whatu o Aotearoa and I am one of the weavers that made the cloak *Maungārongo ki te Whenua* which was gifted to Toi Māori Aotearoa. At the presentation ceremony for this cloak, I caught up with Dr Khyla Russel. We flew back to Dunedin together. During the flight Dr Russell encouraged, inspired and challenged me to undertake further study at Te Kura Matatini ki Otago/ Otago Polytechnic.

This was a challenge alright. I was scared, excited, honoured. I mihi to Dr Russell for her achievements in the world of academics and for the mahi that she has done for her people and for Māoridom. I also make reference to *The Eternal Thread* exhibition (2005) that I toured with, as working for this exhibition assisted in building my confidence and this, in turn, helped me to accept the challenge to enrol for my Masters of Fine Arts degree. For this exhibition, I was part of a group of weavers that wove a traditional korowai using whītau (fibre) and tanekaha wairākau (dye) from my rohe. I mihi to Dannie Poihipi, Manny Mokomoko, for their Tautoko within these taonga. Our group gifted the korowai entitled *Aramoana (Korowai Aroha)* to America to create a pathway for Māori Art to the American people. It now has a place of residence with the Mayor in San Francisco.

The cloak, *Aramoana*, symbolised the weaving of strong and vibrant relationships between Māori people and the citizens of San Francisco. It was presented by Te Arikini Dame Te Atairangikaahu, the Māori Queen, to Aaron Peskin, President of the Board of Supervisors for San Francisco. Creative Director of the Pataka Museum in Wellington, Darcy Nicholas, explains:

The Māori art meets America event is important because it celebrates the creative achievement of Māori people today in one of the great art cities of the world. The word 'Māori' has immense values in the international arena, combined with the dynamism and spirituality of the arts it is an awesome force. Māori art has unlocked a huge audience and confirms research for a dynamic fit with the vibrancy and beauty of this country.⁴

In response to calls from Māori to assist them to retain ownership and control of their Māori knowledge, imagery and designs, Creative New Zealand has created and registered the Toi Iho Māori mark as a registered trademark (See <http://www.toiio.com/> as last accessed on 30 September 2007.) I am a current registered artist of Toi Iho and would like to acknowledge Moana Davey from Creative New Zealand for the awahi in the Sydney Aboriginal and Oceanic Art Fair, 2004.

THE SCHOOL OF ART

Upon my return from this fair to Dunedin, an opportunity arose to re-establish the raranga programme for Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. Yet again the mauri (life-force) of the harakeke has been able to find sustainability for the whānau. After my return, Dr Russell again challenged me to study further and an interview was scheduled with the panel from the School of Art and my application was submitted. It was a thrill to be accepted, but I was seriously asking myself what I was doing there?

Initially, I became whakamā (shamed); my initial plans and thoughts for my projects were blown away; they didn't seem to fit or I didn't seem to fit. Although my hoa, Rose and Rangī, gave me the support I needed, the Māori art forms of kete, kete whakairo, piupiu whāraki and whatu korowai felt as if they were being drawn away from me. This made me feel very lonely. But, sitting in the corridor I had observed another lonely creature: the loom. I became curious and before long I had attached myself to it. In the loom I found an interest and an entry into the masters programme at Te Kura Matatini ki Otago. The whānau were also proud and excited. I was ready. Was I ready?

My first impressions of Te Kura Matatini ki Otago began to shake my foundations. Feelings of doubt, isolation and of not belonging absorbed me. My studio appeared lonely. The world of Toi Māori that I had been used to as a teacher and learner was far different from the place I was at. Complaints from fellow students about my resources and their smell then also severely rocked my foundation and in order to overcome this I focused on how looms functioned and what could be woven on them.

In the warp and weft I found a similarity to the aho and whenu of the whatu technique required for weaving korowai. Feelings of renewed hope and excitement began to fill my creative world. My creative energy was awoken and I was a Māori artist again. Tihei Mauriora! I mihi to Christine Keller for her tuition on the loom and I have named my first piece off the loom *Keller*. I was learning to weave my wānanga toi Māori world together with the western Te Kura Matatini ki Otago art world. I had found a balance.

My table loom sampler *Keller* is a wall hanging piece with mixed media from tōku haerenga, my journey. It includes bear grass and sweet grass from the whenua of the American Indian Confederated Tribes of Siletz Salem in Oregon. Mihi aroha ki Bud and Robert for their support and aroha in supplying these to me. The tea plant from Hawaii is represented and woven in to be worn so as to keep the evil spirits away. Fijian tapa cloth was given to me by my son Carl who is a barrister in Fiji. Harakeke paper made from New Zealand flax came from the printmaking studio at the School of Art.

Furthermore, I included Māori sweet grass, pīngao and the karētū, in the piece; as well as huruhuru feathers from the native New Zealand pigeon or kererū as well as contemporary materials; asian feathers, wool, mink, as well as human hair weaving together the four generations of my whānau: myself, my daughter, my mokopuna and my mokopuna tuarua.

In teaching the skill of Piupiu making to taurira of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa raranga programme at Waitati, I designed a piece from the American Indian dress made from hide which I purchased in Salem. The glass beads that are also attached to the whītau (fibre) represent the beautiful beadwork of the Indian people and the glass beads from the iwi of Ngai Tahu.

Thus, I was bringing two worlds together. But, for me the understanding of the two worlds of art has been difficult. My tūpuna (ancestor) Nanny Roka's art of survival and story telling, which we consider to be he taonga tōku iho (treasures of our ancestors), is part of the culture but the art of today is quite different. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* states that "story telling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research."⁵ Indigenous writers' stories are ways of passing down the beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass the story down further. The story and the storyteller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story.

As a research tool, Russell Bishop suggests, storytelling is a useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the 'diversities of truth' within which the storyteller rather than the researcher retains control.⁶ Linda Smith, further states: "Intrinsic in story telling is a focus on dialogue and conversations amongst us as indigenous peoples, to ourselves and for ourselves. Such approaches fit well with the oral traditions, which are still a reality in day-to-day indigenous lives."⁷ Kathy Irwin characterises Kaupapa Māori as research which is culturally safe; which involves the mentorship of elders; which is culturally relevant and appropriate while satisfying the rigour of research; and which is undertaken by a Māori researcher, not a researcher who happens to be Māori.⁸ My story is important to me as Māori, we celebrate our survival and not our demise. Through storytelling our people have successfully retained their cultural and spiritual values and authenticity.

As my preparation of my materials developed the need for research to kīnaki tōku mahi (support my work) became evident. We are privileged in our community and certainly at Te Kura Matatini ki Otago to have a kaumātua (an elder) of significance such as Huata Holmes. He is a much respected elder in the community steeped in Tikanga Māori and a native speaker of Te Reo Māori.

I prepared myself for an interview with Huata that had been arranged by Dr Russell, armed with pen

and paper and tape recorder. Had we been on our marae the interview would have been conducted in the whareniui embraced by our tūpuna. It would have been held in a place of solace fit for such an interview. However, here at work we struggled to find an appropriate room, a quiet place where he could think, recite and talk.

My interview went well. Huata spoke of the Ngai Tahu language for the Kupu Korowai as his Ngai Tahu whanau use Kahurangi for cloaks. The different dialect is Kahuraki and it comes from our native manu the kahu (hawk). I created a workbook with my images of Tōku Haerenga and named the book *Huata*. During my interview with him, I placed my very old book that I had recycled for my images on the table that our coffee was served on. He told me to remove the book, stating that it was "He Tapu tena Taonga". The book was precious like our many precious taonga. For me, he wove the written language and the oral art together.

I also had the pleasure of Huata's presence at the Te Moana Nui a Kiwa Conference at the University of Otago in 2006. We had a small exhibition and workshop in the textile department to kīnaki (add support to) the conference and I also had the pleasure of working with Kelly Davis in his workshop of Mokihi building with my demonstration of mahi (making) piupiu (a traditional garment somewhat like a skirt).

RAHERA AND TE HARAWAKA

My thoughts then became focused on the preparation of my raw materials for loom weaving and for my sculptural piece, *Rahera*, made from harakeke paper as a prop for my *Te Harawaka* cloak. During this process I gave a workshop in the printmaking section. I would like to thank the printmaking section at Otago Polytechnic for their harakeke papermaking workshops, especially Marilynn Webb and Steev Peyroux; and also Kahu Toi Te Kanawa who gave the flax for the workshop and Te Whare Wānanga o Waitati taurira who participated in the workshop.

I would like to thank Leoni Schmidt for introducing me to Linden Cowell and I wish to make reference to Linden for his koha aroha of the kauri slab, on which my sculpture, *Rahera*, is erected. I also wish to make reference to my son Ricky for the preparation of the kauri slab that is over a hundred years old. This piece of kauri is from a project that Linden worked on for the Otago Museum. The cabinet displaying *Rahera* and the cloak *Te Harawaka* is also made from kauri which is over a hundred years old. "He Rangatira."

My *Rahera*, a paper-mâché doll, is named after my Matua Whangai mahi (care and protection of families). The love and nurturing I received from my kuia encouraged me to nurture others who were less fortunate than me and I thus became a foster parent. The doll I recycled belonged to one of my foster daughters who is now in her 30s. After completing my diploma in theory and practice of Social Work at Otago University under the direction of Dr Pat Shannon, I decided that my skills were still required in caring for people hands-on rather than from an office. "Matua Whangai mahi".

Te Harawaka is the first garment I made on the floor loom. I had prepared tonnes of whītau/flax fibre and I used wairakau tānekaha (a native tree) and traditional methods as part of my preparation. It took me months to do the gathering and working with the raw materials.

The classic korowai (cloak) that was collected by English navel officer John Fletcher in 1837 from the Motu o Kapiti Rohe o Pōneke (Wellington area) is the prototype for *Te Harawaka*. I wove three titi (mutton bird bones) on the front of *Te Harawaka*, making reference back to the spiritual kōrero (conversation) in the beginning of my story in this essay called "Tōku Haerenga". For me, the realisation of the possibilities when joining together my traditional methods of preparing with the Western techniques of loom weaving is developing into a passion and a story which I am proud to tell.

Figure 7, right: Detail of whītau tags and tānekaha dye, 2007 (photograph courtesy of Craig McNab).

Figure 8, inset right: *Korowai Puketeraki*, 2007, harakeke, cotton and linen, pig tusk capped with granite stone (worn here by Dr Khylla Russell (photograph courtesy of Craig McNab).

PUKETERAKI

The next korowai *Puketeraki* I made was in remembrance of our kaumātua (ancestors). A korowai is a fine cloak with black cord tags. The distinguishing feature of the korowai is the decoration of its kaupapa (main surface) with hanging cords of two-ply rolled fibre, usually dyed black. The aho (wefts) secure the center of each cord so that the two ends hang down as a double tag. When the wearer moves these hukahuka (fibre tags) move too, giving life to the whole garment. These form a subgroup which is loosely rolling tags that appear to be unraveling.

TE WHĀNAU AROHANUI TRUST

Reflecting Tikanga Māori principles (ways of enacting Māori values), my husband and I established the Te Whānau Arohanui Trust (T.W.A.T.) in 1990. That same year the country was honouring the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Waitangi. This was our little part to play for the cause and our way of holding onto our Tino Rangatiratanga (self-determination).

We followed the ways of our tūpuna and creating a path heading into the future. T.W.A.T. acknowledges the support that the rūnanga Kati Huirapa has given to the trust.

Dr Peter Walker, lecturer in the Family and Communities Studies Department, Otago University, wrote an article on the T.W.A.T. partnerships with the rūnanga Kati Huirapa. The method of kanohi ki te kanohi allowed the assessment process to happen orally face-to-face with rūnanga. The respect paid to Kati Huirapa by T.W.A.T. was the foundation of the trust between them. With the blessings of the mana whenua (people of the land) the facility was opened by our Rangatira Rangī Ellison with a special mihi to the Kati Huirapa hapū for their support and belief in the Kaupapa.

The two women pictured overleaf were from the rūnanga Puketeraki near Karitane. The photograph was taken in the late 19th century. The garment on the left has vertical bands. My korowai, *Puketeraki*, has vertical bands of tānekaha. It also has a pig tusk adorning it,





Figure 9: Late 19th-century photograph of two women from the rūnanga Puketeraki near Karitane (photograph courtesy of Ani Tokina).

which I personally capped with a granite stone (see Figure 1) in our jewellery section at the School of Art. The wild boar that the tusk came from was caught by my son Ricky. I make reference to our tūpuna (ancestor), Ani Tokina, great-great grandmother of Ani Denham – Mihi aroha kia koe Ani for the use of this photograph above of the korowai.

Both the *Puketerak* and *Te Harawaka* korowai made the finals of the Westfield Style Pasifika 2007 New Zealand fashion awards (see more at www.stylepasifika.co.nz as last accessed on 30 September 2007). I would like to thank the Otago Polytechnic for the support enabling me to take part in this prestigious event.

TE WHĀNAU AROHANUI TRUST

I was following the ways of my Kuia through the harakeke. We planted numerous pā harakeke or flax plantations around our whenua (land) and I began teaching my mokopuna (children) raranga (weaving) and the skills of our tūpuna (ancestors). This gave me much pleasure and it did much to weave and bind us together as a whānau. This creative energy has become the backbone of the already mentioned Te Whānau Arohanui Trust (T.W.A.T) founded in 1990 and a foundation from which members are able to climb their poutama (stairway of knowledge).

With the gift of natural resources from Papatūānuku and the guardian of plant life (Tāne Mahuta) and the raranga skills of our tūpuna we had found a way to sustain ourselves. Te Ao Takahuri Gallery is an extension of T.W.A.T., where Māori art can be sold. A mobile gallery (a bus) serviced the marae of the two Islands and was in attendance at a national Hui for Māori Art. Our late kaumātua (elder), Skip Biddle, named the gallery Te Ao Takahuri (The Spiral Life) in 1996.

Moe mai I roto e ngā ringaringa o Ihu Karaiti.

KOWHAIWHAI AND TĀ MOKO

My journey also includes tā moko (skin art) and the kowhaiwhai designs on the Te Whānau Arohanui building rafters which were designed by my son Francis Cameron and my husband Kerry Cameron in 1991. The kowhaiwhai design that adorns our whare uses the koru design to tell of our dual cultural heritage, standing side by side with each other. They represent parents caring for children, men respecting women and the women's whakapapa alongside the men's whakapapa. The whānau tā moko tells of our ancestors and shows the lifeline to the future. The tā moko also promotes the toi (art) of our tohunga tā moko to be worn with dignity and which holds meaning to our kaupapa of te whānau arohanui. They are worn also to remind our rangatahi (youth) that skin art is a beautiful art form and that our bodies are to be respected in the wearing of true tā moko. As our tohunga tā moko say: "It is better to have tā moko that is meaningful on your body than have skin art that is not" (kōrero a waha).

Much has remained with me from the times I would sit on my kuia's knee and touch her moko; when I would feel its lines and its texture and admire its beauty.

RIMURAPA

During my morning walks with my kuri (dog) along St Clair Beach, I noticed the rimurapa (bull kelp) that had washed up. I was so fascinated by its size and its texture that I selected large pieces and dragged them home. I worked on these pieces with great excitement, stretching them, blowing them up like

balloons, stuffing them with paper and shaping them with a netball. I could feel the wairua (spirit) of the tītī (mutton bird) harvesters that made the pōhā (bag made of kelp) to preserve and carry the tītī. I made sure to give the pieces left over back to Papatūānuku (mother earth).

While collecting the rimurapa I was reminded of the stars Mātāriki and Puaka, and Hekenukumai Busby - the reviver of the Māori lore of ocean-going waka (boats). Around the middle of May both Mātāriki - a star in the constellation Pleiades - and Puaka - a star in the constellation Orion - disappear from the night sky below the horizon. My grandmother would warn us that Mātāriki and Puaka were going to dive "kua ruku a Mātāriki, Puaka". She would say Mātāriki and Puaka's diving would cause currents that would stir up the seabed that loosen off the seaweed. The next morning, at dawn, she made sure we were all up so that we could collect the seaweed which was used to make iodine. This took me back to my Turangawaewae (domicile) where my nanny and I would collect the seaweed after Mātāriki and Puaka disappeared. We also collected karengo (edible seaweed) which was part of our diet; it is a delicacy of our whānau hapū iwi.

HE WHAKAARO

In conclusion I celebrate my survival at Te Kura Matatini ki Otago. My mahi has been undertaken positively and my heart has been opened to the wairua of my resources, tools and environment. The similarities of the weaving techniques – both Māori and Western – have woven a thread of love through my veins. My mahi has brought the ways of my tūpuna Māori and my tūpuna from my non-Māori side Ngati Airihi together. The wairua I felt when I completed my first piece, *Te Harawaka*, was very strong. I was proud of my dual cultural heritage and that my mahi was in harmony with my heart, soul and hands.

Toi te Toi

Toi te Mana

Toi te Whenua

Promote the arts

Promote the prestige

Promote the land the nation benefits

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

- 1 Erenora Puketapu-Hetet, (1989) *Māori Weaving*, (Auckland: Pitman, 1989).
- 2 Elsdon Best, "The Art of the Whare Pora", in *Clothing of the Ancient Māori*, (Transactions of the New Zealand Institute, Vol 31, 1898), pp. 625-658. http://rsnz.natlib.govt.nz/volume/rsnz_31/rsnz_31_00_008730.html as last accessed on 24 September 2007.
- 3 Pine Taiapa korero from kaumātua Wiremu Baker, Nga Puhī (1980).
- 4 Darcy Nicholas Toi Māori Aotearoa, Wellington, New Zealand (2005).
- 5 Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 177 – 178.
- 6 Ibid., 84, 145, 186.
- 7 Ibid., 177-178.
- 8 Ibid., 184-186.

Roka Hurihia Ngarimu-Cameron is Aotearoa (New Zealand) born. Roka was raised on the Hawai Marae in the rohe of Te Whānau ā Apanui. She has established three weaving schools within Aotearoa and is currently the head of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, Raranga programme, Dunedin. Roka enrolled in a Master of Fine Arts degree at the School of Art, Te Kura Matatini Ki Otago (Otago Polytechnic) in 2006. Her postgraduate studies focus on the translation of traditional off loom hand woven garments into a contemporary arts practice in loom weaving in order to weave the two cultures of Aotearoa together. She is a registered *Toi Maori* artist.



Figure 10: *Rimuroa*, 2006, a bull kelp kete with harakeke handles (photograph courtesy of the artist).