Cultural Narrative
Whakaari / Wakari Hosptial

Commissioned by Te Whata Ora / Health New Zealand
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Aukaha
KIA KAHA, AU KAHA

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GENERAL HISTORY OF WHAKAARI / WAKARI

Image: View of the sanatorium at Wakari, Dunedin, 1926.. Godber, Albert Percy, 1875-1949 : Collection of albums, prints and negatives.
Ref: APG-1633-1/2-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Whakaari Hospital began its life as an infectious diseases centre in 1915, later becoming a sanitorium. It was redeveloped as a general hospital in 1957, then served as the main hospital for Otago while the Dunedin Hospital was being redeveloped in the 1970s. The Nurses' Home was leased to the University of Otago for use as a student hostel in the early 1980s and was taken back when the Cherry Farm Hospital closed in 1992.

Wakari was used as a geriatric and psychiatric care facility, but the geriatric wards were gradually wound down through the 1990s when the government introduced reforms to privatise long-term care. The care of the elderly assessment and rehabilitation wards were transferred back to Dunedin Hospital. Attempts were made to sell the main block of the hospital, which was occasionally used as a facility for live-in drug trials and even as temporary accommodation during rugby tests.

THE BEGINNING / THE CREATION

It is important here to introduce our creation narrative, which aligns with our core beliefs on wellbeing and health.

Nā te Timatanga me te Waiatatanga mai o te Ātua

(The beginning of the singing of the Ātua is with Te Pō, 'The Night') [1]

Te Pō (The Night)

Te Ao (The Day)

Te Aomarama (The Bright Day)

Te Aotūroa (The Long-standing Day)

Te Koretewhiwhia (The Unattainable Void)

Te Koreterawea (The Intangible Void)

Te Koretetamaua (The Unstable Void)

Te Korematua (The Parentless)

Te Mākū (The Damp), who coupled with Mahoranuiātea, and Raki (The Sky) was born

Ka Puta ko Raki

Tuatahi e moe ana Raki i a Pokohārua-i-te-Pō

Tuarua e moe ana Papatūānuku....

[1] Van Bellekon & Harlow, "Te Waiatatanga mai o te Atua', 23

This ancient waiata was written by the esteemed rangatira Matiaha Tiramōrehu (Ngāi Tūāhuriri) for the Methodist missionary Rev Creed sometime between 1844 and 1848. Tiramōrehu was a tohuka, or priest, who had learnt in the whare wānaka – formal house of learning. After leaving Kaiapoi Pā following its downfall in 1829, he moved to Moeraki with his people, and it was there he encountered Rev Creed. This waiata talks about the very beginning of time in te ao Māori, but it also refers to the initial coupling of Rakinui and Pokohāruatepō, from whom Kāi Tahu descend, and the narrative follows on from there.

Three main narratives have been retold from the epic narrative of Matiaha Tiramōrehu (Kāi Tahu, died in 1881). These narratives provide templates for behaviour and elevate particular struggles and examples of resilience in our whakapapa. Examples from the Rakinui templates include children born with disabilities and references to various states of mind. For example, Hall describes the concepts for words like “Hauraki”, “pōraki”, “wairaki” and “kahuraki” as “significant aspects of psychological functioning and suggests their importance for psychotherapy.” [2]

On the following page is part of the epic creation narrative that was told by Matiaha Tiramōrehu. Takaroa couples with Papatūānuku, and while he is away burying the umbilical cord of their baby, Rakinui couples with Papatūānuku. There is a deep love between them.

Image: Otago Peninsula (Aukaka)

[2] Hall, ‘Kainga: Healing Home with Indigenous Knowledge’, 19.

TAKAROA

In ancient times, a long time before you and I were born, lived a woman called Papatūānuku who fell in love with a man called Takaroa and together they had children.

I kā rā o mua, i mua noa atu i tō tāua whānau mai, tērā tētahi wahine, ko Papatūānuku tōna ikoa. I hika a Papatūānuku i te aroha ki tētahi tāne, ko Takaroa tōna ikoa. Kāhore i roa, ka puta mai ā rāua tamariki.

After the birth of each child, Takaroa would go on a long journey and find the right place to bury the placenta in the ground. On the birth of one of his children, he took the placenta to bury and was away for a very long time, leaving Papatūānuku on her own.

Nō te whānautaka mai o ia tamaiti a Takaroa haere atu ai kia kawea te popoki o tōna tamaiti kia nehua. Nō te whānautaka mai o tētahi o āna tamariki ia haere atu ai me te popoki o te pēpi rā. Kua roa ia e karo ana, ā, ka noho mokemoke a Papatūānuku.

Papatūānuku waited for Takaroa to return. He was away for some time and she was very lonely. While Takaroa was gone, she fell in love with another man. Rakinui was his name. Together they had many children.

Pōpōroa a Papatūānuku e waiho mokemoke mai. I a Takaroa e karo ana, i hika a Papatūānuku i te aroha o tētahi tane kē. Ko Rakinui tōna ikoa. I whānau rāua i kā tamariki tokomaha.

Eventually Takaroa returned and he discovered that Papatūānuku had fallen in love with Rakinui and that they had had many children together. He was angry. Takaroa invited Rakinui onto the beach and they fought.

Hoki rawa mai a Takaroa, ā, ka tūpono noa atu ia ki te honoka o Papatūānuku ki a Rakinui me te aroha i waekanui i a rāua. Waihoki, kua whānau mai ā rāua tīni mano tamariki. Ka pukuriri a Takaroa. Ka takoto te manuka ki a Rakinui, ā, ka taumātakitahi te tokorua ki tātahi.

They fought and Takaroa threw his spear at Rakinui, and it pierced him through his buttocks. He was badly wounded and became ill. However, Takaroa left and Rakinui went back to Papatūānuku.

I whawhai rāua, kātahi ka whiua e Takaroa tāna huata. I puta te huata mā kā io o Rakinui. Kāhore a Rakinui i mate ekari ia he mamae rawa, kai te mate ia. Heoti anō, ka wehe atu a Takaroa, ā, ka hoki atu a Rakinui ki a Papatūānuku.

In this kōrero, it is understood that Takaroa fights Rakinui on the beach in his rage towards him for the infidelity. He wounds Rakinui and then leaves. Rakinui and Papatūānuku go on to have unwell children and children with disabilities due to Raki's wound and state of wellbeing. Raki then asks his son Tāne to separate them so that they discontinue producing unwell children and bring light and health to the world.

RAKINUI

After fighting with Takaroa, Rakinui was badly wounded and he returned to be with Papatūānuku. They had more children, but because Rakinui was weak these new children were sick.

Nō muri iho o te whawhai a Rakinui rāua ko Takaroa i mate ai a Rakinui, ā, ka hoki atu ia ki a Papatūānuku. I te nui o kā whara a Rakinui ka puta i a rāua kā urī koikore.

These children were The Family of Weakness, The Family Lying Down, Tāne With Bent Legs, Tāne With Legs Drawn Up, Tāne With Swollen Eyes, Tāne Who Wets Inside the House, Weak Tāne, Big Head, Long Head, Swollen Head and Tāne Of Great Health.

Ko aua urī nei ko Te-whānau-tūoi, Te-whānau-takoto, ko Tāne-Tūturi, ko Tāne-pepeke, ko Tāne-kōperu, ko Tāne-mimi-whare, ko Tāne-tūoi, ko Upoko-nui, ko Upoko-roa, ko Upoko-whakaahu, ko Tane-i-te-wai-ora.

This was the reason that Rakinui said to Tāne and his younger brothers, "Son, you must lift me up so that I am standing above and your mother is lying below and daylight will shine upon you."

Nā kōnei a Rakinui i kī atu ai ki a Tāne rātou ko āna tāina, "E tā, me waha ahau ki ruka kia tū kē ahau, kia takoto kē tā koutou hākui kia tipu ai te whaiao i a koutou."

Tāne lifted his father upon his back. Tāne raised his pole Tokomauka. Paia raised his pole Ruatipua. Paia then said his karakia:

Ko toko nā wai?

Ko toko nā Tokomauka.

Ko toko nā wai?

Ko toko nā Ruatipua.

He turuturu tēnā tokotoko.

Ka eke ki tēnei raki.

Nā Tāne tōna hākoro i whakawaha ki ruka. Ka tokoa te toko a Tāne ko Tokomauka. Ka tokoa te toko a Paia ko Ruatipua. Ka inoi a Paia i tana karakia:

Ko toko nā wai?

Ko toko nā Tokomauka.

Ko toko nā wai?

Ko toko nā Ruatipua.

He turuturu tēnā tokotoko,

Ka eke ki tēnei raki.

Rakinui was lifted up to the sky. Papatūānuku lay on the earth below. Rakinui farewelled his wife. "Papa, goodbye. This is my love to you. Every year I shall cry for you." This is the dew and mists that arrive every summer.

Ka rewa a Rakinui ki ruka. Ka takoto a Papatūānuku ki raro. Ka poroporoaki a Rakinui ki tōna wahine, "E Papa, hei kōnei rā koe. Tēnei taku aroha ki a koe. Kai te waru ka taki au ki a koe." Koia hoki te haukū, te tōmairaki ka tupu ai i te raumati.

This narrative contains many kaupapa (themes) to unpack, which provide templates by which Māori can understand the origins of love, illness, trauma, loss, separation, violence and so forth.

Below are some key experiences to consider if we look to understand the Kāi Tahu creation narrative:

1. **Takaroa and Papatūānuku – love, responsibility, adultery, betrayal, separation.**
2. **Takaroa and Rakinui – violence, anger, revenge.**
3. **Rakinui and Papatūānuku – love, sick and disabled children, separation, trauma, grief.**

VALUES

Below are basic translations for the values discussed for Whakaari Hospital. It is important to note that not all can be simply translated into English and are more complex than a one word translation. Further to this, the language is in the Kāi Tahu dialect. The main values will be discussed further in the narrative.

Mana

Mamae (hurt/pain), utu (reciprocity), maumaharataka (memories), mana motuhake (self-determination), manaakitaka (hospitality), tautoko (support), aroha (love/care), pono (honesty), whakamana (to be mana-enhancing), whakahaumaru (to shelter), tuakiri (identity).

Whakapapa

Whanaukataka (relationships and familial connections), tūpuna (ancestors), ara honohono (pathways), tapatapa (naming), Whakaari (to lift up – actual name and spelling of Wakari), whenua (afterbirth/land).

Mauri

Taiao (environment), mauri ora (life force), atua Māori (Māori gods), hauora (health), waiora (health), wā (time), whakawātea (to clear), kā hua o te tau (seasons of the year), oraka (health).

Tapu

Tapu/noa (dual values – restricted versus normal), whakanoa (to make normal), wairua (spirit), tikaka (custom), rokoā (medicine), karakia (incantation/prayer), tūpāpaku (body of the deceased), tūmataiti (private).

These values are directly related to wellbeing.

TAPU / NOA

Tapu pervades every aspect of the Māori world. In the past, this restriction determined all aspects of daily life.

A Kāi Tahu waiata refers to the concept and value of tapu, talking of the disaster created by Ruatapu, who was the illegitimate child of Uenuku. His brother Paikea was the legitimate son. The waiata opens with a whale bone being found on a beach and a heru (comb for his head) being carved from it for Uenuku. Ruatapu meddled with the heru, and Uenuku was angered by this and belittled him with verbal abuse. Mortified and angry, Ruatapu took all of the chief's sons out on a waka to sea and pulled the plug from the waka, drowning the children. Ruatapu became personified as a tidal wave – Te Tai o Ruatapu. He came onto shore angrily, and the village took to higher ground on top of Mount Hikurangi.

Tapu is the pivotal lore in this example. The whale and the heru made from it were tapu. Uenuku as the chief was also tapu, so Ruatapu's meddling with this was only going to lead to punishment from Uenuku and ongoing disaster. The calamity was known as a Huripureiata. One of the other important themes that comes from this narrative and that we see in many other narratives is that of whakamā, shame. Ruatapu was deeply shamed by Uenuku's insults and because he was an illegitimate son. This shame then turned to rage, and he enacted revenge on his whānau. This is a very common narrative throughout te ao Māori. We know that this type of whakama is in fact very complex and leads to mental health challenges and sometimes far more serious and far-reaching issues.

There are many examples of tapu within Kāi Tahu. Hori Kerei Taiaroa wrote a diary extract named Patu Taipō (Exorcising Demons) about ridding the Ōtākou community of the time of tapu – sacred places. Many places on both sides of the harbour were traditional sacred places with tūāhu to mark these. People in the community were suffering from Mate Māori, and the tohuka (Piripi Te Kohe) who was brought down from the North Island claimed that to help the community they needed to eradicate the sacred sites. The extract goes further to explain that the tohuka and Kahukura (the demi-god) had a physical encounter.

This is discussed in an article by Megan Pōtiki: [3]

It was the nephew of Aoraki, Tūterakiwhanoa, who was asked to find the whereabouts of his uncles and he discovered that they and their waka had become an island in the ocean. After a period of lament he took his great adze, Te Hamo, and set about shaping the canoe and its inhabitants so that it could be a liveable land mass. He carved out the sounds in Fiordland and Marlborough and also formed the peninsulas along the eastern seaboard including the Otago, Huriawa and the Moeraki peninsulas. He left guardians in place, namely Kahukura and Rokonuiatau. Beattie refers to the Otago Peninsula in this narrative of creation as Mua-upoko , according to our ancestors, these atua kaitiaki (guardians) remained in on the Otago Peninsula right up until the time the old religion and beliefs were abandoned, and Christianity was adopted. H.K. Taiaroa was a well-known leader, scholar and New Zealand Māori politician of his time. He was born in the 1830s or 1840s and hailed from the Peninsula. Taiaroa maintained in one of his diary extracts from 1865 that he saw the demi-god Kahukura at a place (unnamed) on the Otago Peninsula. He described a cliff edge that was covered in sand and beside this area was a sacred tūāhu (altar) where Kahukura abided. Taiaroa stated that "with his own eyes he could see the spirits of the tohunga (specialist healers) of that site who had gathered there to guard and protect the area."

[3] Pōtiki, 'The Otago Peninsula. A Unique Identity', 71

Cowan retells a story of the physical tūāhu that was stolen from a fortified village near the Otago Peninsula. This was a result of a battle between closely related sub-tribes of the Peninsula and the neighbouring northern village. A carved image of Kahukura was kept with the sacred altar. "The spot was called Te Irika o Kahu-kura, meaning the place where Kahukura was suspended or raised up to view." The Otago Peninsula, along with other peninsulas along the East Coast of the South Island, were protected by these demi-gods. These were gods whoand as guardians of people. Through them Māori connected geographically and spiritually to the Peninsula.

Other examples to be cognisant of are the sites known as wāhi tapu (sacred sites), which include past and present urupā (burial sites), places of events such as battles, or places of death, places of birth, building sites such as past villages, places where there were once altars and places of a religious nature.

Tahu Pōtiki states that "Tūāhu were wāhi tapu and were to be avoided by the rank-and-file iwi members. Even following the adoption of Christianity there was a strong belief that continued to exist. As modern illness struck the Māori population many were of the belief that was due to ignorance of the old tūāhu and mauri stones and that the population was unknowingly walking through sacred areas." [4]

Furthermore, illness, death and takihaka (Māori funerals) are still greatly influenced by the observance of tapu. The dead and any ceremonial practices observed are tapu. A person becomes increasingly tapu as death approaches. The deceased and all objects that come into direct contact with them are tapu. Tapu pervades every aspect of death and the takihaka process. Ultimately a hospital is completely tapu.

Image: Otago Peninsula (Aukaka)

[4] Pōtiki, Private Papers, Ōtākou.

MANA

Mana ensures that the indigenous authority of mana whenua is recognised and upheld in tribal territories. At the core of the value mana, mana whenua hold authority within their region. Furthermore, mana whenua lead and approve the use of Māori knowledge and reflections of Māori identity to ensure all cultural material is correctly represented and proceeds with the approval of mana whenua.

People can attain varying types of mana. They can attain mana through whakapapa and good deeds and behaviour, and that mana can equally diminish with bad behaviour. Behaviour can be mana-enhancing – if you treat others with respect and an open heart, that is then reciprocal. Mana is also a concept that encompasses personal and collective strength, pride and identity. When that is challenged, it undermines a person's or group of people's wellbeing.

WHAKAPAPA

At the core of being Māori is whakapapa. This is central to Kāi Tahu and Māori identity. Tahu Pōtiki has written extensively on this. [5]

Although the cosmogony differs slightly from iwi to iwi, the elements are common. In considering Māori concepts like whakapapa, it is important to note that because the material under discussion is from an esoteric knowledge base, discussion regarding the key concepts is limited. There is no truth to be determined, although there are some generally shared understandings among key experts. Creation and the introduction of all elements into the universe is genealogical or whakapapa-based. This means that ultimately all things in the universe are interconnected and share a single source of spiritual authority.

In the beginning there was nothing, and from that came the night and then the light. From this void came a union that gave rise to the primary gods (or, in some instances, one primary god). Depending on the version cited, the primary whakapapa then explains the appearance of certain celestial bodies and natural events but ultimately Raki and Papa are central to the creation. Their connection and separation lead to sky and earth and the various deities that control the natural world.

From the primary gods or atua such as Raki, Papatūānuku, Takaroa and others come all elements in the known universe. Everything from weather events, clouds, the stars and planets, fish, birds, trees and flowers, stones and volcanic events, wellbeing, life, illness and death can be explained because of the creation narrative interlinking all of these components in a web of whakapapa.

The Māori view of the universe also places a hierarchy on descent. This means that a greater power is inherited by those with a more senior whakapapa status. However, to reiterate, whakapapa and identity are pivotal to being Māori and central to overall wellbeing – Hauora Māori. A loss of identity to your whakapapa places the person in a precarious position; therefore, they are not grounded and have lost a connection to their tūpuna and whenua. This loss of identity undermines Hauora, and we believe it has ramifications for generations to come.

[5] Pōtiki, 'Cultural Values Assessment and Analysis', 7.

MAURI

Mauri is the life force connection between gods and earthly matter. It is stated that all things have mauri, including inanimate objects, so it can be found in people, animals, fauna, fish, waterways, rocks and mountains. The mauri is a protector of the health of a person or place. If a mauri is damaged, then the owner or the seat of that mauri is vulnerable or also damaged. Mauri belongs to the gods, and it is a force that is transportable by the experts familiar with the appropriate protocols. Mauri can affect food gathering and can be found inland and in waterways. If there is a mountain or forest with no birds or a river with no fish, a mauri can be supplanted. Traditionally, hunting areas were dedicated to lesser, familial deities and their mana could be used to create a mauri to protect the hunting ground. So long as the mauri was healthy, the hunters or fishers could expect to find an abundance of fish or birds. If it was damaged, then the evidence would be in the absence of prey and the disappearance of guardian entities or kaitiaki. To initially establish the mauri, a ritual would be performed to imbue an object with the life force, and it would often be hidden or buried on site to protect it from damage. Elsdon Best provides an example: [6]

The mauri of the sea is sometimes a stone, which is imbued with the productiveness of the ocean by the karakia of the priests, that is [sic] it represents the same. Together with it is concealed the gills of a kahawai, or whatever the principal fish of that sea is. This mauri preserves the productiveness of the ocean, causes fish to be plentiful, and the fishers to catch many.

Mauri has evolved as a concept and is heavily drawn upon for environmental and physical models of health. The health of water is directly aligned to mauri. It is also a cleansing property and it is advised that water points are created, where running water is available at entrances and key areas related to tapu in the hospital.

WHAKAARI

Wakari is spelt incorrectly, and unfortunately with that misspelling comes a loss of meaning. The actual name of the area is Whakaari, which can be interpreted as elevated, or lifted up. This was directly attributed to the treatment of a particular ancestor's tūpāpaku (body).

Some tūpāpaku were elevated and laid on a platform known as Tiara-rakau [7] for people to attend and pay their respects. An example of this concerned Wharawhara o te Raki, a chief of the Otago region. This chief was elevated onto a platform and dressed in his finest mats, and in his right hand he held his taiaha, which had beautiful feathers on it. Plumes from birds like the kōtuku (white heron) and the huia were used to decorate the heads of deceased chiefs as they lay upon the atamira.[8] Keane comments that "in traditional Māori thought, many birds were seen as chiefly. The feathers of certain birds were used as adornment for high-born people – particularly plumes worn in the hair. Chiefs wore the kahu huruhuru (feather cloak), made from the feathers of the most beautiful birds." [9]

[6] Best, 'Spiritual Concepts of the Maori: Part II', 5.

[7] HK Taiaroa obituary on his father Te Matenga Taiaroa. Private papers, Ōtākou. Te Matenga Taiaroa's body was also elevated on a platform and this is named a Tiara-rakau by HK (his son).

[8] Best, 'Maori Eschatology', 220.

[9] Keane, 'Te Tahere Manu'.

Roberts wrote:

The foot of Frederick street was a tapu spot, known as Te Iri-o-Wharawhara te Raki, meaning "the place where Wharawhara te Raki was lifted up." About 150 years ago Wharawhara, a Tangata tapu, or sacred man – that is, a chief and tohunga of very high rank, died there. A post was fixed in the ground, and he was tied to it, dressed in his best mats, with his "taiaha" (a wooden weapon like a sword, the handle being beautifully carved and decorated with a bunch of feathers) in his right hand, so that his tribe could see him, before he was buried, standing in state.

TAKIHANGA

This section connects to the name of the area and provides a deeper understanding of death to mana whenua. It is important to note here that life and death are a natural and integral part of te ao Māori. The dead are talked about in ceremony and conversation, those who have passed on beyond the veil of death. Dying itself is cloaked with tradition and customs that are still followed today. Karakia are pivotal in all aspects of the takihaka process. This includes tuku wairua (release of the spirit), which occurs at the death of an individual. A tohuka performs karakia as the person takes their final breath and their wairua leaves their body to go on their journey to the final resting place.

HINE-NUI-TE-PŌ WHAKAPAPA

Hine-nui-te-pō is known as the "woman of the night". She is recognised as the woman who protects the dead, the guardian of the underworld. She originated as Hine-ā-tauira. Tāne coupled with Te Puta-rākau, producing two daughters, Hine-tītama and Hine-ā-tauira. On discovering that her husband was in fact her father, Hine-ā-tauira fled to the underworld taking two of her daughters with her. She became the goddess of death (Hine-nui-te-pō). Tāne went in pursuit of her. When Tāne arrived at the house where she resided, Hine-nui-te-pō told him to return to the world of the living to raise their remaining children, which he did. Hine-nui-te-pō is the personification of death in the Māori world.

Māui, one of the most important cultural heroes in Māori mythology, unsuccessfully attempted to gain immortality for humanity by turning himself into a mokomoko (lizard) and trying to pass through Hine-nui-te-pō's body. He entered by way of her vagina, intending to pluck out her heart and exit her mouth, thereby reversing the birth process. However, she was woken by the tīwakawaka (fantail) laughing at his attempt and she killed Māui by crushing him, leaving humanity mortal. The tīwakawaka and mokomoko continue to be seen as Māori omens of death today. The narratives of Hine-ā-tauira, Hine-nui-te-pō, Tāne and Māui are widely known in the Māori world. They not only introduce and explain the origins of death, but also provide a belief system on which traditions and ceremonies are hinged.

There are some key issues to consider about death, grieving and tapu in the hospital. These are to include running water for tapu cleansing purposes and kawakawa, which was traditionally used for embalming and to cover the pungency of death and has now become a symbol of death.

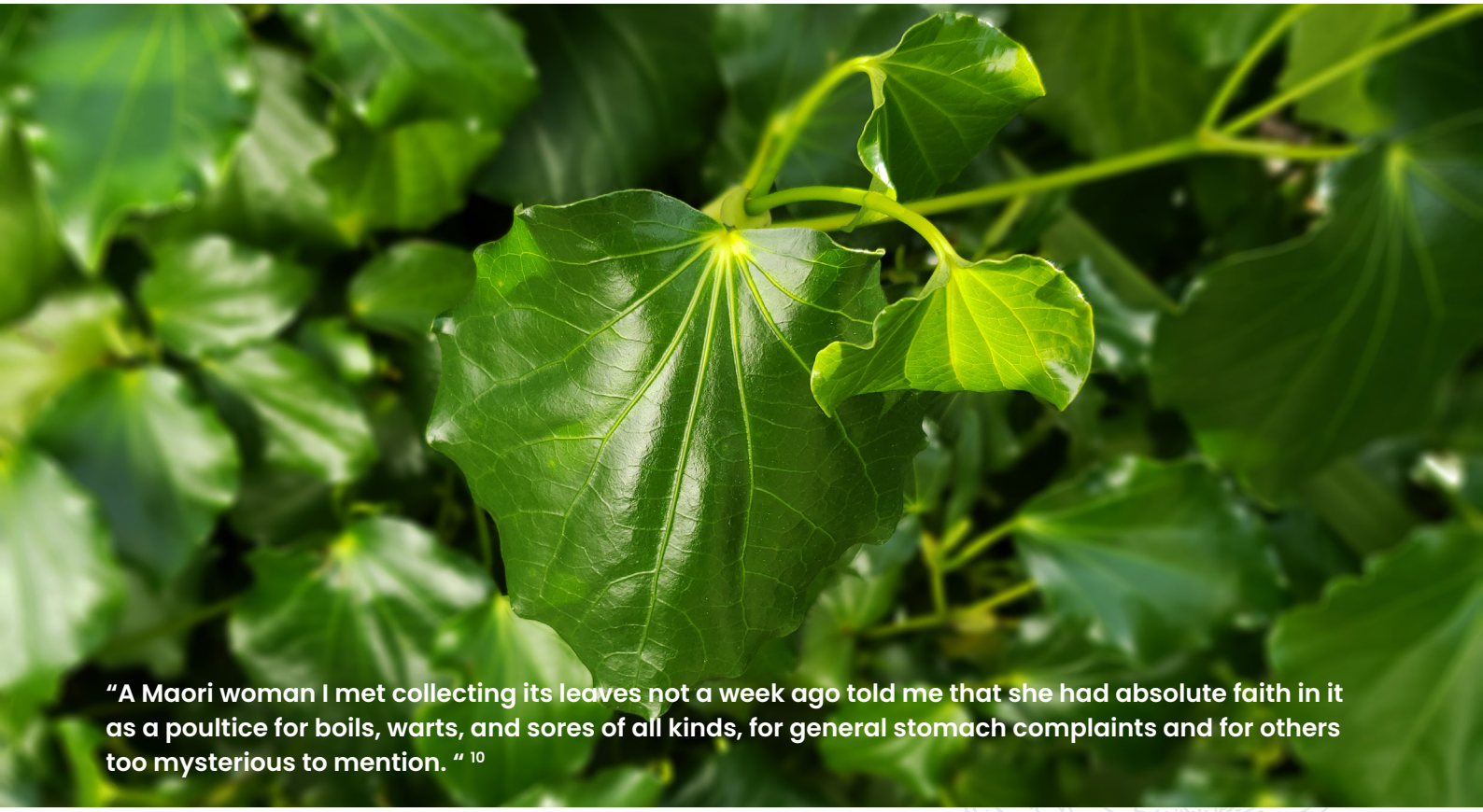
FLORA AND FAUNA

Kawakawa

Kawakawa is a small densely branched shrub. It has dark green, heart-shaped leaves with prominent veining – they are fleshy and aromatic.

In summer the female spikes ripen to a deep orange. The name "kawakawa" refers to the bitter taste of the leaves.

Kawakawa has medicinal purposes, and the leaves can heal cuts and wounds. Boiling the leaves produces a good tonic that can help treat arthritis and bruises. Chewing the leaves can ease the pain of toothache.



"A Maori woman I met collecting its leaves not a week ago told me that she had absolute faith in it as a poultice for boils, warts, and sores of all kinds, for general stomach complaints and for others too mysterious to mention. " [10]

The leaves were also used to perfume houses, particularly those of higher ranking people. Other plants like taramea were included in the perfume mix. McDonald talks about the scent of the kawakawa at takihaka helping with the pungent smell of the body that was lying in state. In the past, bodies might lie in state for a week to two weeks, and therefore the whare or porch was covered in kawakawa and people wore kawakawa (known as parekawakawa) to cover the smell.

For these reasons, having kawakawa in hospitals is an important acknowledgement of illness and death.

[10] Cranwell "Native Wild Flowers," 25.

[11] McDonald, "Parekawakawa: He tohu o te mate," 2.

Pōhutukawa

The pōhutukawa is a significant tree for Māori. This tree grows at the side of Te Reinga – the top of the North Island, the place where Māori believe spirits leap from the waters of Tāne and on to Hine-nui-te-pō (woman of the night). In some iwi, the house of Hine-nui-te pō is also known as pōhutukawa. Some also say that the red flowers of the pōhutukawa are the blood of Tāwhaki, who fell to his death from the sky.

Māori used the strong wood of the pōhutukawa for implements and as paddles for waka.

The bark of pōhutukawa had a role in traditional medicine and was used for toothache and treating sore gums. The bark was also used to treat wounds and stem bleeding in cuts and abrasions. An infusion of bark was used to treat diarrhoea and dysentery.

Kūkupa (wood pigeon)

This Kāi Tahu narrative comes from a moment in the Māui tradition after Māui has followed Te Raka, his father, to the underworld that exists below the pou tokomanawa of their whare. Māui turns himself into a kūkupa (wood pigeon) and lands on the handle of Te Raka's spade, then sings to inform his father of the correct protocols for planting kumara.

It is said that Māui set off and came to his father's house. He found his elder brothers playing darts. Māui threw his dart forward so that it struck against the bargeboard of Te Raka and Hine's house with a loud crash. His mother came out and asked who was breaking the bargeboards in the house. His elder brothers claimed it was Māui. His mother asked who he was, and he claimed to be hers, explaining his back story. His mother realised that he was her child. He then went to stay in his mother's village and wondered where his father was.

Māui eventually disguised himself as a pigeon and flew down to see his father. He cooed to him and straightaway turned himself into a man. He gave his father a karakia for the correct rituals. Te Raka eventually realised that it was Māui and took him home to prepare food for him.

COLONISATION

The South Island (Te Waipounamu) of New Zealand not only has an entirely different landscape to that of the North Island (Te Ika-a-Maui) but also a different indigenous demographic. The South Island was originally inhabited by early Polynesian settlers.

The original inhabitants of the area were known as Kāti Hāwea and Te Rapuwai. Anderson claims that these people were certainly Polynesians and among the ancestors of Southern Māori.[12] The following onset of people were the Waitaha, whose legacy was left in the many places they named in the South Island. They are an early group of people who are known to have arrived on the canoe, the Uruao. The well-known southern tribal ancestor Rākaihautū of the Waitaha people was described as a giant. He carved out the lakes and rivers of the South Island with his supernatural digging implement.

The consequent migration and intermarriage of Kāti Māmoe and then Kāi Tahu from the East Coast of the North Island to the South Island and into Waitaha procured a stronghold for Māori in Te Waipounamu. Therefore, Māori occupied Otago for a long time before Pākehā arrived. Colonisation left longstanding negative impacts on Kāi Tahu and Māori in general.

Image: View from Taiaroa Head (Aukaka)

[12] Anderson, "When All the Moa Ovens Grew Cold", 4.

In 1836, a ship brought disease to Ōtākou. "The *Sydney Packet* arrived at Ōtākou with a few influenza cases on board. Immediately the disease attacked the Māori and the people died in hundreds reducing the population to an alarming degree." [13] Following the demise of the Ōtākou Māori population came the loss of land. This began with the Treaty of Waitangi, which was taken by Major Bunbury through the Kāi Tahu tribal region to obtain the Southern Māori signatures. The Treaty had been signed by many iwi (tribes) in the North Island, and Korako and Karetai signed the Treaty at Taiaroa Head on 13 June 1840. They were among seven signatures for Southern Māori. The premise they accepted in their hearts and minds was that under the Treaty they would retain their lands and have equal protection and rights as British citizens. The ongoing political struggle over the total disregard of the promises agreed to in the Treaty of Waitangi would continue for 150 years. After the signing of the Treaty came the most significant contractual breach for Māori on the Otago Peninsula.

The British Crown eventually came under pressure from the New Zealand Company. It waived its right of pre-emption as stated in the Treaty of Waitangi, allowing the New Zealand Company to negotiate with the local chiefs for the purchase of land in the south. The New Zealand Company and the Free Church of Scotland selected the area at the head of the harbour on the mainland for a permanent site, to be called New Edinburgh. Frederick Tuckett, a surveyor for the New Zealand Company, was assigned to oversee the purchase of the site. George Clarke wrote an account of the proceedings in Otago that included Tuckett, surveyors and local Māori in 1844. They had come to survey the land for a "New Edinborough, the Dunedin of the future". [14]

Kāi Tahu wanted to keep 21,250 acres of the Otago Peninsula with ancestral sites for themselves. However, the Europeans did not agree and would not proceed with the sale unless the Peninsula was included. The Māori conceded to accept only the land at the northern end of the Peninsula, and a few other areas outside of that, consisting of 9,612 acres total. On 31 July 1844 at Koputai (opposite the Peninsula – Port Chalmers today), 25 chiefs signed the Otago Deed, selling around 400,000 acres for £2,400. Of those 400,000 acres, 150,000 acres would be chosen for the New Edinburgh site. In addition to this land, verbal agreements were made to reserve 10% of all land sold, known as "the tenths", in trust for the benefit of Kāi Tahu. The agreement was not honoured, and the work on New Edinburgh on the mainland began in 1846. The organised settlement of the suburban and rural areas of the Peninsula began in 1848, focusing on Anderson's Bay and Portobello. The Peninsula was divided into farms of about 50 acres, which were gradually occupied and supplied a growing Dunedin with food. West states that "the sale of the Otago Block to the New Zealand Company in 1844 was by far the most significant event that shifted control over the Peninsula… the Ōtākou Māori were stranded on the northern tip of the Otago Peninsula, confined to meagre portions of their once vast property. The way was thereby opened to the European settlement, and the making of a new environment on the Otago Peninsula." [15]

[13] Ōtākou Rūnaka, "Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Consequent Land Sales in Dunedin".

[14] Ibid.

[15] West, "The Face of Nature", 265.

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MEGAN PŌTIKI

Tēnei te rūrū te koukou mai nei

Kihai mahitihiti

Kihai marakaraka

Te ūpoko nui o te rūrū

Terekou!

Ko Pukekura te mauka, ko Ōtākou te awa moana, ko Ōtākou hoki te kāika. Ko Taiaroa rāua ko Karetai ōku tūpuna. I ahu mai au i te whānau Ellison. Ko Megan Pōtiki ahau.

I hail from Ōtākou and whakapapa to Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe Waitaha and Te Ātiawa iwi. My parents are Edward and Alison Ellison. I have a brother, Brett Ellison. My husband is Tahu Pōtiki who passed away in 2019. I am mother to three children (Ripeka, Timoti and Tūkitaharaki) and have a large family unit who provide constant support, as the saying goes "it takes a village to raise a family."

I am currently straddling two roles, the Co-Executive Director for Te Pukenga, Region 4 and I am also the Executive Director for the Otago Polytechnic. I have completed my PhD in 2024 and my research interests are focused on the loss of te reo Māori at Ōtākou and the written Māori archives of the past that have a particular geographical focus on my tribal region of Kāi Tahu.

I have been pulled in a number of different directions in the last few years and have been contracted by Aukaha Ltd to provide cultural support, write narratives and guide tikanga and te reo while instilling our values into design, building and development.

I prioritise my children and my whānau, hapū and iwi. I was raised at the Kaik and live there and there is no question about my commitment to Ōtākou, and raising our tamariki to be the leaders of their future.

To find out more about any of our services please contact us:
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