

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL
OF NEW ZEALAND

IN THE MATTER OF: The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF: The Wairarapa ki Tararua Inquiry – **Wai**
863

AND

IN THE MATTER OF: The claims of Rangitāne o Tāmaki- Nui-a-
Rua - **Wai 166**

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF JOHN MEHA

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Background

- 1 My name is John Taylor Meha. I was born on 11 December 1922 at Te Tapairu, Waipawa.
2. My mother was Ivory Te Paora Morris who was from Te Aitanga a Mahaki, My father was Stuart Meha. My father was of Ngāti Parakiore descent on his father's side and Ngāti Rakaipaka on his mother's side.
3. My Rangitāne hapu which gives me a connection to the Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua takiwa is Ngāti Parakiore.
4. My Rangitāne whakapapa from Te Rangiwhakaewa is included at page 12 of the whakapapa booklet, "He Āta Tātai Tupuna - Tātai Hono Hoki".
5. My evidence will discuss the following matters:
 - (a) I will look at the reasons why some of my Ngāti Parakiore ancestors decided to move from their lands in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua to Te Tapairu near Waipawa in the late 19th century. This section will highlight that despite the migration of some of my ancestors to Te Tapairu, they maintained a strong affinity to the tipuna Parakiore and strong links to Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua;
 - (b) A brief discussion on Te Hāpuku and, in particular, my tipuna Te Ropiha Te Takou's threat to cut off the nose of the Te Hauke rangātira in the 1850s;
 - (c) I will discuss Tawhiao's visit to Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua and to Te Tapairu and the significance of that visit as regards to Ngāti Parakiore;

- (d) I will discuss my tipuna Hori Ropiha, and in particular his travels to England to petition Queen Victoria in 1884 in respect of non observance by the Crown of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The Migration to Te Tapairu

6. Te Tapairu near Waipawa is outside of the Wairarapa ki Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua inquiry area, however the story behind the migration of some of my Ngāti Parakiore tipuna to Te Tapairu is significant because of the reasons they left their homeland of Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua.
7. Parakiore was one of the tipuna involved in the defensive system that was established to protect Rangitāne lands in the greater Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua takiwa during the early part of the 19th century. Parakiore was situated at Te Reinga o Mahuru which was in the heart of Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua.
8. Following the dismantling of the defensive system some Parakiore descendants, moved east towards Wanstead or Eparaima where they lived until their move to Te Tapairu in the 1870s.
9. The right of Parakiore descendants to reside at Te Tapairu was not directly through Parakiore himself. Descendants of Te Ruatotara, (an aunty of Parakiore) had been awarded interests in the Waipawa district through the Native Land Court.
10. Te Ruatotara's interests were inherited from her father, Kapa, who was born and buried at Waipawa.
11. The Native Land Court sat at Waipawa in the 1870s. Waipawa hosted many of the hearings in relation to Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua lands.
12. Some Parakiore people moved to Waipawa to ensure that their rights in their lands in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua were not usurped by the Native Land Court process; for

- example when sittings of the Native Land Court were convened at Waipawa a great grandson of Parakiore, Apiata Kuikāinga, sent his younger brother Heta Tiki from their home at Pakaroa, Eparaima, to ensure that the family interests in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua were safeguarded. Apiata Kuikāinga later moved to Waipawa himself along with several of his kinsfolk.
13. Not only did Heta Tiki and Apiata Kuikāinga ensure that imposters did not present spurious claims in the Native Land Court, there were also significant benefits of living a short distance from Waipawa when the Native Land Court hearings were taking place.
 14. In the 1870's Waipawa had quickly become the administrative and commercial centre for the area stretching from Te Aute to Woodville. This was also why the likes of Arapata Meha, my paternal grandfather, and his progeny chose to remain in Te Tapairu.
 15. There would have been a cost to my Parakiore people for travelling from their homes in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua and Eparaima to attend the hui that were held before the hearings themselves. It would have seemed logical, I suggest, that they would have remained where the hearings were held. That is not to say that everyone liked that fact that they had to move from the lands where they had lived for so long to lands that they were not overly familiar with at Te Tapairu. Although there would have been a saving of costs in a monetary sense, I would imagine there would have been the emotional cost of leaving their homelands in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua to face Te Ao Hou.
 16. Because of the constant flooding of the original Te Tapairu settlement it was decided to move the settlement further inland towards the current day Te Taiparu settlement. That tells me that our people from Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua were not familiar with the Waipawa area at that particular time. It was Nepe Te Apatu, a descendant of Te Ruatotara, who chose to build on a plateau when the original kāinga of Te Tapairu was relocated. There is a photograph of Nepe Te Apatu at page 8 of the photograph booklet, "He Kanohi E Kitea, He hokinga Mahara" and

his whakapapa is at pages 27 and 28 of the whakapapa booklet, “He Āta Tātai Tupuna - Tātai Hono Hoki”.

17. In summary I believe that the reasons why some of our people moved to Te Tapairu were to ensure a presence at Native Land Court hearings and to enjoy the benefits of Te Ao Hou. It amazes me how a Court which was ultimately detrimental to Rangitāne attracted our people away from their homeland. Why didn't the Court sit in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua where the land was located?
18. Despite Ngāti Parakiore people leaving their homelands in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua and Eparaima, they maintained a strong Parakiore and Rangitāne identity. This strong identity was evidenced by two pepeha that I can recall hearing when I was growing up at Te Tapairu.
19. The first pepeha has its origins at the same time as the organisation of the Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua defensive system.
20. Parakiore was seen as the central figure in the defensive system given his reputation as a rather able fighter.
21. Whilst the defensive system was in place a major breach of etiquette occurred in the Heretaunga district that so angered the offended that only the shedding of blood would give satisfaction. The culprits fled southwards to Te Rākoutatahi where they sought refuge with Te Rangitotohu who was stationed there as part of the defensive system. The following conversation took place at Te Rākoutatahi:

“Ko wai e whai mai I a koutou? [Who is pursuing you]”? “Ko Te Rehunga. [It is Rehunga]”. “Haere ki a Parakiore, ki te kohatu kura tawhiti [Go to Parakiore, the rock whose prowess is known from afar].”
22. The fugitives accepted the advice and became staunch members of Ngāti Parakiore, resolute in battle.

23. The statement “*Haere ki a Parakiore, ki te kohatu kura tawhiti*” is something I remember hearing during my childhood at Te Tapairu and is referred to on the inscription on Amiria Ropiha’s (a Parakiore descendant and wife of Nepe Te Apatu) headstone at the Te Tapairu urupa.
24. The second pepeha relates to an experience that I had when I was 15 years old. It would have been in 1938 whilst standing in the business district of Heretaunga Street East watching the passing parade when a prominent local woman approached whom I recognised as Hinekatorangi Nepe. After the elders I was with had exchanged a few Māori pleasantries, I was introduced: “*Ko te tamaiti nei na Te Tuati (This is the child of Stuart)*”. The dignified lady with a charming gracious smile in my direction acknowledged the introduction by saying “*Tini whetu ki Te Rangi, ko te tini o Parakiore ki Raro*”.
25. It was the first time that I had heard the pepeha which I memorized by repeating it to myself on a number of occasions when we journeyed home to Te Tapairu. I then asked my father to explain the pepeha. He told me it was “*As numerous as the stars in heaven are the fighting men of Parakiore*”.
26. Even in 1938, almost 70 years after some of my tipuna left Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua and Eparaima for Te Tapairu, the local people knew that the people of Te Tapairu were Ngāti Parakiore.

Te Ropiha Te Tākou and Te Hāpuku

27. I am aware that a lot has been said about the land selling activities of Te Hauke rangātira, Te Hāpuku, in the evidence placed before this Tribunal. I am aware that Te Hāpuku was a great supporter of the sale of Māori land to the Government.
28. On one occasion he told Donald McLean that he would facilitate the purchase of land in the Pōrangahau district. This related to the Tautane block. When it was reported to those concerned, Te Ropiha Te Tākou declared that if Te Hāpuku and

- McLean entered their area, he would disfigure Te Hāpuku by cutting off the tip of his nose.
29. Following the threat made by Te Ropiha Te Tākou I am not aware of Te Hāpuku or McLean entering into the Pōrangahau district. What I am aware of is that Te Hāpuku took McLean by schooner, which I believe he had purchased from the proceeds of the Tautane block sale, to the designated area from which he indicated prominent physical features of the land he intended selling to Donald McLean.
 30. Te Hāpuku by all accounts was a rangātira who held mana at Te Hauke. There is an account that I have identified which highlights the aggressive character of Te Hāpuku. At the request of Te Hāpuku, Ngāti Rākaipākā carving experts led by Te Mātenga Tūkareaho traveled to Te Hauke to build Kahurānaki, a superior whare whakairo. Before its completion however one of the Ngāti Rākaipākā workmen compromised one of the wives of Te Hāpuku. In his righteous ire Te Hāpuku began to go about the business of hanging the miscreant. Te Mātenga who was working on the top of the meeting house, when informed, clambered down and cut the hangman's rope before it could be put into effect.
 31. By all accounts Te Hāpuku was a very aggressive person who backed down to few. However, as history tells us, Te Hāpuku never set foot at Pōrangahau after the threat by Te Ropiha Te Tākou.
 32. Given Te Hāpuku's reputation, the reason for the threat must have been serious. I suppose selling land belonging to a rangātira would have been considered serious enough for the threat to be made in the way in which it was.

The Hikoi of Tawhiao

33. The mana of Ngāti Parakiore was such that a planned visit by Tawhiao to Te Hāpuku's kainga at Te Hauke was interrupted by the Parakiore people of Te Tapairu as Tawhiao passed by.

34. The hikoī of Tāwhiao in the late 19th century highlights the strong Parakiore presence not only in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua but also at Te Tapairu. Tawhiao, the determined leader of his people, went into self imposed exile among his kinsfolk of Ngāti Maniapoto from whom he emerged in 1881 to engage in a hikoī.
35. Tāwhiao desired to travel southwards visiting tribes to measure their support for better Māori/Pākehā relations, a peace making enterprise. The journey took him and his entourage to many places at all of which tangata whenua joined the hikoī to act as guides to the next destination and to demonstrate their support. Eventually, the hikoī reached the Tamaki–Nui-a-Rua district. The assembled hapu received Tāwhiao. During the course of the Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua hui, Tāwhiao heard the pepeha “*tini whetū ki Te Rangi, ko te tini o Parakiore ki Raro*”.
36. It had been decided well in advance of the visit of Tāwhiao that Ngāti Kahungunu would welcome him at Te Hauke, the marae of Te Hāpuku.
37. Apiata Kuikāinga, whose kāinga at Te Tapairu was only a stone’s throw from the road along which Tawhiao would travel to Te Hauke, told his Pōrangahau kinsmen that it was inappropriate for them to attend the gathering at Te Hauke, that they should combine with him to extend hospitality to the manuhiri at Te Tapairu. Apiata Kuikāinga’s views fell on deaf ears. Undeterred by their attitude, he consulted Tongi of Ngāi Toroiwaho from Mataweka, who agreed to assist in preparing to receive Tāwhiao.
38. Ample provisions, including pork from Pākāroa in the Wanstead area, which, of course, is one of the original kāinga of the Ngāti Parakiore people, and firewood, stones and water from the nearby Waipawa river and kai Pākehā from Messrs Bibby and Rathbone, Waipawa businessmen, were quickly assembled.
39. Apiata told his granddaughter-in-law, Mere Meha, what she was to do when the vehicle in which Tāwhiao was travelling reached the entrance to their kāinga.

40. The highway from Te Waipukurau to Waipawa is an imperceptible climb which descends to the kāinga of Te Tapairu in which Apiata, Tongi and their supporters were waiting. Before the descent, Tāwhiao and the others saw evidence of the preparations to receive them. Near the entrance to the kāinga, a wahine known as Mere brandished the tewhatewha she was holding. She grasped the coupling strap linking the bridles of horses pulling the vehicle in which Taiwhiao was traveling and turned their heads to the entrance of Te Tapairu.

41. Tāwhiao asked his escorts:

“No wai tenei kāinga? [Whose habitation is this?]”

“No Apiata Kuikāinga [It is that of Apiata Kuikāinga]”.

Tāwhiao then uttered the pepeha he had heard at Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua:

“Tini whetū ki Te Rangi, Ko te tini o Parakiore ki Raro”.

42. Tāwhiao then indicated to his driver to follow Mere to the people waiting at the gate of the Te Tapairu kāinga.

43. The non-appearance of the honoured guest and his companions at Te Hauke at the appointed time was a matter of no little concern. A mounted messenger was sent southwards to discover the reason for the late arrival. Approaching the Waipawa river in the gloom of the evening, the horseman heard the sound of a very large gathering, estimated the next day to be several hundred in number, and saw the glow of the campfires. Making his way to the small unembellished meeting house he found Apiata, to whom he reported the anxiety of Te Hāpuku. He was provided with a remount and returned to Te Hauke to report. The next day, the chiefs and people of Te Hauke joined Apiata, Tongi and their supporters, to extend their salutations to their honoured guests.

44. The arrival of Tāwhiao at Waipawa had created a wave of resentment among the hot-headed members of the Pākehā community. Their grievance was that he had

been indirectly responsible for the death of military personnel and non-combatants. There was inflammatory talk to kill Tāwhiao as part compensation for the past. A delegation of local Pākehā, including Bibby and Rathbone, waited upon Apiata, Tongi, Tāwhiao and associates to suggest that the hikoī could be jeopardized. Māori would resist an incursion, the consequences of which were too awful to ignore. The delegation suggested that the guest of honour accept the suggestion of Bibby that he spend the night at his home, to which there was reluctant acceptance by those meeting in council.

Hori Ropiha and his grievance against the Crown

45. Grievances against the Crown for non-observance of the Treaty of Waitangi is nothing new to Rangitāne, and in particular Parakiore descendants. An example of this involved Tāwhiao and our tipuna, Hori Ropiha, who were involved in a trip to England to petition Queen Victoria in 1884. A photograph of Hori Ropiha is at page 14 of the photograph booklet, “He Kanohi E Kitea, He hokinga Mahara”.
46. A hui convened at Kohimarama, Waitematā, Auckland, I believe in the early 1880’s, discussed matters of vital interest to the tribes represented by those in attendance. Of greatest concern was the cavalier, naughty, off-hand attitude of the Government towards the Treaty of Waitangi.
47. The statement of William Hobson in 1840 after each signatory had made his mark “He iwi kotahi tātou”, seemed to have confused Māori since that significant day, to be at variance with the performance of its responsibility towards them. It was resolved therefore that a delegation would travel to England to protest to Queen Victoria, the non observance of the Treaty of Waitangi.
48. Those authorised to represent the assembly were men of integrity who on many occasions had proved their ability. The delegation was comprised of Tāwhiao, Te

Wheoro, Pāora Te Tuhi of Waikato, Tūroa of the Ruapehu area and Hori Ropiha of Rangitāne, amongst others. In 1884 the delegation left on its mission.

49. Immediately upon arrival they made the necessary approach to the appropriate minister. Lord Derby the Secretary of Colonial Affairs, to their considerable dismay, told them that the Queen was the titular head of the British Empire, an office without responsibility in its governance. That responsibility lay with Parliament. Sadly, they were not only disillusioned by their ignorance, but also much wiser in the necessity of being better informed in the niceties of British governmental protocols.
50. As an aside in several hui held at Te Tapairu during my adolescence, Ngāti Kere, Ngāti Mārau, Ngai Toroiwaho, Ngāti Te Ruatotara, and Ngāti Parakiore spokesmen without exception, always referred to Hori Ropiha as the leader of the delegation.
51. In the late autumn of 1947 when I started my dairy farming cadetship at Te Rehunga, a short distance south-westward of Dannevirke, I visited the Dannevirke Public Library. It was in there that I had the pleasure of reading the book “Waitangi” in which was a considerable amount of correspondence between Hori Ropiha and Lord Derby. This confirmed in my mind the statements expressed by subtribal spokesmen. Why was the correspondence not between Tawhiao and the Secretary of Colonial Affairs? Was it because the former was persona non grata, a person who is not acceptable to the Crown?
52. Despite the failure of the delegation being granted an audience with Queen Victoria, the visit was not without incident. Tūroa was stricken by ill health. Hori arranged to defray all medical and nursing costs to ensure the recovery of their associate, from his personal financial resources. Tūroa suggested to him as a measure of his gratitude that he would welcome a matrimonial alliance with the family of his benefactor. Hori agreed. His only child, however, had married in the autumn of 1878. His older brother Paora had two sons, one of whom might be acceptable as a husband.

53. Following the return of the delegation from England, Matene Ropiha, the third child of Paora Ropiha, and Atareta Taupe, married Makarena Tūroa. Their issue included a daughter, Tāupe, who married Te Whakatere Kuru. One of their children was Topia Turoa Kuru.
54. Following Hori Ropiha's death on 28 December 1897, a Chapel was built after a promise by Nepe Te Apatu, who upon hearing that Hori Ropiha had passed away, promised the Porangahau people to erect a Chapel dedicated to Hori Ropiha if he was interred at Te Tapairu. That Chapel still stands at Te Tapairu today. The principal reason why Hori Ropiha was buried at Te Tapairu was the fact that his elder sister, Amiria Ropiha, the only daughter of Te Ropiha Te Takou, invited three of her brothers to build homes in close vicinity of hers and Nepe Te Apatu's at Te Tapairu.

The Future

55. Unlike the unsuccessful journey made by Hori Ropiha in 1884. It is hoped that my kinsfolk of Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua will have more success in their petition before this Tribunal against the non observance of the Treaty by the Government since 1840 to the present day.
56. I hope that the efforts of my tipuna, Hori Ropiha, are realised and that the relationship that the likes of Hori Ropiha and Tawhiao wanted with the Crown are cemented for future generations.