

HENARE KING

Te Kainga Tupu

The book “The Tail of the Fish” was published in 1968 and written by a Te Aupouri kuia, Matire Kereama (nee: Hoeft) of the far north of Aotearoa, New Zealand. I grew up with this book as my grandmother would read the stories to me at bedtime. Although my comprehension of each story was very vague and unrelatable to my life at that time, today, I find myself totally absorbed by the historical content and knowledge encapsulated in each chapter.

I completed a Masters of Applied Indigenous Knowledge at Te Wananga o Aotearoa in 2017, entitled; Tales of the singing fish: He tangi wairua. I comsed twelve waiata (Maori songs) of which ten of the waiata was information extracted from ten chapters of the book. The other two waiata were composed specifically for my people of the Te Rarawa tribe, namely, Ahipara.

This waiata demonstrates the simple lifestyle Te Aupouri had at Hauturu where everyone lived at peace with each other. Pākeha had come with Christianity but the Maori preserved their way of life. When winter came the people of the viillage, except the old people moved out. The canoes had been hidden away during the summer in big high caves along the shores of the Whangapē hairbour. The fleet of canoes was soon ready and away. When the paddles were lifted the people began to sing and continued their chorus all the way up the harbour. On reaching the place where the two rivers enter the harbour, the fleet turned left into the Awaroa river and sailed up river until it reached the Te Maire creek. Everyone was happy and looking forward to their new home and the fun they would have there.

Sometimes, there were plentiful of fruit-like plants to enjoy such as pātangatanga which grows inside the sweet white tāwhara, the flower of the kiekie. No one ever went hungry during those bush camping days. Life was full of richness while living at Hauturu.

Mē kimi te ao nei
He wāhi hei rite
Ki tō kainga tupu
E matea nuitia nei
Hei aha ōna kino
Hei aha ona hē

Ka tāwhai te ngākau
Ki reira noho ai
Te kainga tupu
Te ai ōna rite
E kore e rite