

“Whakamana ngā whānau, whakamana ngā hapū, whakamana ngā wāhine, me ngā tāngata katoa.”



It was so right to have a taonga named Whakamana at the first Waitangi Tribunal hearing heard recently at Hato Pāora College, Feilding. Historian Te Kenehi Teira (Ngāti Ngarongo, Ngāti Hinemata, Ngāti Takihiku and Patukohuru) brought the taonga *Whakamana*, a pakohe (argillite) mere.

Te Kenehi explained the meaning of whakamana was about enhancing mana. He went on to say this was one of the principles of Wai 113 and this was a theme in his introduction to his presentation to the tribunal. This dealt with the various heke (migrations) and connections that settled the Manawatū/Horowhenua/Kapiti area in the 1820s and 1830s. The Waitangi Tribunal is also about whakamana and this is recognised in their Māori title - Te Ropū Whakamana i te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Te Kenehi explained further, the name was given because of a duel meaning.

“Whakamana was a tupuna name as well as a being a word for our people to aspire to - whakamana ngā whānau, whakamana ngā hapū, whakamana ngā wāhine, me ngā tāngata katoa.”

Together with another taonga *Te Tuara o Ngā Iwi* it represented acknowledgement of the work of Whatarangi Winiata. Te Kenehi said the term whakamana coined the phrase and it was symbolic that both mere were at the hearing.

“Te Tuara was given to Whatarangi to recognise his huge contribution particularly around Whakatupuranga Rua Mano and the wānanga (Te Wānanga o Raukawa).”

“Sadly Whatarangi wasn’t able to attend the hearing because of his health but in a way Whatarangi Winiata is here because of those two mere.”

Whatarangi’s involvement in Raukawa’s claims was major.

“He was front and centre for this whole operation and with his children and mokopuna they were at all the different meetings and hui we’ve had. He did a huge amount of good for our people, he revived our people so he needs to be recognised with these two mere being here.”

Whakamana is made of pakohe or argillite and is mainly found in the Nelson area and Te Kenehi said their hapū at Kereru Marae had many associations with the top of the South Island in particular Ngāti Kuia where the pakohe comes from.

“The hapū have been given large blocks of pakohe which have been fashioned into different taonga over the years.”

One of their uncles is Frank Wells who is from the Hippolite family and he has re-established the use of pakohe by the iwi by producing all types of taonga including mere pakohe.

Pakohe was commonly used to make mere and it was more common than the pounamu mere mainly because it was more accessible. Up until about the arrival of Captain Cook pakohe mere were more common. Te Kenehi says most of the mere found in European museums, collected by the early Pākehā explorers were pakohe.