



A Fire in the Belly of Hineāmaru

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Te Hiku Hanora

Book Title: A Fire in the Belly of Hineāmaru - A collection of Narratives about Te Tai Tokerau Tūpuna **Author:** Melinda Webber and Te Kapua O'Connor **Year of Publication:** 2022 **Publisher:** Auckland University Press

This unapologetically Te Tai Tokerau debut opens with Sir James Henare's call to action to celebrate connection to the histories, lands, and ancestors of Northland. It is the region between Cape Reinga in the Far North of the North Island of *Aotearoa* (New Zealand) to the Auckland region, that includes the largest number of Māori residents of any region in Aotearoa. There is a familiarity with the moving 24 narratives that have been furnished by Te Tai Tokerau authors Melinda Webber and Te Kapua O'Connor about Te Tai Tokerau *Tūpuna* (ancestors). Though, not newly told legacies of Te Tai Tokerau ancestral leaders, what is different is the way they have been presented in this contemporary print.

Inspired by the 2009 speech of Māori lawyer Moana Jackson who said 'Māori were better known as Gardeners and were more likely to maintain their traditional practices from their ancestors' (Grey et al., 2020). Webber & O'Connor frame the 24 narratives into eight streams of Peace Makers and Mediators; Agriculturalists and Entrepreneurs; Pioneers and Innovators; Political Leaders and Change Makers; Strategists and Tacticians; Audacious

and Inventive Thinkers; Explorers and Discoverers; Navigators and Voyagers.

The title 'A Fire in the Belly of Hineāmaru' is a metaphor that reveres Te Tai Tokerau wahine (female) ancestor – Hineāmaru, mokopuna (grandchild) of Rāhiri and Āhuaiti, and acknowledges her tenacity in the face of adversity for her people to thrive. Her narrative is in the Explorers and Discoverers section. It is in recognition of her leadership, that her people were named Ngāti Hine, who today declare themselves as an autonomous Iwi (tribal nation) in their own right.

Given this book review is situated in this edition of the Te Mauri Pimatisiwin Journal of Indigenous Wellbeing, which focuses on Indigenous workforce development, I propose this text of Tūpuna narratives could help shape the development of the Māori health workforce in Te Tai Tokerau. By extending upon the ancestral cultural resilience as a construct that has been described throughout this book, coupled with the ability to leverage upon Te Tai Tokerau Māori descendants' lines of ancestry that are rich in history and *Pūrākau* (stories). This is a Te Tai Tokerau Māori workforce development strategy.

This book will support Māori storytelling practices as a vehicle to pass down inter-generational knowledge, in turn fostering an in-depth understanding of Māori who whakapapa to Te Tai Tokerau, their past worldviews and successes, and how these are shaping the present. Māori health workforces need an awareness of the communities in which they work, and for those in Te Tai Tokerau, here is the ancestral and embedded evidence base to inform how you

locate and make links to its people, and its whenua.

Rather than the often deficit perspectives of Māori viewed by non-Māori (Hickey & Wilson, 2017) these ancestral stories are of courage, resistance, challenge, and triumph, all of which can be infused into educational approaches of tamariki, mokopuna and future health workforces in Te Tai Tokerau. Here is a strategy that could enhance Māori communities by reinforcing ancestral beliefs and infusing the value of community to Māori.

One of my favourite stories is situated in the Pioneers and Innovators section, which shares the story of conflict between Ngāti Kuri, Ngāpuhi and Te Rarawa Iwi. The focus is on Tūmatahina, who saves Ngāti Kuri with a strategic campaign involving innovation, knowledge of the whenua, technical skills, faith, and courage.

Imagine an approach to workforce development that considers the stories and legacies of Tūpuna and considers building workforce capability frameworks of peace makers and mediators like Rāhiri, who united many groups in Te Tai Tokerau, or of Pioneers and Innovators like Te Ruki Kawiti who redesigned Pa to repel the British Forces. It is evident from the communities in Te Tai Tokerau, and of the Northern Political Leaders and Change Makers in this generation that the qualities from these Tūpuna persist in their descendants. The potential for developing more Strategists and Tacticians; Audacious and Inventive Thinkers; Explorers and Discoverers; Navigators and Voyagers is very real. I recommend to all descendants of Te Tai Tokerau, and those interested in applying the knowledge of the past to the present, *A Fire in the Belly of Hineāmaru* is a must read.

References

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