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Kanohi ki te Kanohi

A Journey towards Repatriation

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Abstract

This thesis explores and examines Ngāti Hine perspectives with respect to taonga. Whilst past research has tended to focus on how museums have responded to international and domestic pressure in terms of their recognition of indigenous rights and cultural awareness, in contrast, the Ngāti Hine experience and the Ngāti Hine response is emphasised. With particular regard to the Ngāti Hine taonga tapu currently housed at the Auckland Museum, this thesis examines hapū-museum relationships from the perspective of Ngāti Hine and investigates and analyses the degree and quality of hapu-museum interaction. An account of the journey, thus far, that Ngāti Hine have made in terms of repatriating their taonga tapu back to within their tribal boundaries and jurisdiction is given. The Ngāti Hine experience is central to the research findings and shows how this journey continues to shape the current perspectives of Ngāti Hine in terms of their response to, and their relationship with, museums.

The research consulted with participants drawn from within Ngāti Hine. Research methodology included one-to-one interviews, a focus group discussion, and a review of relevant literature. Appropriate and relevant methodologies for Māori-centred research, and in particular, Action Research methodology, were employed. Due to the nature of the research and the researcher's personal cultural views and convictions, the Māori research participants were limited to those of Ngāti Hine descent who are known personally to the author. In addition, all interviews, consents, and dissemination of information complied with legislation regarding privacy and included any additional restrictions, or freedoms, stipulated by the participants. The expected timeframe was from November 2004 to January 2006 but was extended to August 2010. Whilst the research data has not been affected, some updates to the research have been made. Envisaged outcomes include the opportunity for Ngāti Hine to share their perspective in an area where they are infrequently consulted and to share their journey through the repatriation process. It is also hoped that this thesis will provide a better understanding of the hapū-museum dynamic and therefore assist in improving iwi/hapū-museum relationships.

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Kei raro, ko te awa a Taikirau, e komirimiri ana i te riu o Motatau
Ka huri whakararo ki te tai tapu o Hokianga whakapau karakia
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Ka huri whakarunga ki te rohe o Motatau
Ko Hine-ā-maru te tupuna
Ko Ngāti Hine te hapū
Ko Ngāti Te Tarawa te hono
Ko Motatau te marae
Ko Manukoroki te wharetūpuna
Ko Mihiwira te wharekai
Ko Brenda Tipene-Hook ahau
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Ki a koutou o te kanohi ora, e mihi ana ahau ki ō koutou mauri
Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa.

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I did, however, appreciate the fact that Ahuaiti was enjoying a healthy exposure to taonga at a very impressionable age. One image that will stay with me forever is that of Ahuaiti sitting on the lap of Naida Glavish at the foot of our waka tūpāpaku, which had been removed from display and laid out before Ngāti Hine, during our protest at Auckland Museum. For that moment in time, all of the threads of this thesis were there – our taonga tūpuna lay serenely on the stage; our kaumātua were waving their tokotoko at museum officials; the chairman of our rūnanga/political arm, Tohe Ashby was present; Naida, our Ngāti Hine/Ngāti Whātua kai karanga and descendant of Mate Kairangatira, Kawiti’s historical gift to Ngāti Whātua, sat beside our waka tūpāpaku; the museum staff who had cared for our taonga were there; my whānau and university supporters were there; and in

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To Ngāti Hine, I acknowledge that this thesis is only a small part of our journey. There is much work yet to be done in terms of repatriation, but thank you for the learning curve. This has been a monumental journey for me, and for my immediate whānau. I am aware that there are many more perspectives and kōrero out there, but at the very least, this thesis will allow some of our kōrero to be heard.

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