

E te kai

**Whakapapa Research
Project series: Kai**



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Whakapapa Research Project series

This is part of a series of writings from eight whānau researchers on nine kaupapa. This kaupapa is about kai.

Whānau researchers

Miriama Cribb

Grant Huwyler

Tania Kara

Raukura Roa

Kaapua Smith

Rachael Tinirau

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Raymond Tuuta

Research kaupapa

Aspirational letter to future generations

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) and whakapapa

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Matriarch

Research methodology and methods

Whānau event

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Taonga



E te kai

The reason
The season
The maramataka
The tikanga
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The methods
The planting
The nurturing
The gathering
The foraging
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The preserving
The pickling
The cooking
The smoking
The flavouring
The caring
The sharing
The tasting
The consuming
The feasting
The giving
The receiving
The thanksgiving

E kai! Te kai! Ngā kai!
Kua puta te pito – kua mākona!



He kupu whakaūpoko: Introduction

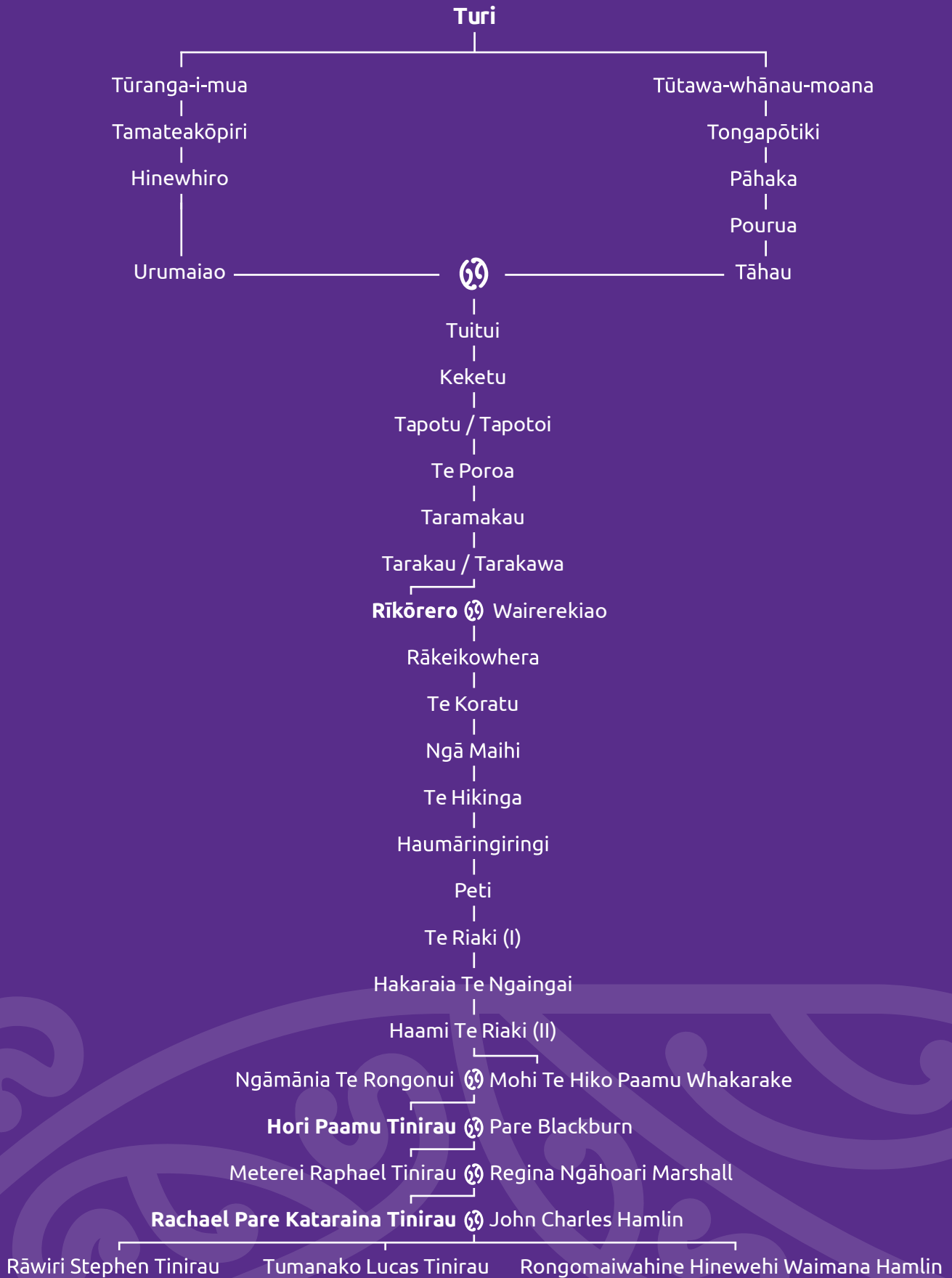
Ko Hori Paamu rāua ko Pare Kataraina Tinirau (née Blackburn) ōku tūpuna, ko tā rāua tamaiti, ko Meterei Raphael Tinirau. Ka noho a Meterei i a Regina Ngāhoari Marshall, ka puta ko mātau, ā rāua tamariki, arā ko Raphael Meterei Tinirau rāua ko David Fitzgerald Rimitiri Marshall aku tungāne, ko Esther Tania Tarihira Tinirau taku teina, ā, ko Rachael Pare Kataraina Tinirau ahau, te mātāmua. Tēnā tātau.



Rachael Pare Kataraina Tinirau (author), at Ngutuweru. Photographs courtesy of the Tinirau whānau.

Waverley, South Taranaki. The farm was owned by a very kind and generous man, Roland Lupton, and operated by our Dad, Meterei Tinirau.

Springbank Farm Trust was situated at the end of Block 8 Road, Ngutuweru, within Ngā Rauru country. Although we have whakapapa to Ngā Rauru, our connections to the people, whenua and wai were based on a way of life for our whānau, built around farm work (a producer of kai) and seasonal kai activities, based on the land (including cultivated and uncultivated foods, as well as animals), and in the waters (both freshwater and ocean life). Our whānau did not have mana whenua or mana moana over these domains, but respectfully we grew and gathered kai from our local environs, constantly calling on or appeasing the atua, Maru. Our whakapapa to Ngā Rauru is through our grandfather, Hori Paamu Tinirau, who is a descendant of Rikōrero:



Whakapapa from Turi, to Rīkōrero, to Hori Paamu Tinirau, to the writer (Hawira, 2018, p. 6, p. 11; Tinirau, 2017, p. 62).



This paper describes the kai that we as a whānau were fortunate to grow, gather, harvest, consume and share as tamariki growing up within this environment.

Our daily fare

On a daily basis, Dad would hand-milk our cow, affectionately known as Daisy. He would use a hand-driven milk separator to extract the delicious cream. Along with butter and sugar, we would dollop cream on our daily porridge or weetbix. Our two loaves of sliced and barracouta bread (two loaves joined together) arrived via the mailman every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. In between those days, however, Mum would make either fried bread or a 'bangbang' (a large oven-baked scone), or a 'yeast bread', a rēwana bug and its long process, where the dough is placed in a buttered umu and left to rise twice, then baked in a hot oven. Each bread slice was served hot with butter, golden syrup or blackberry jam. Mum was an amazing homemaker and a wonderful hostess. She could whip up a meal out of thin air. She looked after us, our home, and the many relatives who came to stay with us from time to time.

Our gardens

The maramataka was and still is very important to our whānau. It guides us in planting, tending, gathering, foraging, hunting, fishing, eeling, diving, and harvesting kai by the moon. Our parents created two gardens. One was a huge kitchen garden, over which Dad had erected a structure using metal poles both vertically and horizontally, then covered it with small-sized wire netting. This was to keep out the white butterflies and small birds. He had borrowed from his father-in-law, Tame Marshall, a rotary hoe to till the soil, after which he planted seeds and young plants of various vegetables, including my favourite, sweet peas. The other garden however was almost paddock-sized. Dad used the tractor to plough the jet black soil which was rich in nutrients. It would be planted out in kūmara, taewa Māori, hue (also known to others as kamokamo), and corn that when ripe, would be gently boiled until tender, buttered, and then immediately devoured.

The same corn was also the basis of kānga wai (also known as kānga pirau). Dad would put corncobs in a sugar bag, tied with a string, and then immerse them in our puna, which was in our front paddock. Two or so months later, we would retrieve the bag, de-cob the 'aromatic' corn, package it, freeze it, and then share it within our wider whānau. Dad would boil the corn in a saucepan until it had the consistency of porridge. All that was needed was brown sugar and a dollop of Daisy's fresh cream. However, there was a strong pungency that lingered: it smelt like blue vein cheese! Whenever Mum or Dad cooked it, we would quickly exit the house, and play outside for the rest of the day! In later years, I learned how to prepare kānga wai, and would often give kānga wai to kuia and koroheke who savoured this delicacy.



Our kuia, Pare Paamu Tinirau (née Blackburn), affectionately known to us as Nanny Kui, would weave kete for harvesting, and storing both kūmara, and taewa that had many 'eyes'. Generally, these taewa were colourful: red or purple-skinned, yellow flesh, and pink squiggles on the inside. Dad would use a garden fork to carefully dig up the taewa, which I placed in the kete. When it was half-full, I would run the outside tap over the kete, using a backward and forward motion to gently peel the skin, then scoop out the 'eyes'. When cooked, our taewa were very tasty, much different to today's bland potatoes from the supermarket.



Kete māra, woven by Pare Kataraina Tinirau (née Blackburn)

Hue also grew in the larger garden. Mum would nip and steam the curly hue frond ends (known as 'hihi'), as well as the medium-sized hue, which were very sweet. The larger hue along with carrots, cauliflower, green tomatoes, onions, sugar and spices would be used in Mum's famous sweet pickle.





Clockwise (from top left): Hue leaves and flower; young hue; hue ready to eat; pickle. Photographs courtesy of the Tinirau whānau.

Peaches and apples grew in our little orchard behind the house, and our only pear tree was in a paddock a mile further up the road. We would stand on the truck tray to pick its delicious fruit. Mum would then preserve these fruits for the winter period. We would rise early to pick huge flat mushrooms from our front paddock. Mum and Dad would clean, slice, and fry these in butter, then add cream which would turn into a grey-coloured gravy.

There were two varieties of walnut trees at Ngutuwera. One yielded medium-sized nuts, and to gain access, we would use a hammer to open its tight shell. As for the larger-sized walnuts, we would simply twist the shell and devour its contents on the spot. Mum preferred to peel the skin off the walnut to reveal a creamy-coloured brain-shaped gem of deliciousness. The look and taste were nutty creamy rich.



Medium and large-sized walnuts. Photograph courtesy of the Tinirau whānau.

Raphael and I attended St Michael's Convent School in Waverley. It had a chestnut tree at its entrance. With the nuns' permission, we would gather the chestnuts in season, using our shoes or gumboots to remove the prickly shell. On arrival home, Mum would boil (or roast) the chestnuts for 30 minutes or so until cooked. Using a knife to halve the nut, and a teaspoon to scoop out the sweet nutmeat, we added butter, then it was 'down the hatch'. These days, we gather chestnuts from either the orchard of my great-great-grandmother, Ani Haami at Te Pou-o-Rongo, Rānana, or at Whanganui's Kōwhai Park. Chestnuts that we ate are quite different to horse chestnuts, which look similar but are sour, and are only fit for a game of 'conkers'!



Rachael Pare Kataraina Tinirau (author) and Raphael Meterei Tinirau, enjoying a picnic at Kōwhai Park, Whanganui. Photograph courtesy of the Tinirau whānau.

Our animals, and other kai Māori

Our kai supplies were more than ample. We had access to sheep and lambs, both tame and wild pigs (poaka puihi), wild geese, roving turkeys, brown ducks, and tuna from the Waitōtara River. We also had egg-producing hens, chickens, and a rooster; their diet consisted of wheat, mash and water. Occasionally, they would be let out of their chook-house pen to forage. We also had roaming Muscovy ducks, and a pet goat called Sally (who was also our lawnmower).



We had working dogs, and horses. Dad's stallion was Johnny, whom he rode and deployed two of his working dogs to muster the sheep from the paddock down by the river, and drove them up for shearing. Our canny horse Flicker had a knack for opening one of our farm gates. Dad put paid to that. He fixed the gate so that it only opened outwards thus preventing Flicker from opening the gate inwards. We also had two wild white female and male cats that were tamed over time and produced generations of kittens. One morning, we saw the female cat dragging the head of a tuna, which could only have come from our farm dam. Together with two nephews, Sonny-Boy Nahona and Derek Brooks, we would catch a few big 'crawlies' (kōura, or freshwater crayfish) at the dam, and we proudly brought them home for Mum to cook. She just dropped them into a pot of boiling water. I felt sorry for the crawlies, however, their lightly boiled flesh tasted so good.

Raphael Meterei Tinirau on 'Flicker', with Meterei Raphael Tinirau standing behind, at Ngutuwera. Photograph courtesy of the Tinirau whānau.



Craig Thomas and Pare Kataraina Tinirau (née Blackburn) at Ngutuwera, known affectionately as 'Nanny Kui'. Photograph courtesy of the Tinirau whānau.



Nanny Kui would come to stay with us at seasonally important times of the year. In summer, my brother Raphael and I would help Nanny Kui and Mum collect karaka berries that the sheep had nibbled on to remove the orange exterior skin, inside of which was a seed containing karakin (lethal toxin). Nanny Kui and Mum would wash, rewash, load, fire up, boil and stir the almond-shaped karaka berries, which for two or so days, would start before I left to catch the school bus. Nanny Kui would still be stirring Dad's purpose-built karaka cauldron when I returned. The purpose of this process was to detoxify the berries. If any berries floated, Nanny Kui would discard these. The kernels were laid out to dry in the sun and then deposited in Nanny's various kete. I have tasted karaka; it was a soft nut, dark brown in colour, and to me, it tasted like the smell of karaka. Dad always had a sweet tooth, so he would have his karaka with cream.

Every now and then, Mum and Dad would check the maramataka for weather, tidal and fishing conditions. If favourable, Mum would pack a picnic lunch and homemade lemon honey cordial, and we would set off with two other families, to travel and go diving near Opunakē beach. Access to this beach was via a kind farmer's private property that had Taranaki 'wire fence gates', which my brother Raphael and I would take turns opening and closing. On arrival at the rocky beach, we children would investigate the rock pools, play games, eat our lunch, or lay in the long grass and talk about all sorts of things. Meanwhile, the adults would walk across an extremely long stony-flat shelf to access the rocky kaimoana beds, in particular, pāua and kina. When our parents had finished harvesting, Dad would always 'give one back for Maru', which would involve returning the first catch or something gathered to the atua, Maru. This was and is an inclusive tikanga, which would appease or placate Maru.



Hāngi being prepared at Ngutuwera. Photograph courtesy of the Tinirau whānau.



He kupu whakakapi: Conclusion

Like the kai that grew within our gardens, our childhoods were shaped by the tikanga and mātauranga of our tūpuna. As tamariki, our whānau made the most of opportunities to share together the knowledge and methods of planting, nurturing and gathering kai that held us in close relation with te taiao and our atua. Knowledge of the maramataka helped guide us through phases of productivity and rest within te taiao that directly influenced the kai we ate, affirming the importance of our relationship with, and responsibilities to the specific whenua where kai activities were centred. Kai brought us together, working in tandem to harvest, catch and hunt the kai that scaffolded spaces of manaaki tangata where we could foster our relationships with one another, crafting memories across generations. Our childhoods embodied the whakataukī he kai kei aku ringa (providing food by my own hands) – from the skills we learnt, we had access to the knowledge of our environment that kept us fed – thriving and finding joy in being able to provide for ourselves and others.



Kuputaka: Glossary

Use of tuhutō (macrons): the introduction of macrons over some Māori vowels, have (1) clarified definitions and (2) made it easier to pronounce Māori words (i.e., knowing where to place the emphasis as you are saying the words). When we quote sources from earlier periods where macrons have not been used, we have not included the macron to remain true to the original text. In the glossary, we have included both versions of the word (with and without macrons).

atua	god
E kai! Te kai! Ngā kai!	Eat! The food! All the food!
he kai kei aku ringa	providing food by my own hands
hihi	curly hue frond ends
hue	stubby green vegetable marrow or gourd (<i>Cucurbita Spp</i>)
kai	food
kaimoana	seafood
kamokamo	stubby green vegetable marrow or gourd (<i>Cucurbita Spp</i>)
kānga pīrau	fermented corn
kānga wai	fermented corn
karaka	seeds from a green tree, very glossy, with large leaves and orange berries containing seeds which are poisonous unless roasted or cooked correctly (<i>Corynocarpus Laevigatus</i>)
karakia	prayer, incantation
kete	flax woven basket
kina	sea egg, common sea urchin (<i>Evechinus Chloroticus</i>)
koroheke	elderly man; grandfather
kōura	freshwater crayfish
Kua pito te pito – kua mākona!	My belly has extended! I am content!
kuia	elderly woman; grandmother
kūmara	sweet potato
mana moana	power associated with the ability of the ocean to produce bounties of sea-life

mana whenua	power associated with the ability of the land to produce bounties of nature
manaaki tangata	looking after and caring for others
maramataka	lunar cycle dictating fishing, horticultural and agricultural activities
Maru	an atua associated with fishing, uri of Ranginui and Papatūānuku
mātauranga	knowledge
Ngā Rauru	tribe of South Taranaki
Ngutuwera	rural locality inland, south of Waverley, North Island
pāua	abalone, sea ear (<i>Haliotis Spp</i>)
poaka puihi	wild pig
puna	freshwater spring
Rānana	small settlement located on the banks of the Whanganui River
rēwana	yeast bread
Rīkōrero	ancestor of author, from Ngā Rauru
taewa Māori	Māori potato
tamariki	child(ren)
kōura	freshwater crayfish
Te Pou-o-Rongo	marae at Rānana, Whanganui River
te taiao	natural environment
tikanga	customary practices and protocols
tuna	eel
tūpuna	ancestors
umu	cast iron pot
wai	water
Waitōtara	river that runs through the Waitōtara Valley
whakapapa	genealogy
whakataukī	proverb or saying
whānau	family
whenua	land



He rārangi rauemi: References

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