

Haunui-a-Nanaia and the naming of the Manawatu River

Haunui-a-Nanaia was a great-grandson of Kupe, and Nanaia was his mother. His father Popoto came to Aotearoa in the Kurahaupo waka, along with Whatonga, according to Ngati Kahungunu sources. Hau left his wife Wairaka at Mahia and returned to Hawaiki with his elder brothers. He returned after some time to find she had been carried away by two servants, Kiwi and Weka, towards Pukerua Bay, near Paekakariki. Haunui is said to have crossed to Whanganui and then headed south, naming the rivers and other waterways as he crossed them (see below). At Pukerua he finally caught up with his wife Wairaka and her lovers. They were killed by his incantation, and she was turned to stone, remaining a lonely sentinel at Pukerua to this day.

Kapua mai e Hau ko te one ki te ringa,
Ko te tokotoko. Ka witi i te awa,
Ka nui ia, ko Wanga-nui;
Tiehutia te wai, ko Wangae-hu;
Ka hinga te rakau, ko Turakina;
Tikeitia te waewae, ko Tikei;
Ka tatu, e hine, ko Manawatu;
Ka rorohio nga taringa, ko Hokio;
Waiho te awa iti hei ingoa mona ki Ohau;
Takina te tokotoko, ko Otaki;
Kamehameha, e hine, ko Wai-mea;
Ka ngahae nga pi, ko Wai-kanae;
Ka tangi ko to mapu, e hine,
Ka kite koe i a Wai-raka:
Matapoutia; poua ki runga, poua ki raro,
Ka rarau, e hine. Ka rarapa nga kanohi,

(Excerpt from *Ko te popo a Te Rangitakoru mo tana tamahine, mo Wharaurangi*. In *Te Ika a Maori, or New Zealand and its inhabitants*, Chap X Songs. Rev R.Taylor, Wertheim & Macintosh, 1855, London. www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz)

Note that Haunui's descendants are Ngati Kahungunu, and Ngati Raukawa through Mahinarangi, the mother of Raukawa.

Hau took up some sand in the palm of his hand, and his staff.
When he crossed over the river,
Finding it was wide he called it Wanga-nui;
Splash the water, that will reach Wangae-hu;
The length of a fallen tree, is Tura-(kina);
Having many times lifted up his feet, Tikei (Rangi-tikei);
When his heart sank within him, Manawatu;
When the wind whistled past his ears, Hokio;
The small river he called, Ohau;
When he carried his staff in a horizontal position, Otaki;
When he prayed, O daughter, it was Wai-mea;
When he looked out of the corner of his eye, Wai-kanae;
When he became weary, my daughter, he reached Wai-raka.
He repeated an incantation,
She became fixed above, and fixed below,
And she remained immovable.