

The hui was run by MASPAC to bring together about a hundred tutors plus tutor trainees as well as elders who were knowledgeable in the performing arts, such as waiata tawhito, haka, poi and waiata-a-ringa.

On the first day there were two sessions, in the morning a session on waiata tawhito with convenor Patariki Rei, a kaumatua from Te Atiawa, Ngati Toa, Raukawa whanui and Nga Puhi. He's lived in Rotorua for many years and readily admits that much of his knowledge about things Maori particularly waiata tawhito was told to him by the elders of Te Arawa.

As convenor of waiata tawhito, he set the scene for where most of these waiata were sung. He began by saying it was important for people as Maoris to be associated with the marae and the reason for this was that its on the marae that much of our maoritanga is witnessed and lived.

The marae was the social gathering place and Maori people were often either going to a hui or else returning from one. There are two categories of hui, hui mate or a tangihanga. The second hui is a hui ora, that is a celebration including weddings, 21sts, family reunions, church gatherings or tribal wananga.

At the hui mate, waiata tawhito were often sung by tribal groups.

Another reasons for a maori to attend a hui on the marae is to strengthen his connection and relationships with people, through whanaungatanga or blood relationship, taukete or relationships through marriage and nga hoa or friendships. The latter was particularly appropriate to the pakeha as more and more pakeha come to the marae because of friendships with maori families.

Having set the scene Patariki then talked the category of waiata tawhito. To him the main sort was te apakura.

"Apakura is a particular sort of waiata often sung by someone very closely related to the deceased i.e. a parent singing for a child that has died or a wife or husband singing it for a departed spouse. Apakura is also associated with the term 'waiata haehae', where a person whilst singing the waiata would self inflict lacerations to the arms and breast."

Patariki Rei then went on to talk about other sorts of waiata performed on the marae, the patere, pokeka and the oriori.

A panel of elders were able to assist tutors with knowledge about the various waiata. The panel for the waiata tawhito included Henare Tuwhangai from Waikato, Mac Whakamoe, Tuhoe but living in Palmerston North among Ngati Rangitane, Hamuera Mitere, an elder from Ngati

Performing arts hui

Turangawaewae January 84. na Hamuera Mitchell



Whakaue/Te Arawa and others.

"On one or two occasions tutors asked the panel if they could give their explanations on how to perform the waiata in english for the benefit of those who couldn't understand maori. This was unfortunate as it detracted from the elders speaking in their first tongue and being able to give indepth information. Also it was a time-wasting factor. However the elders agreed to speak in maori and english. One of the disadvantages of having this particular session in open forum was that it may have inhibited some old people about giving in-depth knowledge.

"For example, a few elders were overheard speaking about information that would have helped the open forum, but that wasn't shared. One elder talked about errors that are usually made in singing a waiata and he referred to these errors, e.g. awai, dragging the singing of a waiata. Another common error was referred to as rangirua when a waiata is sung in two parts, and taupatupatu, to go flat or out of rhythm. And of course the problem of trying to prevent a whati or break occuring during a waiata.

Also there were other aspects of their discussion that would have been of general interest like the role of different people in singing waiata. In some tribes the prerogative of starting a waiata after a whaikorero rests with women, but in the case of Te Arawa the man is the tangata hi, or the person who leads the song. Everyone else who stands to accompany him must follow his lead."

In spite of these gems that weren't shared by all, there were a number of good questions asked. One lady asked when it was appropriate to sing waiata tawhito. Patariki Rei replied that for cultural groups especially during competitions, it wasn't appropriate to sing apakura or waiata whaka-tangitangi, and felt those remained the preserve of the marae, especially for tangihanga.

"Possibly as a result of this many groups who are involved with the Polynesian festival are tending to compose and perform only one sort of waiata, the patere. The tempo of the patere seems to provide the necessary rhythm and dynamics that cultural competitions rely on, a performance that seems to be geared for spectator interest."

Another person asked what was the difference between a patere and a pokeka. The reply was that a patere

