



Matiore's letter:

Go this my writing to Wellington, to Governor Grey. Greetings to you, to you and your younger brother — Maori brother, and Pakeha. Be quick now, you and Selwyn! I myself have decided to go out to New Zealand, to Parewa (Bluff) or Rakiura, (Stewart Island). We are eleven people who have decided to go to New Zealand. Do not exile us! That is all, by Matiore.*

While the letters themselves were businesslike, it was the traditional waiata which accompanied them into which the Maoris poured their feelings.

The song Ngati Mutunga chose as a kinaki for their letters was based on a waiata aroha from their far off home in Taranaki. The Auckland Islanders watch the sea flowing from the west, driven by the prevailing gales, and it reminds them of their kainga tuturu and the people they have left behind. Their grief at their separation is compared to a woman's sadness at being cut off from companionship by gossip. She answers accusations of sexual misdeeds with the declaration that the only lover she had was in her imagination: 'But who can find you in the flesh?' she says. In the last lines she makes reference to Ngamotu, one of the Sugar Loaf islands at New Plymouth, an ancient Te Ati Awa stronghold which was the scene of many victories. The paroa she refers to was a weapon made of whalebone:

The sea moving towards Te Uru brings me longing —

Longing for my people rises up within me. A sea that parts us is flowing to the west. You came in the night and sought my bed, But who can find you in the flesh? When the limpet is pounded, it falls from the rock.

The seas at Papanui flow out weeping, To the lover I approached — we are separated by talk.

*Oh the wretched status of a woman! My hand was not pierced With a paroa point on the heap of slain at Ngamotu.***

Matiore managed to leave Maungahuka with his family three months after he wrote his letter to Governor Grey. He settled for a while on Rakiura. In 1856 a rescue mission to the Aucklands was organised by the Maoris at Wharekauri, and they also picked up Matiore's household and returned them to the Chathams. The restless Matiore stayed there only briefly before returning to Waikanae where he eventually died. By 1868, most Ngati Mutunga had also left Wharekauri and returned to their old homes around Urenui in Taranaki.

Kupu Whakamihi

Mrs Ranui Ngarimu

Te Ataarangi and flax weaving are just two of the interests of Mrs Ranui Ngarimu, who has been voted by her peers, West Coast Woman of the Year. The award came from the Greymouth Business and Professional Women's Club for her notable contribution of service to the community, as well as fulfilling her family role.

She has been a foundation member of the Maturanga Maori Cultural Club and has helped many local organisations including scout and guiding groups. Mrs Ngarimu is a mother of five and a teacher's aide at Otira School.

Nga Puna Waihangā are soon to see a local branch of the Maori Artists and Writers in Otira, under the formation of Ranui. She is also vice-president of the Arthur's Pass Search and Rescue Society, treasurer of the Otira Railway Social Hall Committee, vice-president of the South Island Maori Netball Association, a member of the Westland REAP management committee and a

trustee of St Christopher's Church of Otira.

Mrs Ngarimu's service has stretched back many years, as she was the tutor and leader of the West Coast contingent in the powhiri to the British Queen and family and assembled athletes at the 1974 Commonwealth Games in Christchurch.

The nomination for the award came from the Kotuku Maori Women's Welfare League. In accepting the award, Mrs Ngarimu said she did so on behalf of all Maori women who worked silently and diligently to uphold mana maori.

*This letter is held in the Grey Collection, Auckland Public Library.

**This waiata appears in Sir George Grey's Nga Moteatea. I am grateful to Lyndsay Head and Margaret Orbell of the Maori Department, University of Canterbury, for translations.