

# KNOWLEDGE KEEPER

## AN ELDER'S EARTHSONG

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE FREEMAN

Deep in the heart of Te Urewera National Forest is Lake Waikaremoana, which most scientists believe was created some 2,200 years ago. Forming an extensive bioregion that covers an area of 225,000 hectares, Lake Waikaremoana is the crown jewel of the country's largest sanctuary for wildlife, including kererū (wood pigeon), kākā (forest parrot), kākāriki (parakeet) and endangered species such as pekapeka (long-tailed and short-tailed bat), whio (blue duck) and our national icon, the kiwi.

But it's not until one steps off the beaten track that the delights of more than 650 types of native plants can be enjoyed. The virgin native forest is a treasure trove of a biological and cultural history that the local hapu of Ngāti Ruapani and Tūhoe Pōtiki have jealously guarded for centuries. Managing Editor of *Koha*, Mere Takoko, speaks with local Tōhuna, Rose Pere, about why Māori businesses should tap into the cultural knowledge of 'Hawaiiki-Tautau' in order to create businesses that can sustain the 'mother energy' of Papatūānuku.

HEARTBEAT OF HAWAIIKI TAUTAU: Rose Pere holds her tokotoko (staff) which bares a Wheke (Octopus) a sacred symbol of Hawaiiki. Behind her stands her husband Joe Pere.



HEALING THE WORLD: Visiting healers 'link in' to the energy of Papatūānuku as they pray and massage Rose.

KOPU-ARIKI MISSION: Rose's papakainga is a haven for visitors from the four winds.

RIGHT PAGE: Rangimarie Te Turuki Rose Pere holds a picture of the late Hohepa Delamare, a renowned healer.

PAGE 26: Te Urewera National Forest is the largest untouched indigenous forest remaining in the North Island. It is a treasure trove of biological and cultural history and a haven for wildlife.

MORE ABOUT ROSE: Rose is a published author. Here book *Te Wheke – A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom*, is an introduction to teachings of the Kura huna. She is the holder of the New Zealand 1990 Commemorate Medal, is a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire and holds a Doctorate of Literature from the University of University in Wellington. She is also a Director of the Four Winds Foundation – an international body that works with indigenous and non-indigenous people.

We are all born with great power and wisdom. And yet some people struggle through life and only catch a glimpse of their inner potential. But if we move in the right direction, all the markers point to a beacon in the night. For author and well-known spiritual leader, Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere, that light begins with Whānaungatanga.

"The sooner that humanity 'works that one out' and remembers that we are all whānaunga – and that we all seek sustenance in regard to the four directions, that we are indeed Ngāti Ra – the better."

It was not your usual Sunday morning when our small *Koha* team approached Rose's papakāinga. A still silence had peeped its way into our thoughts. Perhaps it was the flock of kererū that flew above us or the serene light of the sun folding its way through our vehicle. Whatever it was, we all instinctively knew we would soon be in the company of a woman who was quite simply: a world apart.

Rose lives a stone's throw away from the shores of Lake Waikaremoana. Entering her modest home, built by local gang members more than a decade ago, we found her holding court with a group of healers who had travelled from afar to listen and share in her wisdom. We were immediately overcome by her still presence, which is both commanding and beneficent. Despite the years that have taken hold of her aging and sometimes tired body, she is full of the joyful vitality of a young child.

*Ko te kura nui, ko te kura roa, ko te kura tuhae po...*

Rose was born into the Kura huna mystery school of her Māori ancestors, and the ancient kōhanga (traditional birthing home) that was built specifically for her, and dismantled when she and her mother left it. Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere is a Tōhuna who are people who know when and how to sow the seeds of knowledge (whakatō) and when to hide the secrets (huna). She maintains that her teachings have been transmitted to her by the ancient ancestors of Hawaiiki Tautau which is the ancient name of Aotearoa.

"My 'grandmothers' and 'grandfathers' across the board were my 'speaking mountains. They taught me and my immediate family intuitive intelligence and psychic abilities through intergenerational learning and teaching."

As matakite or seers, she says that the old people who raised her regarded her as a tōhuna despite her age. They were also great conservationists and advocates for peace. That's a legacy that is seldom recognised in history books but one that Rose continues to this day. It's also a role that Rose believes Māori business could continue to preserve by linking back to the energies of the earth. And that's the message she conveys with unshakeable certainty.

"We begin and end with the Central Sun – the Divine Spark. We are the living breath of that. We are all Ngāti Ra – all of us the whole of humanity."





# YOUNG GIFTED & BROWN

## Taking Care of Business

BY SEMIRAMIS HOLLAND



"It's about ensuring that the lungs (the trees) of Papatūānuku are well taken care of. She has to heal herself, her axis is on a tilt, and we have to help her as she returns to her natural state of perfection by 2014."

Looking around the room, one's attention is easily drawn to a picture of a giant eagle known by Māori as the hōkioi. Rose goes on to explain that she links into the energy of the magnificent bird that became extinct over four hundred years ago. It is also a guardian of the 12<sup>th</sup> heaven of the Kura huna spiritual tradition that Rose was raised in.

"The largest eagle in the world lived here and we need to be more like them so we can soar above everyone else and see the world from a different perspective," says Rose.

The teachings of the Kura huna go back to more than 12,000 years ago. Rose has travelled the world providing lectures on the wisdom of the mystery school and has even written a book called *Te Wheke – A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom* that provides an introduction to these teachings which place a lot of emphasis on family health and wellbeing.

"One of the things we have to do is to enable people to stand in their own power so they can do what they need to do to progress forwards. We have to link into the mother energy, which is all about families."

According to Rose, that's where Māori resources need to be focused. She says she is not convinced that corporate governance structures such as incorporations, which most of the country's major Māori businesses operate under, are best able to deliver benefits at the whānau level.

"The name of the game today is we're all about corporations. But to win the game it's actually about how to improve the situation of the wider community."

Through a conscious effort to reinstate the role of cultural knowledge and values as a guiding force for business, she believes Māori could tap into a vast reservoir of ancient wisdom that is not only relevant to indigenous peoples but the whole of humanity. Embracing the teachings of the 'ancient ones' is part of the journey that the Māori economy is currently taking says Rose who foresees a period of transition where 'taking care of our mother' will be of more concern than a false sense of land 'ownership.'

"We could embrace people in a very simple way – through whanaungatanga and teaching others how to give the breath of life back into Papatūānuku," says Rose.

Finding ways to create an economy that can lead the world toward a path of peace – from planting more native trees to investing in carbon reduction and recycling technologies – instead of destruction, is a vision that Māori need to be more consciously aware of she believes.

"There's a whole lot of things we could do for ourselves as well as the world community and Papatūānuku herself. As far as I'm concerned we cover the Achilles heel of humanity," says Rose.

With a burning desire to see the earth return to a state where conflicts are resolved through peaceful means instead of war, Rose believes that the Māori economy will eventually become a beneficial force for the planet. And much like the sacred lake of Waikaremoana, which translates as the "sea of rippling waters, beholden to no one," she sees a time when Māori will stand in their own mana to lead the world away from conflict.

"It may be a challenge to see that vision right now. but all will be resolved. Peoples will unite and walk the path of peace. We will continue to have the stance of fearless warriors who not be warriors for death, but warriors who will fight against evil, and walk the path of peace and goodwill."

Miriana Ikin of Ngāti Rārua and Ngāti Ranginui is a founder of Aotahi Limited, a business education company specialising in developing educational resources for small business owners in Aotearoa. Aotahi was established in 2004 with a view to providing practical and relevant business information with an Aotearoa indigenous focus.

After returning with her husband to his hometown Te Kuiti in 2002, they were both inundated with requests from locals requesting advice on how to run a business.

"When we asked if there was anyone offering advice, we found there wasn't," Miriana says.

Miriana and Keith then approached Te Wānanga o Aotearoa for assistance to provide business programmes to the local community. They started business courses through the Pacific Business Trust in Auckland. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa also issued a management contract for delivery of business programmes.

"We have tutors who are business practitioners based in the community

and we train them mainly on facilitation techniques," Miriana says.

In the early stages the programmes' market tended to be predominantly Māori. But they found a large number of foreign students enrolling onto the programme who wanted to know the New Zealand business environment. Aotahi is now building a market presence in Native America where communities like the practical nature of the programmes and how they incorporate indigenous values.

"Internationally, people like the fact that we are holistic in our thinking approach to the business, the fact that we value our responsibility to the environment and our communities," says Miriana.

Aotahi has released a series of books to support small business and Indigenous business development. Part of the series focuses on covering the essentials of small business start up. Aotahi has also produced a unique business dictionary that is Aotearoa based and bi-lingual, to encourage the use of Te Reo Māori in everyday business.

Their latest book, *Taking Care of Business: Indigenous Business Case Studies*, looks at 13 indepth case studies of indigenous business from New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the USA. The book is primarily intended for use by tertiary-level students and entrepreneurs to study management concepts from an indigenous perspective. Aotahi is also currently developing a suite of business programmes for small business owners in Aotearoa focusing on a number of issues including business literacy and numeracy, online business, marketing and intellectual property.

Aotahi is based in Te Kuiti and employs six fulltime employees. The directors are Miriana Ikin, who was educated at Canterbury and Waikato Universities, and Naomi Smyth of Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto who has a Bachelor of Management Studies degree in Finance with First Class Honours and her Masters with First Class Honours in Economics. "When you live in Te Kuiti, you can only really see the road down to Otorohanga. But when you have a look out, there are a lot of opportunities that exist."