

Te Moremonui (1807):

‘Ma iro e kite’

The maggots will find him

The following narrative concerning the battle of Moremonui principally comes from the informants Te Puriri of Te Uri-o-Hau, Te Rore Taoho of Te Roroa, Mawete, Te Wana-a-riri, Whakaoho, Te Otene, and Murupaenga of Ngati Rongo. Although Pokaia had not taken part in this battle he raised a taua and attacked Kaihu, a Te Roroa stronghold, attacking a pa, and killing and eating its occupants.

Under the leadership of Te Murupaenga, Paikea-te-Hekeua, Te Hekeua, Te Toko-o-te-rangi and Manukau of Te Uri-o-Hau. The battle took place around 1807 and became known as Te-Kai-a-te-Karoro,’ and Te Haenga-o-te-one, the principals antagonists being Ngä Puhi and the Kaipara alliance.

Nga Riringa o mua :

Pre Skirmishing :

Moremonui’s genesis was a confusing round of battles between Te Roroa, and Nga Puhi around 1805. At that time Te Roroa took offence at the seduction of one of their woman by a Te Uri-o-Hau relative, and invited Pokaia of Nga Puhi to participate in a revenge raid. The taua sailed into the Kaipara and approached the pa of Te Hekeua where they signaled their intentions to the Te Uri-o-Hau chiefs Te Hekeumu, Taoho and Te Toko. In the resulting the skirmish Te Tao, Pokaia’s son was killed by Te Hekeua and Te Roroa, and their Nga Puhi allies defeated. The taua returned to the Kaihu Valley, and Pokaia returned to his people with a desire to avenge the loss of his son.

According to Butler, further skirmishing between Nga Puhi and **Ngäti Whätua** began as a result of the death of a Nga Puhi woman at Waituna. It appears that a retaliatory battle took place between Nga Puhi and Te Roroa, in which Nga Puhi suffered a defeat. Also present was Eruera Patuone of Nga Puhi. Rongo, **Ngäti Whätua** as a tribe avenged this incident by attacking the Nga Puhi pa Te Tahuna at Mataraua, and also settlements at Taiamai, with both attacks being successful. Pokaia retaliated by attacking Te Roroa settlements at Kaihu, and near the Wairoa River. Nga Puhi then retired to their kainga, but later returned attacking the Te Roroa settlement at Tikinui, killing the inhabitants before retiring north to the Maunganui Bluff. In

revenge Taoho of Te Roroa and Te Pona of Ngati Kawa (Te Uri-o-Hau) met a taua of Nga Puhi at Pa-Hakehake near Moremonui, but were defeated.

Te Kai-a-te-Karoro:

Although various informants differ on the date it was around 1807 when Pokaia of Nga Puhi proposed a further campaign against Te Roroa. Having gained acceptance Pokaia was joined by a number of prominent Nga Puhi chiefs including Hongi Hika. The taua is said to have numbered around five hundred warriors. As was the custom in those times, a messenger was sent to the Kaipara people informing them of the coming of Nga Puhi. The Nga Puhi taua passed through Te Roroa lands until they reached Waikara, just north of the Maunganui Bluff.

Murupaenga of Ngati Rongo took control of the Kaipara taua, which also included Te Uri-o-Hau and most likely Te Taou. The taua moved via the Wairoa River to southern part of the south Kaipara heads where they joined with Taoho of Te Roroa whose pa was located at Tokotoko on the Wairoa. The Kaipara scouts located Nga Puhi encamped just south of the Maunganui Bluff, where they overheard Nga Puhi's battle plan to move south to Moremonui the following day and encamp in the large opening in the cliffs at that location. Murupaenga and Taoho moved their forces to the south side of the Moremonui Stream to lay in wait for Nga Puhi who appeared at daybreak the following day. Ngä Puhi, not expecting enemy forces to be in the vicinity proceeded to prepare a meal.

Hidden from view within the flax and toetoe the Kaipara taua attacked and drove Nga Puhi to the open beach where the battle ebbed and flowed to the advantage of one side then the other. During one particular attack, the Ngä Puhi chief Pokaia was killed by Taoho, which determined the outcome of the battle, and Nga Puhi commenced their retreat northwards.

At this point Taoho directed Te Teke of Te Uri-o-Hau to close with the enemy and draw a line in the sand that was a tohu that the Kaipara taua would not cross. Smith suggests that it was not the wish to exterminate Nga Puhi, probably due to the close relationships that existed between the two tribes. During the battle Taoho was wounded in the mouth by a spear thrust that exited through his neck, but Taoho pulled the Nga Puhi warrior towards him and killed him. As a result of this battle Nga Puhi lost the chiefs Rangatira, Te Waikare, Pokaia, Tohu, Ti, Hou-awe, Tu karawa, and Hou-moka. Hongi Hika, being fleet of foot, managed to escape

the slaughter and survived to extract revenge on a later time. The Kaipara taua are said to have lost one hundred and fifty men from their taua of five hundred.

The battle at Moremonui left many Nga Puhi dead upon the beach, and because the Kaipara taua could not consume all the bodies, they were left to be eaten by seagulls. The battle, also referred to as 'Te Haenga-o-te-one' became synonymous with a disastrous defeat of Nga Puhi and was to lead to the near annihilation of the Kaipara alliance and its allies at the hand of Nga Puhi at Te Ika-a-Ranganui (Waititi) in 1825.

While success in battle is always remembered by the victors, some corroboration of Moremonui came from the Nga Puhi chief Te Morenga who, in 1820, told Samuel Marsden that he had been in four expeditions against the Kaipara people, and that in two of them Nga Puhi had been defeated. He further stated that his grandfather, probably Ngamotu, had been killed and eaten, although from the narrative it is unclear whether this incident was at Moremonui. Lee, in his history of the Bay of Islands, states that in 1824 Hongi Hika was contemplating an attack on Ngati Whatua in revenge for the loss of his half-brother Moka and his sister Waitapu, who were killed at Moremonui. The stage was now set for old accounts to be settled.