

Doug Poole

Poem Notes

The Poem 'Moka's Utu' reference Chief Moka Kainga-Mataa and use the analogy of the Kōtare to talk about his role as a fearless warrior and staunch challenger to English Colonist idealisations.

Moka Kainga-mataa was a Ngapuhi chief of Ngai Tawake descent, who along with his brothers Te Wharerahi and Rewa; formed the Patukeha hapū in memory of their slain mother Te Auparo and sister Te Karehu. Their mother and sister had been murdered and their bodies consumed, in an attack by the Ngare Raumati Iwi, upon Okuratope Pa, (Waimate North) in 1800. (<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>)

Moka and his two brothers participated in the bloody Musket Wars of the 1820s-1830s, which caused wholesale destruction across the North Island; resulting in numerous deaths, slavery, and the displacement of a large number of people. 'Moka, was...a distinguished chief among Hongi's [Hongi Hika] warriors... (<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/>)

Maori academic Brent Kerehona (Ngapuhi/Whakatohea/Tuhoe/Whanau-a-Apanui), claims that on close inspection, it seems as though Moka was a person of high significance. He was an original signatory to the Declaration of Independence (the same document that the Crown had aimed to revoke), was the only Maori signatory to the Proclamation and after raising specific issues, as well as questioning Hobson about pre-emption and illegal land transactions at the meeting at Waitangi, appears not to have been satisfied with the explanations provided and chose not to sign the Treaty of Waitangi. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moka_Te_Kainga-mataa)

(Maori) admired the Kōtare (kingfisher) for the way it perched without moving while stalking its prey, then suddenly attacked in a blur. A good sentry was likened to a kōtare. (www.teara.govt.nz)

The Kōtare is a fearless bird that readily attacks mammals and birds of its own size and larger ...starlings are driven away, red billed gulls put to flight, a Tui killed, cats and dogs blinded in one eye and even weasels attacked. Every kind of small animal is attacked, killed and eaten by the kingfisher. (www.nzbirds.com)

Poet Notes

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Moka's Utu

I

Sound the putatara!
My bloodlines carry me tonight
my mother, Te Auparo,
my sister, Te Karehu.
Grief lies in the barrel of a musket
silver tears for you
I will rain them hot and heavy
tiaha, toki, mere
hold more Mana than you deserve.
I hide in Hinewai's mist.
Ahi ahi ; a bonfire in my chest,
As the Kotare, we shall attack; fearless, sudden.

II

Watch the enemy
breathe & pray to
fortify their hearts.
Anger is the fertile
ground beneath
the hanging tree.
Utu breathes within
soil & blood & skin.
So my enemies, why fear
immortality; fear mine.
You, who are not my people.
Quiver as little sparrows,
for I am the Kotare &
mine is utu; mine is near.

III

Taua!
Take the musket,
take the powder
Tonight we launch
waka taua
at dawn we strike

Hear the warriors breath

He haa he haa!
He ahh ha haa!

Taua!
Gnash your teeth
roll your eyeballs
we attack on the last
of dawns chorus
& have our revenge

Hear the warriors breath

He haa he haa!
He ahh ha haa!

IV

Treaty me this, treaty me that
what is a people, without sovereignty.

Here is my musket, here is my powder.

Treaty me this, treaty me that
what is a people, without land.

Here is my order, here is my power.

Treaty me this, treaty me that
what is a man without limits.

Here is my fury, here is my answer.

V

Waitangi, February 5th 1840
Moka stated:

‘Let the Governor return to his own country:
Let us remain as we were.
Do not say, the lands will be returned.
Who will listen to thee, O Governor?
Who will obey thee?’

Who indeed? Where were Baker, Clendon, Mair?
Buying Maori land in spite of Hobson’s proclamation.

Hobson stated:

‘All lands unjustly held would be returned & all claims to lands
However purchased, after the date of proclamation, would not
Be held as lawful,’

Moka replied:

‘That is good O governor, that is straight. But let me see?
Where is Baker, where is the fellow?
Ah, there he is—there standing!
Come, return to me my lands,’

Baker spat:
‘Will it indeed return?’

The Treaty of Waitangi is worth nothing
& Moka signed nothing in return.

Moka replied to Baker & Hobson:

‘There! Yes, that is as I said.
No, no, no; all false, all false alike.
The lands will not return to me.’

Today the voice of Moka Te Kainga-Mataa resounds within the living distance to the past

‘Let my lands be returned to me, all of them.’