

As you have probably noticed, this episode is not Bob Semple part 2. That episode will appear here next week but if you desperately want to hear the rest of Semple's story, you can hear it on the Happy Hour History Podcast right now! By the looks, the Semple episode is the most popular episode we have had yet based on the numbers so hopefully many of you are looking forward to part two! Don't be concerned though, I still have a weaving episode for you with the next one coming in two weeks as promised. For now though, lets head back to pre-European Aotearoa.

Kia ora, gday and welcome to the History of Aotearoa New Zealand, Episode 23: Does This Kakahu Make my Butt Look Big? This podcast is supported by our amazing Patrons, such as Nicholas and oob. If you want to support HANZ go to patreon.com/historyaotearoa. Last time we talked about weaving, we started our journey by looking at how to process harakeke, New Zealand flax, to extract the muka fibre and dye it to make it ready to turn into a useful item. We also talked a bit about the different types of weaving, raranga, whatu and whiri. This time, we will look at those useful items, what they are, how their made and what they meant to Maori then and now.

So, we have our flax or muka and we want to start turning it into something. We have already briefly mentioned about the various things that Maori would have turned it into but let's start with items that aren't garments. Fishing was obviously a big part of Maori daily life and diet, whether that be in moana or awa, that is ocean or river. A system of knots was often used to make nets for fishing by tying knots continuously with new lengths of flax added as each strip became too short, a technique which was employed all over Polynesia. Like all weaving, the spacing was done with fingers and by eye so the experience of a weaver counted for a lot. Often different whanau were responsible for making different parts of the net that would be joined later under strict tapu and the supervision of a tohunga. Some nets were community items that would feed the whole hapu and as such, these nets could get quite big. The largest ever recorded being made in 1886 by 400 people of the Ngati Pikiao iwi in the Bay of Plenty, measuring about 1.6km long it was only used once to catch tens of thousands of fish for a tribal gathering. Not all nets were as monstrous as this though, some were just small hand nets and the knotting technique was also used to make mesh bags to hold stones for sinkers on fishing lines and traps. There was also a technique of making nets that didn't require knotting called looping, which involved making loops around the thumb and little finger, drawing the entire cord through the loop. This may have sometimes required the use of a small needle to aid in getting the loop nice and tight, unlike other weaving all done by hand. This was primarily used to make the nets of poi, which were totally enclosed nets filled with tahuna, sand, to form a tight ball. This sand filled ball would be attached to a cord which could then be swung around in a dance performed by women. Today, these are often made with plastic bags, another victim of the plastic bag ban, alongside bin liners. If you wanted to get a bit fancy, patterns could be added to the poi by applying strips of kiekie leaf and dyed fibre, as well as paua shell. Kuri hair could also be added, making the poi a poi awe, ornamental poi, awe being the hair from the dog's rump. The same looping technique used to make poi could also be used to make fish traps and bags for carrying hand weapons. Another fish related item, this time made through raranga, were kete kawhiu, diving baskets. These were designed to hold kaimoana when diving for paua and other shellfish, letting the water and sand pass through them.

Twining was another technique which was used to make eel traps, sometimes from supplejack vines rather than harakeke. The way to do this was to place two manuka posts in the ground and wrap the vines around to make an oval base, continuing up and up to make a series of rings. Young manuka stems would then be twined through to give the trap more strength. Hinaki, as these traps were called, could be very tall or long, depending on your perspective, getting up to the same height as a person. They were often used as a baited trap with an inverted funnel, like you see on some

modern traps today. Taruke or crayfish pots were made in a similar fashion along with whitebait traps, which had a distinctive zigzag shape in Rotorua and Taupo.

Moving to the more domestic sphere, whakiri, floor mats, held a special place in Maori culture both as a practical product and one of spiritual significance. In the practical sense, they were placed on the floor of a whare or whare nui as insulation and for comfort, no one likes sitting on the cold hard ground. Generally, a form of underlay made of fern fronds were placed on the floor first before a tuwhara, coarse and quickly woven mat, was placed on top. A finer mat may be placed on top of that if it was a special occasion. These mats could also be used for protection of food in the hangi, placing them on top of the food before being covered in dirt to roast them. On the spiritual side of things, whakiri were used for all sorts of tasks such as underneath important guests sleeping on a marae or under the body of the deceased during a tangihanga, funeral. They were also put under the couple during a wedding or in the house of where an important baby was due to be born. These mats could range from the coarse, quickly made ones we mentioned before with the ones that had a more spiritual job having patterns from dyed harakeke or kiekie to symbolise certain aspects or values of Maori culture.

Within the marae, in between the whakairo rakau, you will see what kinda look like boards with a cross stitching pattern on them. These are tukutuku panels and seem to have been used to disguise the kakaho thatching, made from the stems of toetoe, used for insulation. It is thought that tukutuku may have started out undecorated and eventually Maori decided to utilise the free space for some decoration, using a lashing type technique to create patterns. The way tukutuku were made was by putting a bunch of wooden slats close together on a frame, leaving just enough of a gap between each slat to pull thread through. The patterns though, is what makes these panels so amazing. Poutama, or supportive one, is a stairs pattern of alternating colour that appears to move diagonally up and across the panel, symbolising the attainment of aspirations. A variation on this from Ngati Porou on the East Coast of the North Island has the steps mirroring each other and making a sort of pyramid in the centre. There is also kaokao armpits, a pattern dedicated to Tumatauenga and resembles a wide, rib like pattern, often being placed next to the carvings of tupuna that were soldiers. Other patterns include roimata toroa or roimata turuturu, albatross or falling tears, signifies misadventure or disaster, purapura whetu symbolises lots of stars, sometimes referring to population numbers, niho taniwha represents the chiefly lineage from a diety, mumu is a checkerboard pattern from Whanganui representing tribal alliances, taki toru represents home ties and communication and so on and so on. There are so many patterns and meanings behind them that we would be here all day talking about them but I hope get the idea that these were used not just to hide insulation or a nice alternate pattern and texture in the whare nui wall, although they were certainly that too. They helped add to the story of the carvings they stood next to, adding more symbolism and meaning to them in a different way, in the same way you may read art in the Western sense, some may argue. In the modern era, tukutuku have also been used a lot in churches with a predominantly Maori congregation, being used to depict Christian iconography.

An item you may not have heard of that was made of two long harakeke fibre bands was the kawē. These two bands were made with the whiri technique and connected by a cross band, also made of fibre. Kawē were a neat way to carry heavy loads in a similar way that you see in other cultures across the world. The kawē would be laid on the ground the load that needed carrying laid on the cross band with the longer, parallel bands it connected pulled around the load and tied together to make loops. The loops wouldn't be tied tight though as the carrier would sit in front of the kawē and put their arms through them before standing up. The load would then sit against the back of the

carrier supported by the kawē harness. An awesome and really useful device that was deceptively simple in design!

Weaving was used for a number of different items that had a number of different uses. The main event though, so to speak, was the clothes. In my opinion, more than any other woven object we have discussed thus far, garments is where harakeke and weaving really showed what they were made of, and in the case of kakahu, cloaks, Maori culture certainly agreed, holding the finest cloaks in high regard. We aren't going to jump quite there yet though, first let's talk about some of the other things Maori were wearing. In the episode on the lives of women, we mentioned that in Maori society, it was considered appropriate to cover one's genitals and not showing them off around the pa. Of course, this meant you had to cover them with something, a something called the maro. The maro was worn by both men and women and at its most basic was a type of loin cloth, being triangular pieces of woven flax. They were often ornamental with fancy patterns called taniko, which we will talk about later and sometimes tassels if you were of high rank. Pre-European samples show that maro were likely woven from bottom to top, that is from the point of the triangle to the base and that they were shaped to fit the body as the weaving process went on. Kinikini were similar garments to maro, being a sort of kilt worn around the waist as well, which were used for protection and warmth when travelling across mountainous terrain. Often they were made of mountain grasses that would be readily available when crossing more alpine areas, sometimes using different colours to add an extra flair.

Piupiu was another garment worn around the waist, traditionally made from fibre dangling from a belt, it was another kind of kilt or skirt. This gradually changed with the arrival of Europeans, however. Tourism and public cultural events gradually changed the piupiu to become something more decorative with long cylindrical flax tubes that make a distinctive swishing sound as the wearer sways, which is where the piupiu gets its name, the word meaning to sway. You shouldn't have to try too hard to picture these as all of you, even those overseas, are likely familiar with them or at least seen them a couple of times. If you think of a person in a typical Maori kapa haka outfit you are more than likely picturing the person wearing a piupiu, regardless of whether they are male or female. I'll still put a picture up on the website though, along with all the things we have and will discuss in this episode!

Now though, it is time to talk about the big stuff! Kakahu or cloaks. Cloaks were, broadly speaking, split into two categories, pake or hieke, raincoats and basically everything else which was then further split into categories based on a variety of different reasons. We will start with rain coats since they are bit more straightforward. Pake were rougher, stronger cloaks that were made with thicker fibres and more coarsely woven their other kakahu counterparts. Flax tags would be applied on the outside of the cloak, overlapping to give a sort of thatched appearance and provide the main function. That function, as the name might imply, was to keep the wearer dry in the rain, along with providing warmth. The other group of kakahu is where some of the best work of Maori weavers, both old and new, really comes through. The finest of these cloaks were very prestigious and highly coveted, being one of the signifiers of chiefly status, so they were sometimes used to barter for waka taua or expert services like tattooing a highly ranked individual. The kakahu that ended up on the shoulders of rangatira were made from the whitest, undyed harakeke for the majority of the cloak which was weaved from left to right, bottom to top. Like some of the other items we have talked about, after the first line is completed, the cloak would be suspended between two poles to allow for easier manipulation of the fibre. Weaving a kakahu was no mean feat, however, it could take years to weave a single cloak, adding to the physical and spiritual value placed on these garments. The bottom edges of cloaks also often had a taniko, a border that had some sort of

pattern on it which was meant to be both decorative and help give some structure to the edge of the kakahu. Although, if it had a taniko border it would be called a kaitaka type cloak, in line with typical naming conventions of whatever the main adornment was. The taniko would be the last part of the cloak to be woven and could include designs of chevrons, oblique lines as well as vertical and horizontal lines. Today there is a bit more variety in the styles, colours and motifs, especially with the advent of European contact, such as the addition of the Christian cross, silver fern or just the letters NZ to the weaving repertoire, particularly for sale as tourist items. Wool has also been used by modern day weavers as a replacement for taniko, given it has been one of Aotearoa's primary and most iconic exports in previous years. Today, taniko techniques are also often used for the bodices, headbands, cloaks and other items used in kapa haka, kickstarted by the need for these items due to increasing popularity during the late 20th century.

Taniko borders weren't the only thing Maori liked to put on their cloaks though, almost anything they could weave into the fibre was added to give the kakahu an extra flair. One of the most popular additions was huruhuru, feathers, and as such would be called kahu huruhuru. As we know, Aotearoa is the land of birds so it was only natural that their beautiful feathers featured heavily in the highest quality clothing that Maori wore. Once a bird had been plucked, the feathers were arranged by their size into groups of two or three and using the gum from flax to stick them together they were woven into the fibre. Kakahu would require between four and 12 birds depending on whether you wanted to cover the whole cloak, with early cloaks tending to favour more feathers, sometimes covering the whole surface. In the modern day, feathers are used a bit more sparingly, on account of basically every native bird species being some form of endangered, especially kiwi and kereru, two species with highly prized feathers. There are modern cloaks made with feathers though and it's not like people are going out there hunting kiwis, so how are they getting hold of them? Well, birds do die in the natural course of things, especially when you have introduced mammalian predators sometimes hunting them. So, by law, any dead native species are automatically the property of the government, specifically the Department of Conservation. As the name might imply, this is the governmental department tasked with bringing back our native birds from the brink and making our country predator free by 2050. Since all deceased birds are DOCs property, it is actually illegal to hold onto them or take them overseas. However, if you are affiliated with an iwi and have a legitimate use for them, such as weaving them into a cloak, you can apply to be granted the feathers, which is pretty neat! Exotic species like peacocks were also used upon the arrival of Europeans and the rest of the world.

Other items that could be attached to kakahu were ngore, pompom like objects that fell out of favour due to being prone to moths or hukahuka, which are twisted flax fibre tassels that were often dyed black, making the cloak called a korowai. The absolute best of the best and most coveted kakahu was the kahu kuri. The kuri, if you don't remember is the Pacific dog which rangatira exclusively owned so they were the only group that wore this type of cloak. It was distinguished by the addition of tassels of dog fur from the tail woven into the cloak as well as some cloaks having the dog skin woven on as well. There may have also been cloaks that were made entirely of kuri skin although, I'm unable to find that many sources on it but it sounds really grim.

If you hadn't guessed already, kakahu served a practical and spiritual purpose. They were of course warm and helped protect you from the elements but they were also worn in battle as a sort of armour. They were more than just utility items though, given cloaks were worn close to the body, it was almost as if the mana of the wearer was rubbed off onto the kakahu and carried it with them. There are also stories of rangatira who would save prisoners by placing their cloak around them as the tapu of the chief was passed onto those he chose to protect, ensuring no harm would come to

them. This is of course to say nothing of the fact that cloaks at their simplest level were an indicator of chiefly status, which had its own affects on mana, ihi and wehi. Kakahu serve many different spiritual purposes in the modern day as well, being draped over caskets to represent chieftanship, kinship solidarity and readiness for the deceased to pass on into the afterlife. Often they are used to indicate Maori ancestry as well and to accentuate the status of both the wearer and occasion, many of you will likely be familiar with them from university graduations.

Other modern uses include loaning them to non-Maori of high esteem, such as the current Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, on a visit to Britain in 2018. The kakahu she wore was a kahu huruhuru due to it being covered in feathers, not a korowai as it was frequently reported at the time, which we now know has flax tassels as the primary adornment. Another famous kakahu is Te Mahutonga, which was gifted to the New Zealand Olympic Committee by the late Maori Queen on behalf of the Maori people. You have probably seen it heaps as it is the one worn by the flag bearer at the opening of each Olympic games.

Next time, our final episode of our look into weaving will take a bit of a detour taking us a bit further ahead in time from the arrival of James Cook to the 1980s as we look at the New Zealand flax exporting industry, its rise, its fall and why it was maybe doomed to fail to from its very early days. It was a weird thing I found during my research and I promise it is a lot less boring than you might think!

If you want to send me feedback, ask a question, suggest a topic or just have a chinwag you can reach me through email at historyaotearoa@gmail.com or Twitter at History Aotearoa or Facebook at History Aotearoa New Zealand Podcast. This podcast is a one man band, if you enjoy listening to me talk history, you can support us through Patreon or rate us on iTunes or your preferred podcast platform, it means a lot and helps grow, spreading the story of Aotearoa New Zealand. As always, haere tu atu, hoki tu mai. See you next time!