

In 1847 Mereaira Rangihoea of Ngāti Awa and Kape Tautini, a young Whakatōhea chief lived together at Tauwhare Pā. Not long after the birth of their first child, and son, whom they named Te Pirini Tautini, Kape staged his own disappearance at sea. In reality he had returned to his people, the Whakatōhea. The next time his wife saw him was when he returned amongst a number of battle ready warriors as they rowed their war canoes toward Tauwhare.

The news of an attack was brought to the pā. The Ngāti Awa occupants of the pā were totally unprepared and outnumbered. Mereaira pleaded with her father, Te Keepa Toihau, to prevent any fighting. 'We have no other choice', said Te Keepa sadly.

Overcome with love and terror Mereaira, with her infant son, Te Pirini Tautini in her arms, rushed to the top of the southern cliffs of the pā so that all could see, raised her son above her head and cried:

*The child that I am holding in my hands is a symbol of our two tribes and could make for peace or war, what is the use of living together if the price is ever to be paid for in blood? Has not the sea sufficient for all? Who then can say it is theirs alone? Unless the fighting is stopped now and for all time, I shall throw my child onto the rocks below and his death will be your eternal disgrace.*

Peace was made between the warring parties.

Source: Abbreviated version of 'Ngāti Awa' section in the *Ōhiwa Harbour Strategy. Te Rautoki mō Ōhiwa* - Refreshed October 2014, p. 12