

## *‘Taurikura’*

*Long ago there was a village called Kahakaharua in the Omanawa district. The village was on the cliff tops at the edge of a gorge with a river flowing far below. Taurikura was a puhi a chief's daughter, a woman of high rank. Because she was a chief's daughter Taurikura had always been given everything she wanted. Some said she was a spoiled brat. When she grew up, she expected everything to be done for her.*

*One day her grandfather, who was a very old man, asked her to get him some water from the river. The old man's legs were weak, and it was difficult for him to make the trip down the steep track to the river in the gorge below. Taurikura told the old man she was tired too; she didn't want to go.*

*The old man was thirsty. There was no one else around. His Granddaughter had refused to go, so there was nothing else for it, he would have to go himself. He picked up an empty gourd which was used to carry water. Slowly and carefully he made his way down the steep track to the river. He drank some water and filled the gourd to carry water back up to the pa. Slowly and carefully he climbed back up the steep track cut into the cliff face.*

*When the old man got back to the pa with his gourd full of water, Taurikura demanded some for herself. She was thirsty too. This was too much for the old man. It was very painful for his stiff old bones to climb that steep track. She was young and healthy; he began to tell her off. The old man told Taurikura she was lazy, and who did she think she was to expect everyone to run around after her. He went on and on and made a great speech, fired up by his anger and impatience at this cheeky young woman, his granddaughter. The old man raged on as only an old man can when he is really worked up. Finally, his anger subsided, and he retreated into his whare.*

*Taurikura felt whakama, very embarrassed and ashamed. She knew she had behaved badly. She did not know how she could face the old man again. She did not know how she could face all her other relatives in Kahakaharua, because very soon everyone would know how bad she behaved. She felt so ashamed of herself she decided the only thing she could do was leave that village.*

*That night Taurikura crept out of her whare. Carefully she crept down the steep track to the river. Here she changed herself into a ngarara, a sort of lizard, and plunged into the water. She swam downstream toward Tauranga Moana. As she swam, the river carved out a new course for itself, along the route now known as Koupurerua. She swam with the stream out into the estuary of Waikareao, past Matarawa, the old name for Judea Pa, past Matuopae, out into Tauranga Moana. She swam on past Mauao, and out into the open ocean. Finally, exhausted, she landed on the rocky island of Karewa, out in the sea beyond Matakana.*

*Taurikura stayed on Karewa, she kept the form of the lizard so no one would recognise her. She was the ancestor of Tuatara, the special kind of lizard that are only found on Karewa now, where they share the nest of the mutton birds. Taurikura is also remembered specially at Judea. She can be seen in one of the carved poupou in the meeting house Tamaterapokaiwhenua. There is a carved portrait of Taurikura, the girl who is the ancestress of the tuatara of Karewa.*

*Purakau sourced from: STORIES OF TAURANGA MOANA, Compiled by Evelyn Stokes.*