

Her Story Silhouette by Shari House

www.sharihouse.com



Silhouette:

Tarore was the daughter of Chief Ngakuku, one of the fiercest Maori tribal leaders, who lived near the modern-day town of Matamata in New Zealand. For years the local tribes had attacked each other to steal supplies and food. They often warred against each other in land disputes, and war parties could strike at any time. If someone was killed, the cry for "Utu" (revenge) could be heard and the blood bath would continue.

Alfred and Charlotte Brown were some of the first English missionaries that came to the area in the mid 1830's. They spoke fluent Maori and established a mission-station near where Tarore's tribe lived. The Maori language had been reduced to written form and the Te Rongapai a Raka or the Gospel of Luke had been translated. In 1835 a small number of these booklets had been printed and were being used at the mission station to teach the Maoris how to read in their own language. Tarore was 12 years old at the time and begged her father to let her attend classes. He finally gave his consent. She was a quick learner and soon mastered the ability to read.

As Tarore read the book of Luke, she learned about Jesus for the first time. She learned of His great love for all people. She learned that she was a sinner and that she was on her way to hell. She learned about how Jesus died on the cross to pay for her sins. She learned of Christ's forgiveness. She learned of the peace that Jesus offers to those who put their faith and trust in Him. Tarore decided to trust Christ as her Savior and became one of the first Maori converts. Mrs. Brown gave her one of the copies of Luke to keep for her own.



Tarore's copy of the Gospel of Luke was her most prized possession, and she kept it in a small kete (flax bag) that she wore around her neck. Most evenings she would read from it to her friends and family members that gathered around. Her father listened, and as she read about God's love and the peace He wanted for all men, it affected his heart and the hearts of those in the village. The chief made a decision that he wanted to follow God's ways.

On the 19th of October, 1836, Chief Ngakuku got word that a group of young Te Arawa warriors from a rival tribe were on their way to fight them. For the first time Ngakuku did not want to fight and decided instead to lead his people over the Kaimai range in order to avoid bloodshed. The small group stopped to camp near the Wairere Falls believing they had

escaped the warriors. Sometime in the middle of the night the warriors found the camp and a war cry was made. The chief yelled for everyone to run into the forest and hide. The warriors made a clamor as they turned the campsite upside down. They were not able to find the chief or his people, and when they finally gave up and started to return home, the chief began calling out names to check to see if everyone was okay. One by one they answered until he got to his daughter. When he called out her name and she did not respond, He feared the worst. They returned to the campsite to find that Tarore had been killed and her flax kete had been stolen from off her neck. Immediately the cry "Utu" rang out and the men in the group were ready to run after the rival warriors to avenge Tarore's life. The chief commanded them to stop, insisting that enough killing had been done and that their tribe was going to follow the ways of God. He reminded them of the truth that Jesus taught in His Word about loving our enemies just as He did. This was hard for his warriors to comprehend, but they could see that their chief wanted to follow God's ways.

After feeling they were a safe distance away from Ngakuku's campsite, the five young Te Arawa warriors stopped to take a rest. Uita was eager to see what was inside the kete he had stolen from the young girl he killed when she wouldn't let it go. He thought it must contain a jade stone or something very precious for her to be willing to sacrifice her life for it. When he looked inside the kete, he found a book with strange markings in it. He could not read and could not figure out why it would be considered a precious treasure. None of his warrior friends could read either. The small book haunted Uita day and night. **"What message does this book contain that would make a girl willing to die for it?"** was the question that plagued him. Eventually he crossed paths with Ripahau, a slave from Otaki who had been taught to read by the missionaries. Ripahau offered to read it to Uita. As God's Word was read, it touched the hearts of all the hearers. Uita learned of Jesus and His great love for all people. He learned that he was a sinner and that he was on his way to hell. He learned about how Jesus died on the cross to pay for his sins. He learned of Christ's forgiveness. He learned of the peace that Jesus offers to those who put their faith and trust in Him. Uita doubted Christ could forgive him since he was a murderer, but eventually the words that were read to him took root in his heart and he trusted Christ as His Savior. He knew immediately that he must go to Chief Ngakuku and ask for forgiveness for killing his daughter, even though doing so surely meant he would die. When he faced Tarore's father and asked for forgiveness, Chief Ngakuku forgave him. There were tears and they embraced and for the first time in their history there was peace between the two warring tribes. A church was built in that place where peace first came to the Maoris.

Tarore's love for the Bible and the sacrifice of her life helped bring peace to not only her people, but to many Maori tribes. Tarore's small grave can be found in a field just outside of Matamata. It is marked with a simple white cross and a picket fence. Over the past 180 years many Maoris and Pakehas (New Zealanders of European descent) have made the trek into the quiet little field to visit her grave, and before they left have dedicated their lives to the furtherance of the Gospel. Engraved on the cross is an inscription in Maori that says, **"The blood of this child became the seed of the Church."** She was truly a girl of whom it could be said, **"She hath done what she could"!**



Her Story/My Story:

Ripahau, the slave from Otaki that first read Tarore's copy of the Gospel of Luke to Uita, kept it and everywhere he traveled he would read it to anyone who would listen. He read it to Tamihana, the son of the greatly feared chief in Otaki, and to Te Whi-whi, Tamihana's cousin. They both trusted Christ and decided they no longer wanted to war with their neighbors and instead they wanted to follow God and live in peace. Eventually Tamihana's thoughts turned toward the many tribes living on the South Island who had been his father's mortal enemies and who lived in fear of wars and revenge. Tamihana and Te Whi-whi decided to take Tarore's Gospel of Luke to them and tell them of Jesus and the peace that He had brought to the tribes in the North Island. They set off in a canoe and when word spread that the son of the most feared chief was making his way down the east coast of the island, all the tribes were afraid. For 18 months the two men traveled up and down the coast stopping at each inlet, but instead of warring with those they met, they read to them from Tarore's book of Luke and spread the Gospel. Hundreds of Maoris trusted Christ as their Saviour and gave up their blood-thirsty warring. It would be six years before the first missionaries arrived on the South Island. They had no knowledge that God's Word had gone on before them. They had prepared themselves for the encounter they thought they would have with the savage warring tribes, but instead they found the people living in peace and following Jesus. Tarore's Bible had changed the lives of the Maori people forever.

When I was 16 years old I bought a Bible from a traveling evangelist. It was the first one I purchased with my own money, and it had a real leather burgundy cover. I loved it, and it was very dear to me. I used it during my last years of high school and all through my years at Bible college. It came with me to Nigeria and with the heat and humidity became quite worn. The first six chapters of Genesis went missing at some point and the binding started falling off, but I couldn't bear to part with it. A dear Nigerian friend asked if she could get it rebound for me. When it was returned the beautiful leather binding was gone and it was replaced with a hardback cover with burgundy contact paper covering it. I didn't mind too awful much. It made its way with me to New Zealand and for the next 10 years it was my constant comfort. Whenever I was struggling, I could open it to any page and find a note written about something the Lord had spoken to my heart about during my personal devotions or a statement from a sermon that impacted my life. At some point I had it rebound again with a leather binding and the pages that had come loose were sewn back in. When I arrived in Thailand to start my missionary work here, holding this Bible brought comfort to my heart. There was so much that was different in my life when I first arrived, but my Bible was a constant that had seen me through many a trial and joyous occasion alike. It was my most prized possession.

One Sunday night about two months after we had arrived in Thailand, I decided to stop and get some groceries after the evening service before going home. In those early months none of us had vehicles and it took us three taxis to get myself and the whole Bosje family to church. That night I had the two oldest kids and the youngest child with me in my taxi. I couldn't speak much Thai yet, but communicated with the driver that I wanted to stop at the Tesco near my house. He took me to a Tesco, but it was one that I had never been to before, nor did I even know what part of town we were in. As always, all of our "stuff" had to come into the store with us since the taxi was just dropping us off and we would be taking a different taxi back home. We got our groceries and all our

hands were full between me holding the little one and all of us grabbing the Bibles and groceries out of the shopping cart. The trip home took about 25-30 minutes. I dropped the kids off at their house first and then the taxi driver took me to my house. When I got out I checked to make sure everything was out of the car. I couldn't find my Bible, so I assumed one of the older kids still had it in their hands and had accidentally carried it into their house with their things. When I called Amber the next morning, I found out the kids did not have it, and I realized it must have been left in the taxi the night before. I can't thoroughly explain to you with words the devastation I felt in that moment. I cried for days. I couldn't figure out why the Lord would allow it to be lost. It felt like a piece of me was missing. The Bible that had brought me so much peace and comfort through the past 21 years of my life was gone. I tried to remember everything I could about the taxi driver's face, the location of the Tesco, any landmarks we might have passed on the way home, etc. For months I took random taxis from the church and asked them to take me to Tescos in all different directions in hopes that I could find the one the taxi driver had taken us to that Sunday night. Taxi drivers tend to service the same areas, and I thought if I could just find the Tesco that we went to, I could find the taxi driver that brought us home and possibly find my beloved Bible. As the months went by without finding the Tesco and with the face of the taxi driver beginning to fade in my mind, I stopped searching for my Bible and instead began praying that somehow the Lord would allow my English Bible to end up in the hands of a Thai person who was searching for peace and truth. In that way, my loss would not be in vain. Every now and then, I pray and ask the Lord to perform a miracle and let my Bible find its way back to me, but if it never does, I'll be excited to get to heaven and learn of the journey my Bible took without me.

Isaiah 55:8-11

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

**For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

**For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither,
but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud,
that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:**

**So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void,
but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."**

Bible Study: A Most Prized Possession

How important is God's Word to you? I'm sure most Christians would answer this with a hardy, "It is very important to me." But does your interaction with the Bible reflect it? Does your Bible lie on your nightstand gathering dust? Do the pages of your Bible still have the golden edging it came with when you got it 10 years ago and do the pages stick together from lack of use? Do you struggle recalling where certain stories are located in the Bible or remembering verses that might help you with different situations you are in?

It is easy in our modern day, when we can read the Bible for free online or go to our local dollar store and buy one, to forget what others have been willing to do in order to own a copy of God's Word. I am reminded of the many who risked their lives and lost their lives in the pursuit of having a copy of God's Word. One would think that since we live in the age when the Bible is so readily available, it would also be the age when it is most widely

read and used, but I'm afraid that isn't the case. Most Christians reach for their phones to check their Facebook before reaching for their Bible. Most go to their friends for encouragement before they go to the Bible to find it. Most take advice from celebrities and counsel from talk show hosts before they search the Scriptures for God's point of view. Most people view the Bible as an archaic book that was good for their grandmother but is irrelevant to their life today.

We don't have to be a Greek or Hebrew scholar to understand the Bible, but we do have to spend time in the Word if we want to understand it. I remember hearing this statement before, "What you do with the Bible determines what God will do with you." I'm not sure that that is a completely true statement, but I do know that if we want to truly know God, the Bible must become our most prized possession. It must have the highest place in our lives. Psalm 119 is filled with verses about the Word and reading it can show us where the importance of the Bible lies with us.

Here are just a few examples:

Vs. 9 – Do you go to the Word to find out how to live a clean life?

Vs. 10 – Do you seek with your whole heart to stay close to the Word so as not to wander away?

Vs. 11 – Do you memorize the Word in order to help you with Satan's attacks?

Vs. 18 – Do you come to the Word with open eyes to see what God has for you?

Vs. 23 – Do you go to the Word to find solace when others criticize?

Vs. 24 – Do you go to the Word to find counsel and delight?

Vs. 28 – Do you go to the Word for strength when you are weighted down?

Vs. 36 – Do you go to the Word when you're feeling covetous?

Vs. 52 – Do you go to the Word when you need comfort?

Vs. 74 – Do you find your hope in the Word?

Vs. 103 – Do you love the Word more than you love food?

Vs. 127 – Do you love the Word more than money?

Vs. 133 – Do you go to the Word for direction?

Vs. 148 – Do you love the Word more than sleep?

Vs. 165 – Does the Word keep you from being offended?

Vs. 171 – Does the Word cause you to praise the Lord?

I challenge you to start treating your Bible as your most prized possession and let it change your life and thereby change the lives of those around you. If we would each do this, we would see a changed world.

-
- There is no picture of Tarore. This is a photo of Maori girl circa 1900 (<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1074851>)

Resources: