

## **Metuliki (aka Motuliki) Fakatava:**

Metuliki Fakatava is an established punake - a master artist that practises all three performance arts of faiva ta'anga (poetry), faiva hiva (music) and faiva haka (dance). This is in contrast to their specialist practitioners, who are individually known as pulotu fa'u (poet), pulotu hiva / fasi (musician) and pulotu haka (choreographer). A punake is an artist who formally unifies all the three performance arts of poetry, music and dance through composing the poetry, putting it into music and then choreographing dance movements to create a single grand performance.

Metuliki is well-known as a punake of immense social and artistic and literary standing on the local, national and, in some cases, international levels for his great works of art and literature, especially in the artistic genres of lakalaka, mā'ulu'ulu and tau'olunga. Given the level of creativity and originality of his works of art, Metuliki has won a number prizes and awards across these artistic genres in various faiva ta'anga, faiva hiva and faiva haka competitions and festivals in both Tonga and abroad.

Metuliki comes from a long-standing line of ha'a punake, which is a professional class of master performance artists of poetry, music and dance. His renowned grandfather Fakatava, who was both well-educated and well-travelled, was one of the few famous punake of his time, around late 19th to early 20th century. He was born in 1840 and dies in 1948 at the age of 78. Fakatava hails from the unique village of Leimātu'a, with direct aristocratic and artistic connections to Lapaha, Mu'a, the seat of the ancient Tu'i Tonga, in Tongatapu and 'Eua, one of the earliest inhabited islands in Tonga. His mother was from Lapaha and his father was from 'Ohonua, 'Eua. Fakatava spent his younger years in Fiji where his primary and secondary education was carried out. By virtue of his special status as a real punake, Fakatava was usually sent abroad to neighbouring places like the Lau Group in Fiji on royal errands to teach performing arts, specifically lakalaka and ma'ulu'ulu, on important national occasions of huge social and cultural significance. Not only did Fakatava promote the uniqueness of Tongan performing arts beyond Tonga but he also benefited from these new experiences, which continued to enrich the depth and breadth of his artistic activities in novel and exciting ways. One of his great punake rivals at the time was Malukava (Fineasi), a principal hereditary matāpule title or chief's orator and punake of high chief noble Tungī of Ha'atakalaua, the second ancient dynasty in Tonga. On one occasion, Fakatava and Malukava (Fineasi) were staged by King Tupou II in a competition for the best punake in all of Tonga of which Fakatava won. Fakatava was then awarded Tavahi in Fasi-moe-Afi in Tongatapu and the off-shore island of Kalau in 'Eua as his personal hereditary estate.

Metuliki has inherited the refined knowledge and skills that has come down his line of ha'a punake. Such refined knowledge and skills were passed down the generations through critical education and training, the formal inheritance of which makes it a hereditary treasure for members of the ha'a or professional classes. The long-standing artistic and literary movement of punake was inherited by Metuliki's father, Talau-mo-Kafoa, who carried on the punake responsibilities, including the rest of Fakatava's children, as well as his grandchildren and descendants. Metuliki's sister,

Rev. Mele Suipi Lātu who is based in Auckland, New Zealand is also a well-known punake that is very active in the Auckland Tongan performing arts scene. Fakatava's descendants have all actively and critically contributed to the Tongan performing arts of poetry, music and dance in creative and innovative ways, truly making it a living hereditary treasure of extreme social and cultural importance.

Metuliki, received his secondary education from Tonga College, Tonga, and tertiary education from the University of the South Pacific, Fiji, and Queensland University, Australia, where he acquired both BA and MA degrees in economics respectively. Metuliki is currently CEO of the state-owned Talamahu Market in Tongatapu. By combining the living hereditary treasure of being a punake along with his education and training, Metuliki is in a position to add further momentum to the harmony and beauty of this great and lasting artistic and literary movement.