

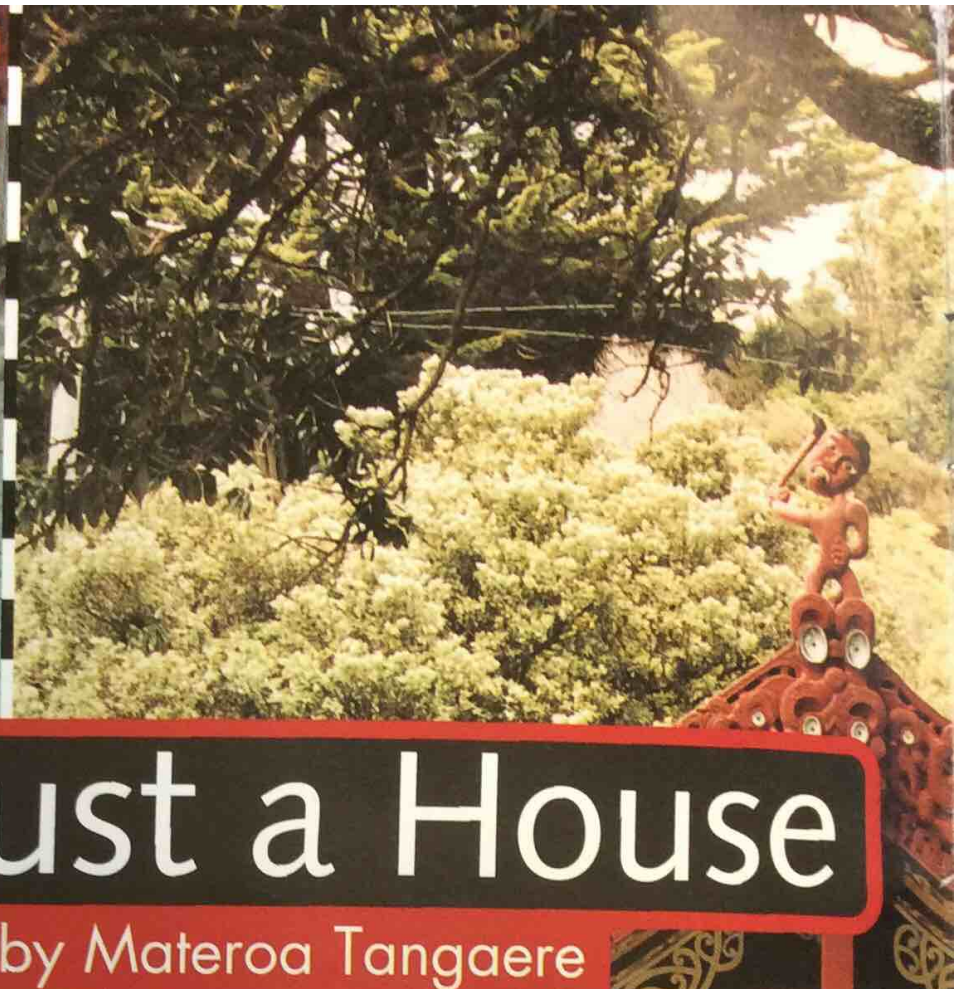


Not Just a House

by Matoroa Tangaere

I want to tell you about our whareniui. It is not just a house: it is one of our ancestors. We name the meeting house after this ancestor. The head is at the top of the whareniui, above the verandah. It is called the kōruru.

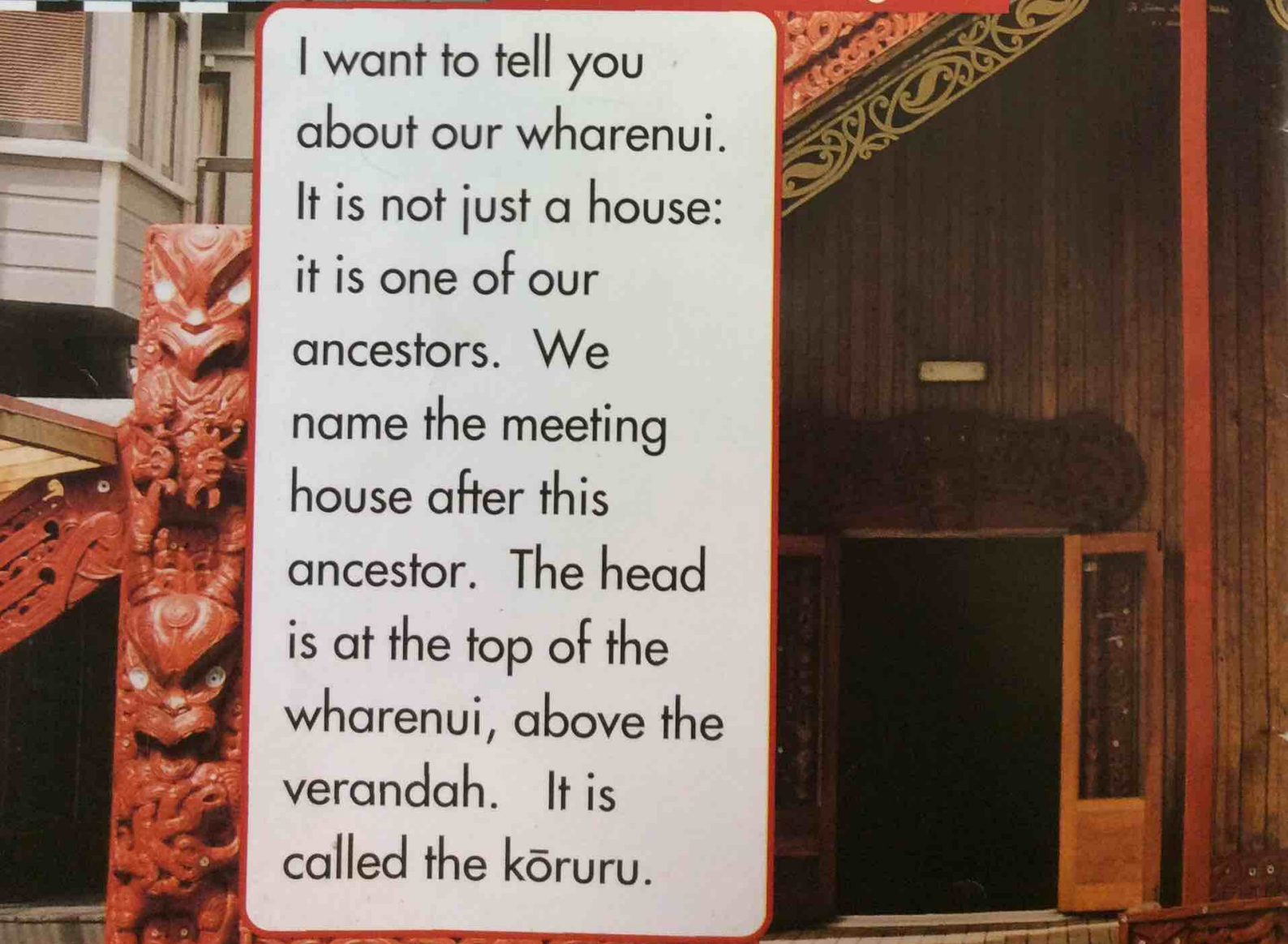
The maihi are the arms. At the ends of the maihi are the raparapa, or hands.



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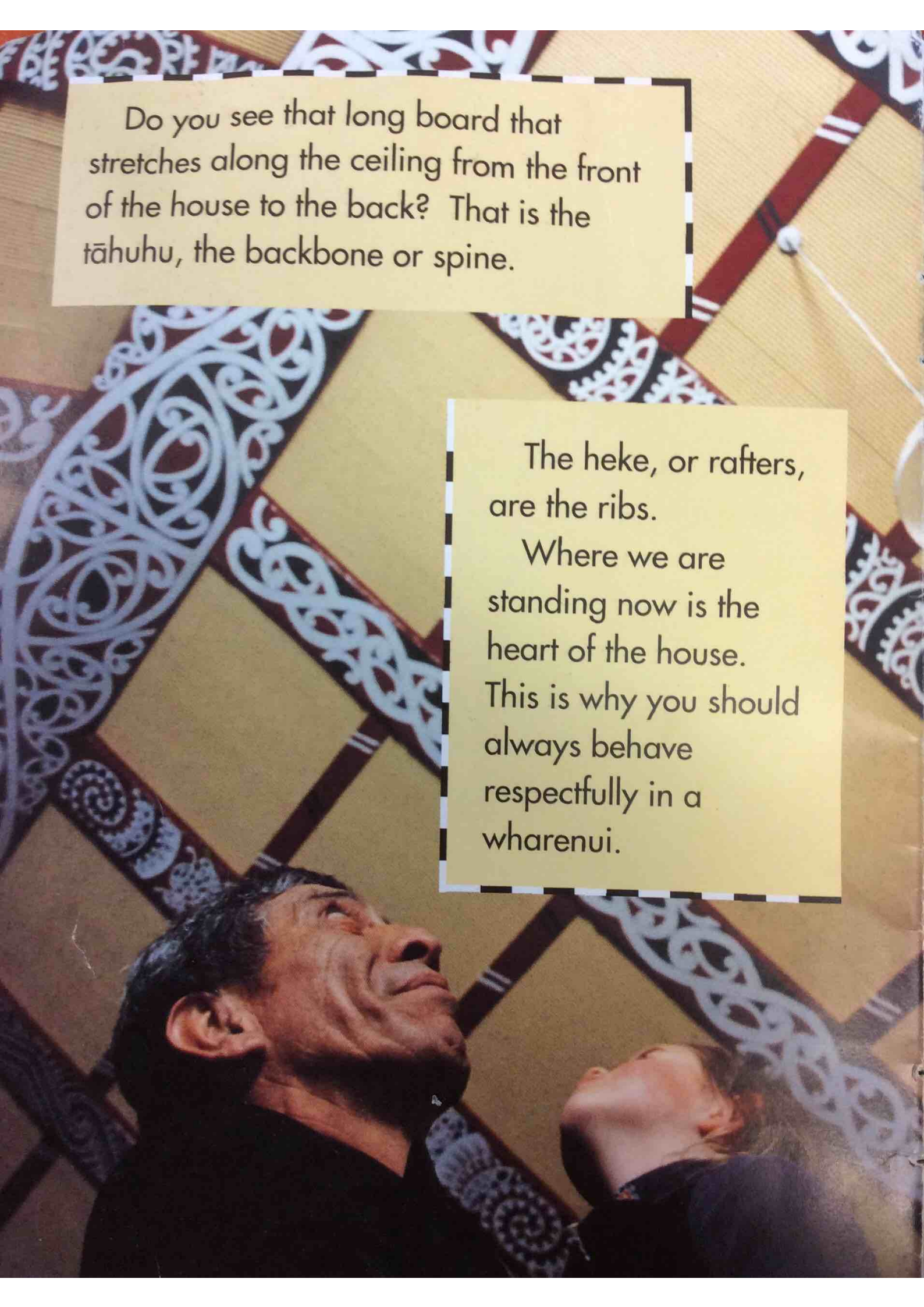
I want to tell you about our wharenuī. It is not just a house: it is one of our ancestors. We name the meeting house after this ancestor. The head is at the top of the wharenuī, above the verandah. It is called the kōruru.





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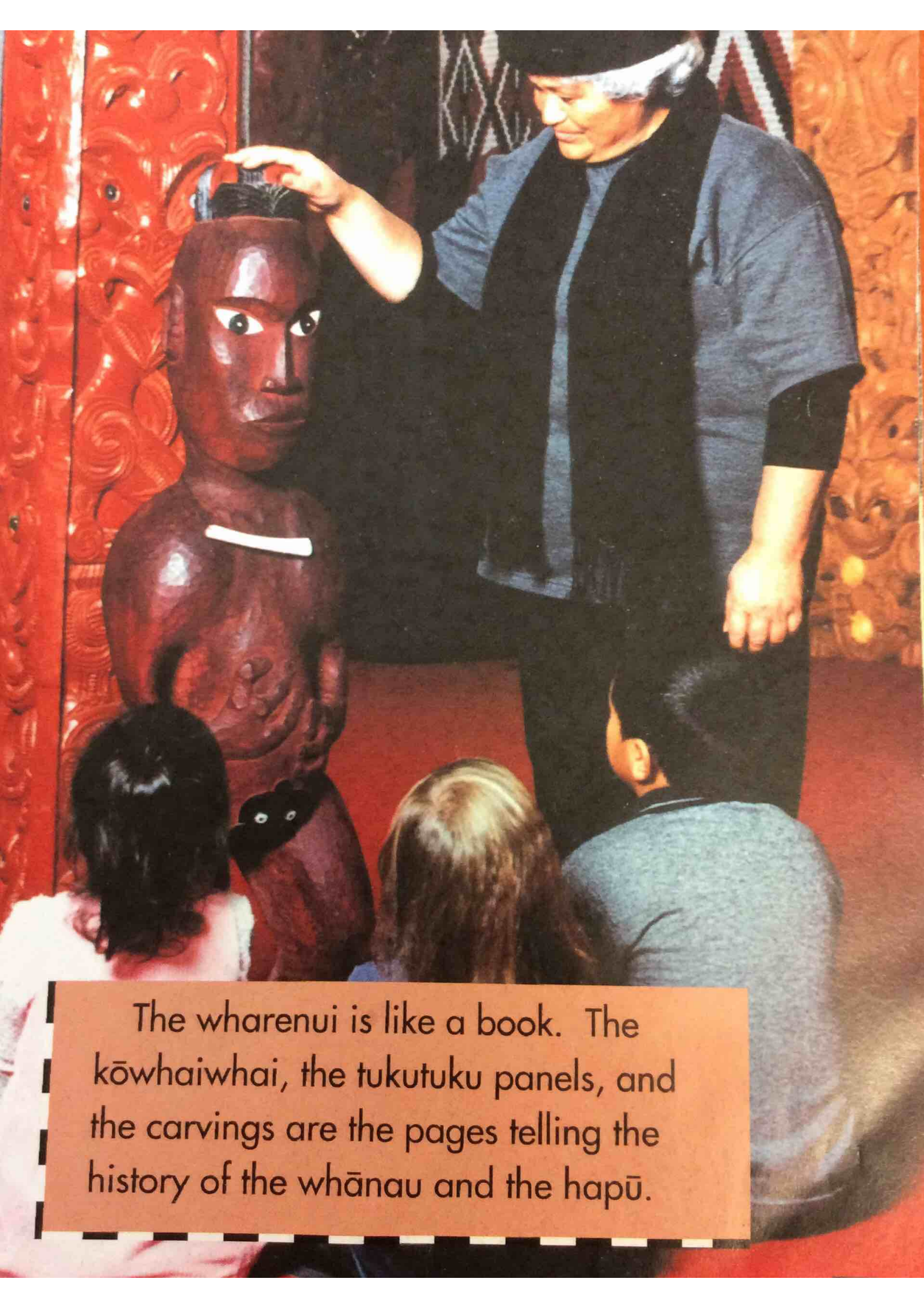




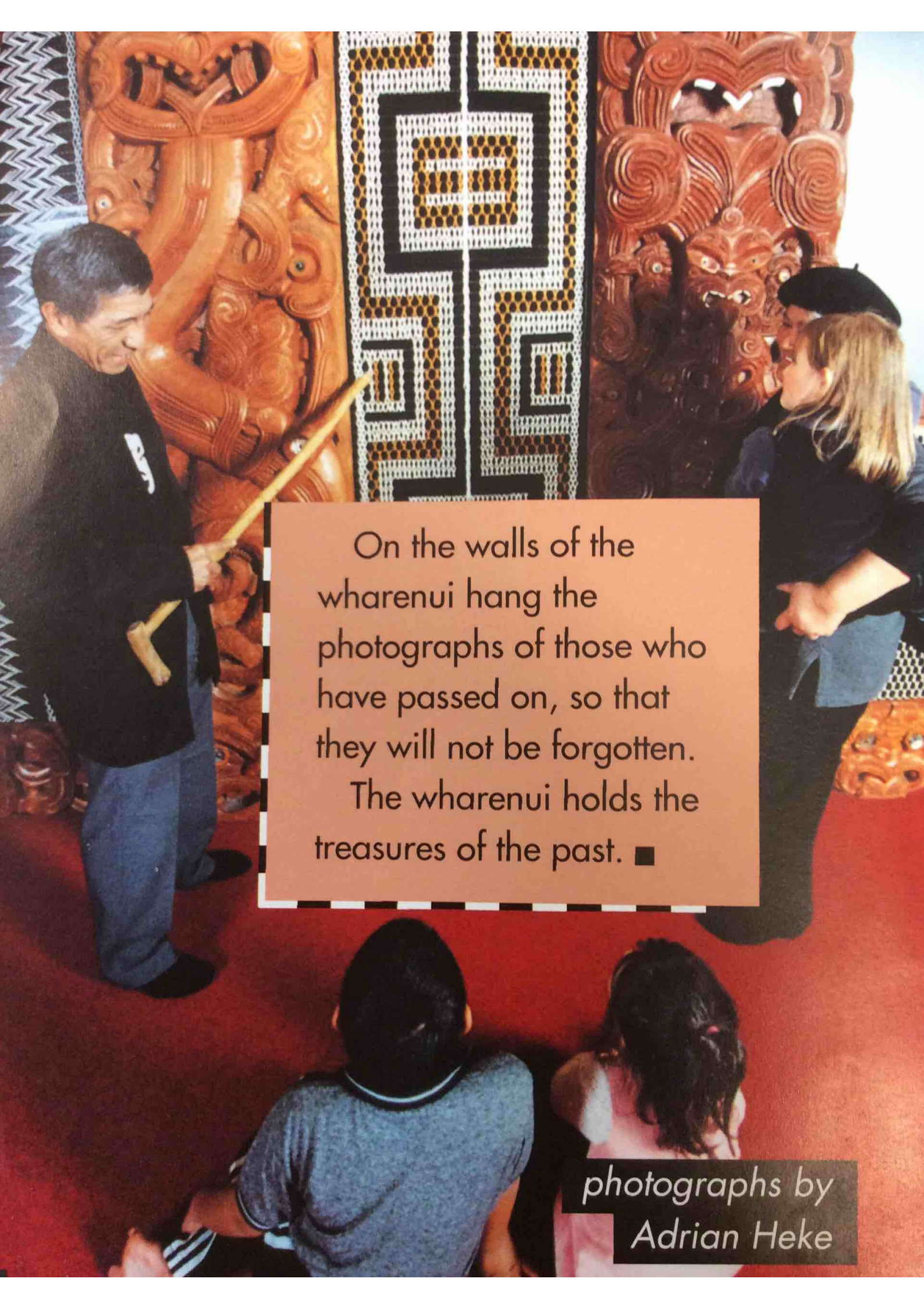
Do you see that long board that stretches along the ceiling from the front of the house to the back? That is the tāhuhu, the backbone or spine.

The heke, or rafters, are the ribs.

Where we are standing now is the heart of the house. This is why you should always behave respectfully in a wharenuī.



The wharenuī is like a book. The kōwhaiwhai, the tukutuku panels, and the carvings are the pages telling the history of the whānau and the hapū.



On the walls of the wharenui hang the photographs of those who have passed on, so that they will not be forgotten.

The wharenui holds the treasures of the past. ■

*photographs by
Adrian Heke*