

**The Use and Meaning of**  
**MAORI WORDS**

**borrowed into English for discussing**

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
**and**  
**CONSERVATION**

**in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

**A discussion paper and presentation prepared for the**  
**CONSERVATION BOARD CHAIRPERSONS CONFERENCE**

10 February 1994

Dr Margaret Mutu  
New Zealand Conservation Authority

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a great deal about language that we often take for granted and as a result perhaps do not realise the extent to which it determines how each of us participates in the society of which we are a part. The language spoken by a community is, as philosophers from any society will tell us, one of the clearest reflectors of the state, thinking and values of that society. As the society undergoes change, so does its language.

### 1.1 Borrowing Between Languages

It is also true that each of the world's natural languages has been specifically crafted over time by its community of speakers to express the culture and values of that society. Where a community is made up of more than one culture or comes into frequent contact with another culture which uses a different language, each of the languages will almost inevitably borrow words from the other in an effort to not only facilitate communication between the cultures, but also to fill gaps existing in one language in respect of items or concepts from the other language and culture.

For example, the English language is full of words it has borrowed from other languages. Some of the best known borrowings are those taken from its French neighbour; words such as 'restaurant', 'bureau', 'chef', 'carte blanche' and so on. Many of these words that English has borrowed, such as 'restaurant', have, over time, been completely integrated into the English language and culture, and as a result retain neither their French pronunciation nor their strictly French cultural associations. Others, such as 'chef' and 'carte blanche', are still associated with their French background and retain their French pronunciation.

### 1.2 Borrowing from Maori into English

The extent to which the borrowing goes on is dependant largely on the amount of communication between the two cultures. It is therefore a very interesting linguistic and anthropological exercise to monitor the increasing use of Maori words in New Zealand English, particularly since the courts and parliament declared the Treaty of Waitangi to be the cornerstone of modern New Zealand society.

What these borrowings reflect is a change taking place in English speaking New Zealand society whereby gaps in the language and culture of that society have been identified and filled from the Maori language and culture. For example the words 'pa', 'marae' and 'pipi' have long been part of the vocabulary of English speaking New Zealanders. The fact that a large number of the borrowings are relatively recent means that they retain their Maori pronunciation and cultural context.

In the area of resource management and conservation, Maori throughout the country have played a major role in leading the huge cultural change that has taken place in the last decade or so. It has been a change from a system rather inappropriately based on the values and culture derived originally and in the main from England and its environment to that which is more firmly based on the realities of the New Zealand environment. In helping to lead the change Maoridom drew on its experience gained over a period of a thousand or so years of having to learn about and come to terms with the Aotearoa/New Zealand environment. In the process of the change Maoridom identified gaps in the English-based culture and its language and then provided the appropriate concepts, values and words to fill those gaps from within

the Maori culture and language. The result is a language and culture in respect of resource management which belongs uniquely to New Zealand society.

The fact that these Maori terms are starting to find their way into official documents and the legislation of the country is a measure of the extent of the change going on in English-speaking New Zealand society. However, from my observations, there still appears to be a degree of confusion amongst English speakers about the meanings of at least some of these borrowings and several other Maori words which Maori speakers themselves borrow into English when discussing resource management.

This was perhaps most clearly demonstrated for me in the recent hearings conducted by the Board of Inquiry into the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. Some local authorities and interest groups demonstrated a good understanding of the concepts and the words associated with them. Others acknowledged their lack of understanding and asked for translations and explanations of these terms. There were, however, a rather exceptional few local authorities and interest groups who quite openly used the confusion to take the terms and redefine them for their own political purposes, thus adding to the confusion. Maori groups were, on the other hand, not surprisingly, very clear and remarkably homogeneous in their understandings, despite considerable variations across the country on details of custom and tradition.

### 1.3 Words to be Discussed

In an effort to help sort out the confusion, this discussion paper sets out to identify and attempt to explain just some of the key Maori words being used in the context of resource management and conservation. I have chosen to discuss the words *mana*, *tapu* and *waahi tapu*, *rangatira* and *rangatiratanga*, *kaitiaki* and *kaitiakitanga*, *tikanga Maori*, *tangata whenua* and *ahi kaa*, and *kaawanatanga*. I have chosen these words in particular because they are very basic to the understanding of Maori resource management practices and they either appear in the *Resource Management Act 1991* (for example, *waahi tapu*, *kaitiakitanga*, *tangata whenua*, *mana whenua*, *tikanga Maori*), are implicated in both the *Resource Management Act* and the *Conservation Act 1987* because of the provisions in those Acts in respect of the Treaty of Waitangi (*rangatiratanga* and *kaawanatanga*) or they appear frequently in both National and Regional Policy Statements and reports of the Waitangi Tribunal on resource management issues.

In discussing these words I will first outline a general background of Maori cultural values and world view, discussing the most basic concepts and words (*mana* and *tapu*) as the necessity arises within that description. I will then move on to discuss each of the other words.

In order to demonstrate how difficult it is to gain an adequate understanding of these terms by referring to translations, I will also compare the understanding that Maori have of these terms with the William's dictionary translations, or, in the case of terms used in the *Resource Management Act* (RMA), the interpretations given at section 2. For it is becoming increasingly apparent that successful implementation of the RMA by local authorities and resource consent authorities (such as the Minister of Conservation) in respect of these matters is going to require a far clearer understanding of these terms than those supplied either by the Act or the dictionary. This same understanding is also required if there is to be a return to the amicable relations that used to exist between conservationists and Maori.

### 1.4 Sources

The sources I have used to compile this paper include firstly and most importantly, extensive discussions and research I have carried out over many years with my own tribal elders from the tribes of the north, Ngati Kahu, Te Rarawa, Ngai Takoto, Te Aupouri and Ngati Whatua. In particular I have discussed the contents of this paper with my Ngati Kahu and Te Rarawa elders and taken instruction from them on how it should be presented.

I have also drawn on the published works of Maori experts in this field such as Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck), Rev. Maori Marsden, Nganeko Minhinnick, Prof. Hirini Mead, Prof. Ranginui Walker and Prof. Mason Durie. The reports of Chief Judge E. Durie and the Waitangi Tribunal have also been extremely helpful as have the many submissions made by iwi authorities and tribal groups throughout the country to the Board of Inquiry into the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. The works of anthropologists such as Dame Joan Metge and Prof. Ann Salmond also provided considerable assistance on how to present this paper in a manner which I hope is clear for those who were not born and brought up with the Maori language and culture.

## **2. SETTING THE SCENE**

### **2.1 Describing the Concepts of one Culture Using the Language of Another**

At the outset, I need to draw attention to the inherent difficulties that exist when one attempts to describe the concepts and values of one culture using the language of another culture. These difficulties arise from the fact that, as I mentioned above, each of the world's natural languages has been specifically crafted over time by its community of speakers to express the culture of that community. Where languages are closely related, as for example, Maori and Rarotongan, or English and French are, then the difficulties are not great since the cultural differences are not great. But in the case of say, Rarotongan and French, or, as in our present case, English and Maori, where the two cultures derive from quite different value systems and world views, difficulties arise when one attempts to express the culture of either of the pair in the language of the other.

### **2.2 One of the Fundamental Differences Between Maori and English Culture**

In emphasising the need to be aware of differences between the Maori and English culture, it is helpful to highlight where the most fundamental differences lie. Several authors and my elders consider that the most basic aspect of Maori culture which distinguishes it most sharply from that of Europeans is that it puts spiritual and communal matters ahead of material and individualistic needs. The Waitangi Tribunal in its Manukau report (WAI 8) considered this fundamental difference and noted

It might be considered that Western society, although espousing a religion, is predominantly secular and individualistic in its world-view. Although there is a religious premise for the presumption that human-kind has authority over nature, that view probably springs from the secular and rational characteristics of our society. Maori society on the other hand is predominantly spiritual and communal. The Maori world view emphasises the primacy of nature and the need for man to tread carefully when interfering with natural laws, and processes. (p.123)

### **2.3 Basic Underlying Concepts of Maori Culture**

Throughout the country when Maori talk about resource management and conservation, they will refer to names such as Papatuanuku, Ranginui, Tawhirimatea, Tangaroa, Tanemahuta and Tumatauenga. These are all names of the gods of natural resources, including man. They

will also make reference to the fact that they are related by descent to all these gods and the natural resources. To understand these types of references, a knowledge of the Maori creation tradition is essential along with an appreciation of how everything in the Maori world seems to be intricately bound up in *whakapapa* or genealogy.

In this section then, I will outline the main threads of this tradition as I understand it from my elders<sup>1</sup>. In doing so, however, I need to set it against a background understanding of the concepts of *mana* and *tapu*. Thus I will attempt describe these two very complex concepts before outlining the tradition. There are distinct variations to the tradition, in particular some of the names, across different tribes. However the underlying concepts are the same for all tribes.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.4 *Mana*

William's *Dictionary of the Maori Language* lists 8 meanings for *mana* providing the following possible translations:

1. Authority, control
2. Influence, prestige, power
3. Psychic force
4. Effectual, binding, authoritative
5. Having influence or power
6. Vested with authority
7. Be effectual, take effect
8. Be avenged.

These translations, however, do not describe the source of *mana* nor how *mana* is upheld and maintained. That, after all, is not the job of a bilingual dictionary. The result is an unfortunate distortion of the real meaning of *mana*, which is inextricably based in the spiritual realms of the world.

The Rev. Maori Marsden, in his article "God, Man and Universe: A Maori View", defines and discusses among others matters the concepts of *mana* and *tapu*. For him,

*Mana* in its double aspect of authority and power may be defined as 'lawful permission delegated by the gods to their human agents and accompanied by the endowment of spiritual power to act on their behalf and in accordance with their revealed will.' This delegation of authority is shown in dynamic signs or works of power.

He goes on to warn

Authority and power in this sense must be clearly distinguished since it is clear that to exercise spiritual power outside the limits delegated is to abuse the gift, and results either in its withdrawal or in that power running rampant and causing harm to the agent and others.

A simple analogy will make the distinction [between power and authority] clearer. A person approaches a traffic crossing and the lights turn red. He has power to cross but no permission. The lights

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<sup>1</sup>In particular I have drawn much of the discussion in this section from Rev Maori Marsden's work including his article "God, Man and Universe: a Maori View" published in Michael King's *Te Ao Hurihuri*.

<sup>2</sup>Some high profile individuals have been known present rather differing and rather oddly secular views on these values and traditions. On marae around the country, however, where Maori knowledge is truly tested, my elders inform me that such views are not articulated.

turn green but his car stalls at that moment. He has permission to cross, but no power. His car starts and the lights remain green. He has both authority and power to proceed (p.119).

There are many different types of *mana* and many aspects of it as it manifests itself in everyday life. For example, all living things, animals, trees and plants, fish and birds, as well as human beings, are imbued with a *mana* of their own, a *mana* implanted by the gods. So also are many inanimate objects such as meeting houses and mountains which are personified and addressed in Maori as ancestors and relations.

The terms *mana atua*, *mana tuupuna*, *mana whenua*, *mana tangata*, *mana moana* and *mana Maaori motuhake* are also heard frequently and are being referred to increasingly by the Waitangi Tribunal in its reports. These are different types or aspects of *mana* and can be described, albeit very briefly, in the following way:

*Mana atua* is "the very sacred power of the gods ... which is given to those persons who conform to sacred ritual and principles".<sup>3</sup>

*Mana tuupuna* is authority and power handed down through chiefly lineage.

*Mana whenua* is the *mana* that the gods planted within Papa-tua-nuku (Mother Earth) to give her the power to produce the bounties of nature. A person or tribe who "possesses" land is said to hold or be the *mana whenua* of the area and hence has the power and authority to produce a livelihood for the family and the tribe from this land and its natural resources. One means of ensuring that *mana whenua* is upheld and enhanced is to return the *whenua* (afterbirth) of a child to his ancestral lands at points specifically designated for the purpose. But the most powerful means is to return the human body to the ancestral lands once the spiritual element has departed (i.e. the person has died). This is perhaps one of the main reasons why tribes will fight to have a body returned to his or her own ancestral lands for burial. Furthermore, the greater the person's *mana*, the bigger the fight, especially if the person has ancestral rights in more than one tribal area.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from these aspects, every effort is made to protect and uphold *mana whenua*, not only from loss of "possession" of the land, but also from despoilation by careless exploitation. *Mana whenua* is a gift from the gods and always remains with the tribe of an area. The imposition of European title, for example, cannot remove *mana whenua* from a tribe.

The RMA interprets *mana whenua* as meaning "customary authority exercised by an iwi or hapu in an identified area". Like Williams' dictionary it falls very short of the real meaning by not incorporating any reference to its spiritual basis.

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<sup>3</sup>Barlow (1991:60).

<sup>4</sup>The continued misunderstanding by the majority of New Zealanders of this very important aspect of Maori society has been a cause of great sadness to Maoridom, especially when open derision of the custom is carried out by an uninformed news media.

*Mana tangata* is the power acquired by an individual according to his or her ability and effort to develop skills and to gain knowledge in particular areas.

*Mana moana* is the equivalent of *mana whenua* as it applies to the sea and its resources. The two forms of *mana* overlap considerably since the land is considered to extend well into the sea, while the sea's effects impinge some distance inland.

The term *mana Maaori motuhake* is a term which encompasses all of the above, but serves to point out that *mana* is something which applies to the Maori people of Aotearoa and to them only. It also points to the fact that with such *mana*, Maori people are imbued with the eternal right to live under their own *mana* and hence determine their own way of life as they themselves see fit to choose.

## 2.5 Tapu

The Rev. Maori Marsden discusses *tapu* at some length, not least to dispel some misconceptions of the concept held by early missionaries and anthropologists. He describes it as

The Maori idea of *tapu* is close to the Jewish idea translated in the words 'sacred' and 'holy', although it does not have the later ethical connotations of the New Testament of 'moral righteousness'.

It has both religious and legal connotations. A person, place or thing is dedicated to a deity and by that act it is set aside or reserved for the sole use of that deity. The person or object is thus removed from the sphere of the profane and put into the sphere of the sacred. It is untouchable, no longer to be put to common use. It is this untouchable quality that is the main element in the concept of *tapu*. In other words, the object is sacred and any profane use is sacrilege, breaking of the law of *tapu*.

From a purely legal aspect, it suggests a contractual relationship has been made between the individual and his deity whereby a person dedicates himself or an object to the service of a deity in return for protection against malevolent forces and the power to manipulate his environment to meet needs and demands. (p. 119-120)

Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck) in his book *The Coming of the Maori* recounts how as a child he was taught the practicalities of *tapu*. He comments "Thus the fear of *tapu* was inculcated early and remained late." (p.359)

Cleve Barlow in his book *Tikanga Whakaaro* points out that everything has inherent *tapu*, and that *tapu* is "first and foremost ... the power and influence of the gods". He then goes on to point out that there is "good *tapu* and bad *tapu*", by which I understand him to mean that there are the aspects of *tapu* which provide protection and those which have potential to injure and harm. It is this second aspect of *tapu* which causes the fear referred to by Te Rangi Hiroa.

It is the laws of *tapu* which play the most influential role in regulating Maori society. It was for this reason that the tribal experts in the laws of *tapu*, the *tohunga*, were outlawed by the colonial government (under the *Tohunga Suppression Act* of 1907) in a rather vain attempt to gain complete and absolute control for the government over Maori society. The laws of *tapu* still hold in Maoridom today and their violation continues to bring disaster, pain and injury to its transgressors.

## 2.6 The Creation Tradition



Having set the necessary background of *mana* and *tapu*, I will now move on to relate the creation tradition.

In the beginning, Io, the supreme god, existed alone and tranquilly in the realm of the nothingness of Te Korekore. Nothing existed before Io. He fertilised Te Korekore and established the seed of potential being for the heavens, light, the rock foundation of the earth and the waters. He then recited the names of the different foundations of these things and they took form.

He called into being the night realms with its many planes and gradations, all of which have their own names. He then illuminated the nights with soft light dividing night from the dawnlight (*whēiao*) and beyond the dawn he placed Te Ao Marama - the broad daylight.

It was in the regions of soft light that he established several Hawaiki: Hawaiki Nui (great Hawaiki), Hawaiki Roa (extensive Hawaiki), Hawaiki Pamamao (far distant Hawaiki), Hawaiki Tapu (sacred Hawaiki). These were the abode of gods and heroes, although Hawaiki Tapu could only be entered by Io, for it was sacred to him.

Having done this he brought into being the first gods, Rangi-awatea (who is also known as Ranginui) and Papa-tua-nuku, the male and female principles out of which all things derived. Rangi-awatea was the god of 'space and light' and he created the first heaven from the foundation established by Io, then descended to cohabit with Papa-tua-nuku (Mother Earth). Out of their union sprang their first born, Tane<sup>5</sup>, and the other gods after him: Tangaroa, Rongo, Tumatauenga, Haumia-tike-tike, Ru-ai-moko and Tawhiri-ma-tea.

But Rangi continued to cling to Papa-tua-nuku, dooming his children to live in perpetual darkness. Io intervened, sending the spirit of rebellion to stir the children to revolt. After consultation among the brothers, all except Tawhiri-ma-tea agreed to separate the parents to allow light into their world. Finally Tane separated them, flinging Rangi into the skies. It is said that the rains are Rangi's tears for his beloved Papa-tua-nuku and the mists are Papa-tua-nuku's grief for Rangi.

Awatea was summoned by Io, deprived of his *mana* and banished to the night realm. Io then summoned Tane and after elaborate rites, commissioned him to complete the heavens. It was the *mana* from Awatea that was given to Tane. Io also delegated through Tane various tasks for his brothers. They became the regents of Io to continue creation in the departments of nature. Tangaroa became god of the sea, Rongo the god of vegetation, Ru-ai-moko divided the lands asunder, Tawhiri took over the meteorological department and Tu took over the war office. Tane reserved the forest and birds and the creation of man to himself. He fashioned the first human, Hine-ahu-one (the maid that emerged from the dust) from clay and infused the breath of his nostrils (*hongī*) into her and she came alive. All tribes are descended from the union of Tane and Hine-ahu-one.

Ranginui Walker in his book *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou* points out

The personification of natural phenomenon is fundamental to the holistic world-view of the Maori. Papatuanuku was loved as a mother is loved, because the bounty that sprang from her breast nurtured and sustained her children. Humans were conceived

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<sup>5</sup>Tane, like many of the other gods, has many names associated with him, the most well-known of them being Tane-mahuta and Tane-nuiarangi.

of as belonging to the land; as *tangata whenua*, people of the land (and descendants of Hine-ahu-one). This meant that they were not above nature but an integral part of it. They were expected to relate to nature in a meaningful way. For instance, trees were not to be cut down wantonly. If a tree was needed for timber, then rituals seeking permission from Tane had to be performed first. Similarly, a fisherman had to return to the sea the first fish he caught as an offering to Tangaroa... it was believed that these practices ensured the bounty of nature would always be abundant. (p. 13-14)

To a Maori way of thinking, it also follows that because man and nature are descended from a common ancestor, then they are one and the same. Thus a tribe will talk of being descended from its river or harbour and point out that a violation against that river or harbour is a violation against the people who are that river or harbour<sup>6</sup>.

### 3. *Tikanga Maaori*

The RMA describes *tikanga Maaori* as "Maori customary values and practices". Williams dictionary gives 7 possible meanings for *tikanga* with the following possible translations:

1. Rule, plan, method
2. Custom, habit
3. Anything normal or usual
4. Reason
5. Meaning, purport
6. Authority, control
7. Correct, right

The word Maori is being used in this term as an adjective describing *tikanga*.

*Tikanga Maaori*, as my elders explain it to me, is the correct way to carry out something in Maori cultural terms. *Tikanga Maaori* is the Maori equivalent of English law. Not surprisingly, it is very different from English law, mainly because it cannot be reduced to writing and hence set in concrete in the way legislation sets English law in concrete.

*Tikanga Maaori* is very flexible and each situation requires its own particular form of *tikanga*. The particular form it takes on any occasion can always be determined by consensus of the *whaanau* (extended family), *hapuu* (sub-tribe) or *iwi* (tribe) concerned if the matter is anything other than very straight forward.

As a result, Maoridom spends what seems to be an inordinate amount of time in *hui* (meetings) discussing what an appropriate *tikanga* for a particular *take* (subject) should be. Consensus in such *hui* is very important in Maori cultural terms, and for that reason they almost invariably run for at least several hours to allow all possible aspects of the *take* to be thoroughly aired. If consensus is not reached the *hui* will either continue until it has been reached, even if it takes several days, or, if the divisions are too great, the *hui* will be adjourned and reconvened at a later time when everyone has had more time to reflect on the matter.

Time is not an influencing factor when important decisions are to be made. This is a trait of *tikanga Maaori* which has often frustrated and annoyed Pakeha effected by the process. The

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<sup>6</sup>See for example the Manukau report of the Waitangi Tribunal with respect to the Tainui tribes and the Manukau Harbour and the Waikato River.

philosophy of my elders is that they would far rather take their time and reach a well considered decision than rush it through and end up having to fix up a mess afterwards.

#### 4. *Kaitiaki, Kaitiakitanga, Rangatira and Rangatiratanga*

I have decided to deal with these four terms together mainly because *kaitiakitanga* and *rangatiratanga* are so very closely associated with each other. I will however discuss each of them separately in the first instance.

##### *Kaitiaki and Kaitiakitanga*

The word *kaitiaki* is derived from *tiaki* which Williams dictionary translates as 'guard, keep, watch for, wait for'. The prefix *kai-* denotes the doer of the action and on Williams translations should give 'guardian, keeper, someone who watches for or waits for'. *Kaitiakitanga* is the derived noun from *kaitiaki* and therefore should translate as 'guardianship' or something similar.

The interpretation of *kaitiakitanga* provided in the RMA is

Kaitiakitanga means the exercise of guardianship; and in relation to a resource, includes the ethic of stewardship based on the nature of the resource itself. (section 2)

The understanding of *kaitiakitanga* held by Maoridom involves far more than just this interpretation or the dictionary translation. The submissions of *tangata whenua* of various areas of the country made to the Board of Inquiry into the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement made references to and explained this concept in a manner consistent with the following explanation.

*Kaitiakitanga* is the role played by *kaitiaki*. Traditionally, *kaitiaki* are the many spiritual assistants of the gods, including the spirits of deceased ancestors, who were the spiritual minders of the elements of the natural world. All the elements of the natural world, the sky father and mother earth and their offspring, the seas, sky, forests and birds, food crops, winds, rain and storms, volcanic activity, as well as man and wars, are descended from a common ancestor, the supreme god. These elements, which are the world's natural resources, are often referred to as *taonga*, that is, items which are greatly treasured and respected. In Maori cultural terms, all the natural, physical elements of the world are related to each other, and each is controlled and directed by the numerous spiritual assistants of the gods.

These spiritual assistants often manifest themselves in physical forms such as fish, animals, trees or reptiles. Each is imbued with *mana*. Man being descended from the gods is likewise imbued with *mana* although that *mana* can be removed if it is violated or abused. There are many forms and aspects of *mana* of which one is the power to sustain life.

Maoridom is very careful to preserve the many forms of *mana* it holds, and in particular is very careful to ensure that the *mana* of *kaitiaki* is preserved. In this respect Maori become one and the same as *kaitiaki* (who are, after all, their relations), becoming the minders for their relations, that is, the other physical elements of the world.

As minders, *kaitiaki* must ensure that the *mauri* or life force of their *taonga* are healthy and strong. A *taonga* whose life force has been severely depleted, as is the case for example with

the Manukau Harbour, presents a major task for the *kaitiaki*. In order to uphold their mana, the *tangata whenua* as *kaitiaki* must do all in their power to restore the *mauri* of the *taonga* to its original strength.

In specific terms, each *whaanau* or *hapuu* (extended family or subtribe) is *kaitiaki* for the area over which they hold *mana whenua*, that is, their ancestral lands and seas. Should they fail to carry out their *kaitiakitanga* duties adequately, not only will *mana* be removed, but harm will come to the members of the *whaanau* and *hapuu*.

Thus a *whaanau* or a *hapuu* who still hold *mana* in a particular area take their *kaitiaki* responsibilities very seriously. The penalties for not doing so can be particularly harsh. Apart from depriving the *whaanau* or *hapuu* of the life sustaining capacities of the land and sea, failure to carry out *kaitiakitanga* roles adequately also frequently involves the untimely death of members of the *whaanau* or *hapuu*, a punishment my *hapuu* has had to weather on more than one occasion in the recent past.

Nganeko Minhinnick of Ngati Te Ata has written extensively on *kaitiakitanga* and is careful to point out that only Maori can be *tangata whenua*, that is, those who hold or are *mana whenua* for a particular area. Hence only Maori can carry out the role of *kaitiakitanga*. That is not to say that Pakeha do not have guardianship responsibilities in respect of the country's natural resources, for they certainly do.

### ***Rangatira and Rangatiratanga***

Williams' dictionary gives 4 meanings and the following translations for *rangatira*:

1. Chief, (male or female)
2. Master or Mistress
3. Well born, noble
4. Person of good breeding

A *rangatira* in Maoridom is a person of *mana* derived not only by genealogical seniority but also by his or her own personal qualities and abilities to maintain the support and confidence of his/her people. Should a chief lose the confidence of his people, then his *mana* will suffer and the people will look elsewhere for leadership. In practice today, there will usually be one overall or *tinu rangatira* who is able to draw in and utilise the skills of other *rangatira* within the tribe.

The word *rangatira* was once analysed for me as follows: *ranga* is a shoal of fish; *raranga* is to weave or plait; *tira* is a group of people. A *rangatira* then is someone who holds a group of people together so that they move as one, like a shoal.

*Rangatiratanga* is the derived noun from *rangatira* and is generally translated as 'chieftainship'.

The Waitangi Tribunal in the *Ngawha Geothermal Resource Report* (Wai 304) considers *rangatiratanga* to include the concept of *kaitiakitanga*. The tribunal has discussed the concept of *rangatiratanga* at great length in many of its reports, simply because it is a key term in the Treaty of Waitangi. Quoting the New Zealand Maori Council it states

In essence it is the working out of a moral contract between a leader, his people and his god. It is a dynamic not static concept, emphasising the reciprocity between the human, material and non-material worlds. In pragmatic terms, it means the wise administration of all the assets possessed by a group for that

group's benefit: in a word, trusteeship. And it was this trusteeship that was to be given protection [in the Treaty], a trusteeship in whatever form the Maori deemed relevant.

And then from the *Muriwhenua Fishing Report* (WAI 22) at p. 181

"Te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou taonga" tells of the exclusive control of tribal taonga for the benefit of the tribe including those living and those yet to be born. There are three main elements embodied in the guarantee of rangatiratanga. The first is that authority or control is crucial because without it the tribal base is threatened socially, culturally, economically and spiritually. The second is that the exercise of authority must recognise the spiritual source of taonga (and indeed of the authority itself) and the reason for stewardship as being the maintenance of the tribal base for succeeding generations. Thirdly, the exercise of authority was not only over property, but of persons within the kinship group and their access to tribal sources.

In the *Mohaka River Report* (WAI 119) Ngati Pahauwera is quoted as saying

*Rangatiratanga* denotes *mana*, *wehi* and *ihi*. The right to have interests and to make decisions, in terms of the river, someone must have it. Ngati Pahauwera (the *iwi*) have it over the Mohaka. Pahauwera have the right to decide what is right for them and the river. *Rangatiratanga* is a birthright.

(Cordry Huata quoted at p.18)

### 5. *Tangata Whenua* and *Ahi Kaa*

The term *tangata whenua* translates as 'people of the land' while *ahi kaa* translates as 'burning fire'.

*Tangata whenua* are those who hold *mana whenua* in a particular area and carry, as a result, all the responsibilities of *kaitiakitanga* and *rangatiratanga*. These days, many of the *tangata whenua* of most areas in the country do not actually live in their own tribal territory. This does not change the fact that they are still *tangata whenua* in their ancestral tribal territories.

*Ahi kaa*, on the other hand, are those in a *hapuu* (subtribe) who 'keep the home fires burning', those who are born within their own tribal boundaries and have always lived on their *tuurangawaewae*, their tribal lands.

From the 1940's and 50's until the early 1990's, increasingly severe economic hardship precipitated by oppressive legislation began to see dislocation of many *tangata whenua* from their ancestral lands to the cities. Many have been born and brought up outside their tribal boundaries, particularly in Auckland and Wellington, but they have always been welcomed and encouraged to go home. The advent of large scale unemployment of Maori in the late 1980's has precipitated a migration back to the traditional *turangawaewae* where, although there is often extreme monetary poverty, *tangata whenua* are still *mana whenua* and their *mana Maaori motuhake* is in tact.

It is the *ahi kaa* who are there to welcome *whanaunga* (relatives) when they return home, to pass on the history, the traditions, the customs, the genealogy and so on. These are mainly oral traditions, and are passed on carefully and with a great deal of sensitivity and patience to those who demonstrate a willingness to learn. *Tikanga*, the basic rules of behaviour, are carefully taught to all those returning, although these days, those who have spent a long time

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<sup>7</sup>New Zealand Maori Council, 1983 *Kaupapa: Te Wahanga Tuatahi* Wellington p.5 quoted in *Ngawha Geothermal Resource Report* (WAI 304) at p.18.

in the cities and been alienated from their own customs have difficulty remembering them at times. However, if they last the test of time and stay at home in their own territory, or visit regularly, they find it a lot easier.

## 6. *Waahi tapu*

A term which describes one particular manifestation of *tapu*, namely *waahi tapu*, seems to have caused some misunderstanding by local authorities and interest groups. Although the RMA instructs that the relationship of Maori with their *waahi tapu* is to be recognised and provided for as a matter of national importance, neither *tapu* nor *waahi tapu* is defined in the Act, nor is there clear direction on how to provide for them.

Quite simply a *waahi tapu* is a place that has become *tapu*. There are many reasons why a place can be *tapu*. They include places where there are human remains resulting from the burial of bodies, places where blood was split in battle, places where *whenua* (afterbirth) are buried, places where the people rested when carrying a body to its final resting place, places set aside for particular ceremonies or activities of a *tapu* nature, old pa sites and so on.

Some local authorities appear to having a problem about the identification and management of *waahi tapu*. I have heard officers comment on several occasions and in many different forums that Maori "make up the location of *waahi tapu*" to suit "their own political ends". For this reason the authorities refuse to provide for the necessary protection of these places which in most cases requires some restriction on activities on the site in question.

I hope that the explanation of *tapu* given in section 2.5 above can explain why any Maori will have the greatest of difficulty lying about the existence and location of *waahi tapu* in the manner being implied by these local authority officers. The consequences, under the laws of *tapu*, for both him and his family are not worth it, and he knows it. To lie about a *waahi tapu* is a form of desecration and the laws of *tapu* apply in such instances.

Basically, if *tangata whenua* of an area say a place is a *waahi tapu*, they do not do so lightly and should not be questioned and interrogated about it by uninformed local authority officers. Their word should be respected and the appropriate management of the site duly noted and provided for.

## 7. *Kaawanatanga*

*Kaawanatanga* is the term used in Te Tiriti o Waitangi to describe the rights handed over to the Queen of England. It is derived from the word *kaawana* which is the transliterated form of the English word 'governor' and translates as 'governorship'.

The notion of governorship is not derived from Maori culture, and as such I will not discuss the term any further. Suffice to point out that a great deal has been written about *kaawanatanga* in relation to the rights and powers guaranteed to the Queen of England in the Treaty of Waitangi, especially in the reports of the Waitangi Tribunal.

## 8. Summary

In summary then we can say that Maori world view and values are firmly rooted in the

spiritual aspects of this world, where he or she and all other creations, both physical and spiritual, are imbued with a life force (*mauri*), *mana* and *tapu* by the gods. From the spiritual world proceeds the material physical world of Te Ao Marama (The World of Light), and the spiritual (which is the higher order) interpenetrates Te Ao Marama. (Marsden 1992:134)

Basic concepts of *mana*, *tapu*, *rangatiratanga* and *kaitiakitanga* must be clearly understood as underlying all Maori thinking and determining *tikanga Maori*. It must also be appreciated that behind these concepts each tribe has its own wealth of traditions which explain and give substance to the concepts. These traditions invariably hark back to the role played by the *atua* (gods) in the creation and on-going maintenance of the world in both its physical and spiritual form.