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KAITIAKITANGA OF CULTURAL SITES¹

ROY PIAHANA
TE RUUNANGA A IWI O NGATI TAMATERA

*Nau mai, piki mai, haere mai, welcome to Hauraki, ki nga rangatira, ki nga hapu,
ki nga tangata katoa, te tino rangatiratanga, o ratou whenua, o ratou moana.*

*Nga puke ki Hauraki
Ka tarehua,
E mihi ana ki te whenua,
E tangi ana ki te tangata
Ko Moehau ki waho
Ko te Aroha ki uta,
Tikapa te moana,
Hauraki te whenua,
Marutuahu te iwi,
Tihei mauriora!*

The ancient Hauraki tauparapara in our introduction confirms Ngati Tamatera links to Tikapa Moana, the mountains, the land and the ancestor. Our Hauraki tauparapara is an active reminder of who we are but also confers the responsibility to care for those places.

Kia ora and welcome to the tribal rohe of Ngati Tamatera. My name is Roy Piahana. I am a descendant of Taraia, who frequented this area, and whakapapa to all the Hauraki tribes. My marae is Te Pae o Hauraki where Dr. Caroline Phillips first met members of Ngati Tamatera. Such hospitality and generosity has continued an on-going relationship today with our adopted daughter, and we would like include you all in our extended tribal whanui.

Te Ruunanga a Iwi o Ngati Tamatera was established after a kaumatua hui and further hui with our people. We were determined to deal with our own resources and with a strong mandate to forward Treaty claims to the Waitangi Tribunal under Wai 778.

¹ Paper presented at the NZAA Conference, Westpac Community Centre, Waihi Beach, 17–21 May 2006.

I have been the environment officer for Te Ruunanga a Iwi o Ngati Tamatera for the past six years. During that time I have worked with a number of archaeologists – to name a few, Warren Gumbley, Louise Furey, Phil Moore and Caroline Phillips – on issues affecting our cultural sites. I have also been privileged to establish good relationships with Rachel Darmody and Dave Robson of the Historic Places Trust. Some of these people are attending this hui.

Kaitiakitanga

While the basic meaning of the term tiaki is to guard, it has other closely related meanings depending upon the context. Therefore, tiaki may also mean to keep, preserve, conserve, foster, protect, shelter and keep watch over. The prefix kai with a verb denotes the agent of the act. A kaitiaki is a guardian, keeper, preserver, conservator, foster-parent and protector. The suffix tanga added to the noun means guardianship, preservation, conservation, fostering, protecting and sheltering. Kaitiakitanga is defined in the Resource Management Act as guardianship or stewardship.

Ngati Tamatera has always taken their role of kaitiakitanga seriously and this is the basis of our presentation today. The problem for us as Maori is determining if archaeologists have a clear understanding of the tikanga in the protection of our cultural sites.

The Waihi Beach area is cloaked in histories of inter-tribal warfare and early occupation by Ngamarama, then Ngaiterangi and the Hauraki tribes. Tribal settlement allowed the construction of pa sites, papakainga and urupa. However, since the colonial invasion the landscape has changed considerably. We have seen, through past experiences here at Waihi Beach, house sites, garden soils, terraces, ceremonial food storage pits, ovens, pa sites and papakainga disappearing forever. This continues to happen today and is of grave concern to Maori.

Kauri Point, Koutunui Reserve and Te Kura a Maia are specific sites identified for planned site visits to be carried out Thursday. They were significant areas once dominated by Taraia and other Hauraki leaders, and I have little doubt these sites will be of great interest to you all.

Cultural Sites/Wahi Taonga

It is historical recollections from our kaumatua who are entrusted with this knowledge that helps us to identify significant cultural sites.

Firstly, let us for example take Kauri Point, which holds a spiritual and cultural relationship for Ngati Tamatera through occupation. Kauri Point was also an important pa site of Taraia, (1820s–30s) who left to resolve some

issues at Tapu. Before leaving Taraia warned the locals not to stay there, but as time passed the locals decided Taraia wasn't coming back and settled there. When Taraia got word of this he gathered a war party and returned, killing all those inhabitants of Kauri Point. Many sites are centralised near streams, rivers or the moana. Why? Well quite simply because of the kai that was plentiful, and other reasons.

Secondly, identifying land forms and features that are significant, as well as urupa, living terraces, food storage pits and gardens, all of which are evidence of occupation, and the pa sites on top of ridges, hills or mountain summits that indicate a well fortified pa site community. Tapu and Te Mata are two significant pa sites that are easily visible along the Thames coastline.

Threats to Cultural Sites

In today's reality if a developer wishes to develop property and there is a cultural site on the property, more than likely an archaeologist is engaged and an application made to Historic Places Trust (HPT) to "damage, modify or destroy" the site. Ngati Tamatera are familiar with this scenario and have experienced many times what happens at the end of this process.

Factors that have contributed to the systematic failure to protect Maori ancestral lands, sites and wahi tapu include:

1. The topic of sustainable management of Maori values versus private property rights being too controversial for central and local government.
For example: private property developers win out at Whitianga Waterways.²
2. A lack of funding by central and local government for administering statutes.
3. Inadequate data bases: the private NZAA data base is not suitable for planning purposes or universally available for public use; inadequate access by Maori to scientific data bases; a hesitation by iwi to share traditional knowledge; and fragmented funding for studies by iwi.
This needs to be quickly rectified to ensure the information is available.
4. Problems with linkages between the pieces of legislation, in particular some of the Historic Places Act (HPA) registration sections not transferring well into the Resource Management Act (RMA), and the HPA archaeological provisions doubling up with RMA provisions leading to Councils abdicating their responsibilities and relying upon the HPA.
More sites will slowly disappear if not protected.

² My personal comments or recommendations are shown in italics.

Working with the HPA and RMA

How, then, do Maori manage heritage issues relating to archaeological sites? There are more than 50,000 recorded archaeological sites in New Zealand, most being Maori sites.

Wahi tapu are defined in the HPA as meaning “a place sacred to Maori in the traditional, spiritual, religious, ritual, or mythological sense.” A wahi tapu may be a burial site, an archaeological site (e.g., a pa), or a natural feature (e.g., a spring, mountain, river, swamp, fishing ground or battle site). Some iwi wish to keep the whereabouts of sacred sites private for various reasons including the sensitivity of the information. There is debate within New Zealand to the extent of wahi tapu sites.

Most district plans prepared under the RMA include statements relating to Maori views and aspirations about the environment and detail the need for consultation during statutory processes, but very few plans include rules to sustainably manage sites, or have schedules of sites.

Ideally, then, in the management of heritage sites some form of protocol should be put in place by the local tangata whenua. These may consist of recording, registration or heritage covenants.

The New Zealand Archaeological Association established the scheme to record archaeological sites in 1958 and largely set it up for scientific and study purposes. It includes both Maori and European archaeological sites. However changes to Historic Places Act in 1975 and the Resource Management Act in 1991 placed greater emphasis on the need to protect cultural heritage sites, and in particular Maori sites.

An archaeological site is defined in the Historic Places Act as:
any place in New Zealand that—

- (a) Either—
 - (i) Was associated with human activity that occurred before 1900; or
 - (ii) Is the site of the wreck of any vessel where the wreck occurred before 1900; and
- (b) Is or may be able through investigation by archaeological methods to provide evidence relating to the history of New Zealand.

The HPT has established a register of historic places, areas, wahi tapu and wahi tapu areas. The HPT may make specific recommendations to a city or district council as to the appropriate measures the council should take to assist in conserving and protecting a historic area. The council must have particular regard to the Trust’s recommendations. Registration is primarily an advocacy and education tool: it is the Trust’s means of identifying heritage places.

A heritage covenant is a legal voluntary agreement between HPT and an owner of a heritage property. The objective of the covenant is to provide long-term protection for a historic place, despite changes in ownership. These may assist tangata whenua to avoid pit-falls. The significance of the site and the relationships with tangata whenua must be identified. Heritage orders can be made in a District Plan that would have some limits on how the land is utilised.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (1998) identified deficiencies in the present system for managing historic and cultural heritage of significance for Maori, which are:

1. A lack of co-ordination between statutory agencies involved in the management of historic & cultural heritage (HPT, DoC, and local authorities, and between them and Maori organisations).
More korero needed.
2. An inadequacy of the HPA in dealing with Maori values associated with archaeological sites.
Scientific research appears to be the priority, not so much protecting Maori sites.
3. Limited decision-making power of the Maori Heritage Council.
4. A lack of resources for the HPT to actively assist Maori to protect their wahi taonga, for example through the development of planning, assessment and information systems and support to implement measures to protect taonga.

The report by Sarah Ross and Russell Foster (1996) provided a baseline understanding of how archaeological sites have been destroyed, damaged and modified since they were first recorded in the Auckland region. The most recent issue of AINZ described a similar situation in an article by Caroline Phillips and Harry Allen (2006) of the on-going damage to Waihou River archaeological sites.

Gardens, house pits and midden sites (indicating tribal occupation) on the land block next to the RSA at Waihi Beach were discovered. A recommendation to HPT that these sites should be recorded and then destroyed was a total disappointment for Ngati Tamatera! We had not witnessed such sites as these before and maybe never will again! Fortunately, we had recorded these sites on video and had our kaumatua interviewed on Te Karere. The applicant was annoyed and accused Ngati Tamatera of trespassing. A last minute appeal to the Maori Heritage Council to review the decision failed. During a Tamatera wānanga held in January 2004, a busload of Tamatera people stopped to view this site while listening to the korero of our monitor retelling his accounts of the discoveries.

Ngati Tamatera have voiced their frustration at a process that doesn't quite gel, and have written submissions on the HPA amendments, strengthening and giving more teeth to our Maori Heritage Council. Archaeologists play an important part in the process and in most cases their recommendations receive approval.

We are concerned at the failure of Western Bay of Plenty Regional Council to be proactive in its relationship with Ngati Tamatera. One suspects from the council's past record, when cultural sites were destroyed at will to allow developers to reap the financial benefits in the early subdivision of Waihi Beach, that it has remained conservative.

It is our view that European sites appear to be treated a little differently than those of Maori. An example being the preservation of the old pump house in Waihi where a private mining company and the community see an icon of high priority in the preservation list and will have it moved at a small cost of over \$3,000,000 dollars.

Most of you will be familiar with the pieces of legislation under the various Acts, which supposedly are there to protect heritage sites. However laws can always be changed as Ngati Tamatera and our Marutuahu whanui found out during the Whitianga debate.

The Future?

There is scope in the RMA for the development of procedures for assessment and protection of wahi taonga, but this will depend on:

1. Good information and advice to tangata whenua about the use of planning procedures.
2. The ability of tangata whenua to develop their own heritage policies and to address over-lapping interest.
3. Development of agreed procedures for the consultation between local authorities and tangata whenua. This also applies to sensitive information.
4. The availability of incentive funds to support protection measures where necessary.

The challenge for Maori, then, is to develop their own policies to manage their heritage sites, for instance, knowledge of places that has been kept confidential by those kaitiaki responsible for their protection, and the exercise of kaitiakitanga for the maintenance and protection of sites on Crown-owned and private land.

The use of Maori names for sites reflects their significance and history, which can be affected if the name is replaced by an English one.

Relationships develop understandings between peoples and positive outcomes. Surely, it is time then that HPT, the Maori Heritage Council, regional/local authorities, NZAA members and tangata whenua establish those kinds of relationships for the greater good and benefit for all New Zealanders.

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