

NOTES for Speech to Puteawhakatupu Seminar – at Hamilton, New Zealand 23 to 26 August 2014

## Tena tatou katoa

E mihi ana hoki ki o tatou mate, koutou e moe mai na, e moe, e moe, moe marie mai koutou ki te wahi ngaro

Ki a tatou te hunga ora, nau mai, nau mai, haeremai ra tatou katoa, ka huri

Warm greetings to us all

I feel deeply honoured and very privileged to have been asked to be your guest speaker today. I will do my best to reciprocate. Kia ora ra koutou katoa.

### Speech

Those of you who know me will be aware that my home-town is Te Teko a hamlet in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. I will not bore you with what I have done during my lifetime, but I have a list for anyone who may be curious or whatever?

However what I do want to talk about is our Maori karakia which I honestly believe has been the key factor in how we as Maori have survived here in Aostearoa and beyond.

I often ask Maori people “I pehea tatou i tau mai ai ki konei?” (How did we come to this country?) The stock reply is usually “Ma o tatou waka, ma (name of waka)” And then I ask “Me?” (and what else?) They usually do not know what I am alluding to so I have to tell them “Me a tatou karakia no Hawaiki” (Plus our karakia from Hawaiki)

Sadly many Maori now firmly believe that christianity has displaced the old karakia and that they are supposedly more comfortable with christianity. Therefore the old karakia are no longer relevant nor particularly useful. I question that view and I also note that some pacific island people (eg in Tahiti and Cooks) have forgotten the old karakia but they would now like to recover some of them from Aotearoa, if possible.

Our Aotearoa Maori people did not forget our old karakia from Hawaiki. Rather they were gently put aside in order to conform with our new christian beliefs **BUT** whenever the need for them arose they were available to be used to our advantage. I will cite some brief examples from my own experiences.

As a child, I was about 8 years old, I listened to two of our kuia at TeTeko chanting away as they worked on their Maori taro patch. Later I asked them about their chants, and they told me “Koia nei nga karakia no Hawaiki mo te taro.” (These are the Hawaiki karakia for taro) I then politely commented that I did not understand a word of what they were chanting, so they smiled and told me “Kua ngaro ki a tatou, engari kei te pai.” (The meaning is lost to us, but that is alright)

Years later while sitting in a rather boring lecture on Economics at university, I suddenly clicked as to the meaning of the “engari kei te pai..” part, namely, that the taro could still understand the karakia. Needless to say, those kuia always had very successful taro crops. Sadly the Aotearoa taro is no longer cultivated and hence that valuable link to Hawaiki is lost, and we are therefore sadder and very much poorer.

My next two examples are business matters concerning Putauaki Trust (“the Trust”), the owners of the farm block across the road from Tasman pulp and paper mill at Kawerau.

Some years ago the Trust purchased a tourism venture in Whakatane, called Whale and Dolphin Watch. The venture owned two boats that were used to take paying tourists out to sea to watch and/or swim with the dolphins or whales. Trustees agreed that prior to going out to sea we should bless the boats with our traditional “Karakia whakamanu waka” from Hawaiki. I telephoned my uncle at TeTeko to ask for an appropriate karakia, and our discussion in Maori when translated into English went (He) “Which one do you want?” (Me) “I only need one, but how many have you got? (He) “Twelve, and I can send them all to your e-mail.” So within twenty minutes all twelve karakia were on my computer, along with his very interesting comments. I am happy to share these with anyone who may be interested.

My initial reaction was “He mōumou pea ma nga tuarihi?” (These seem to be wasted on tourists) so I set about compiling an adaption for tourists, based on the old karakia, along with an appropriate translation. I took this adaption down to our boatload of tourists, delivered the adapted karakia along with the English translation. Our chief guide told me that she was taking the group out that day, and in her words were “To see what happens” (NB. A copy of this karakia is appended hereto)

About 30 minutes later a very excited voice on her cell phone told me that as they hit the sea, “Two hundred dolphins were waiting for them” and that “This has never happened before” I reminded her very solemnly “We never had the proper karakia before.”

My second and final example is about a forest that we established. The area on our eastern boundary was hilly and difficult to farm so we decided that a commercial forest was more feasible. However when trustees saw the budget estimates they decided that it was too costly so that they agreed to split the area into a lease forest (400 hectares) and the balance (100 hectares) would be our own forest financed entirely by the lease payments. The lease land, being very close to the mill, proved very attractive and a lessee was quickly signed up. At the signing of the lease I advised the lessee’s Maori advisor that our tohunga had been invited to bless the venture. He (the advisor) was a bit hesitant about this so I told him that the tohunga would bless our 100 hectares and we would leave their 400 hectares unblessed as he appeared to have some reservations about asking his principal (the lessee) to support a tohunga. And so the venture proceeded as one forest, but strangely, after 12 years the lease forest trees all dried up and died but when the disease got to our 100 hectares the disease stopped. The lessee then had to cut the useless dead trees down and replant. Sadly they did not check their lease until after the replant, when they found to their horror that their lease was for one rotation and therefore

upon maturity of the new trees the land would be back with the landowners, Putauaki Trust. After some earnest pleading by the lessee, the Trust agreed to an extension to save them from acute (pecuniary and otherwise) embarrassment.

At the signing of the extension I asked their (same) Maori advisor “Kua korerotia atu e koe he aha a koutou rakau i matemate ai?” He remained very silent and pretended that he did not know what I was talking about, but I could tell by his face that he knew exactly what I was alluding to.

E kare ma, kua roa rawa ranei enei korero? So maybe I will start closing down?

My main purpose is to remind us all that we are Maori and that we have some sound and very useful karakia to help us maintain our Maori ways of doing things. In particular, we need to use our traditional Maori karakia from Hawaiki in ALL of our business activities.

I will conclude with my favourite story from TeTeko. In my childhood at TeTeko it was compulsory to attend Sunday School run by the Presbyterian Church. All of our families were adherents to the Ringatu Church but our elders encouraged us to attend the pakeha Sunday School and thereby gain a better understanding of pakeha ways? One Sunday our Minister brought a new teacher along. “Ko Sister Quayle tenei, ma koutou a ia e tiaki” he told us and then he disappeared. Our new teacher looked at us very nervously and finally asked “Can anyone tell me who Adam and Eve were?” We all knew but in those days one did not show off ones knowledge (or lack of it) so we all remained politely silent. So she asked us again and then again. At that stage a little girl in the front felt sorry for her, and she very shyly put her hand up, Sister Quayle very appreciatively asked her to reply and the little girl told her

“Please Miss, they were the first pakehas” We all laughed but later we realized that she was quite correct, for we had Rangi and Papa, but we still laughed again.

Kia ora mai ano ra tatou katoa, he patai ranei kei a koutou?

Waaka Vercoe JP

25 August 2014

## HE MIHI MAIOHA

Tena tatou katoa

Koia nei te mihi maioha  
A nga Kaitiaki katoa  
Ki a koutou katoa nei,  
He manuhiri tuarangi  
Na koutou nei hoki i homai  
Te tino rangatiratanga  
Ki te tangata whenua  
Nau mai, nau mai, haeremai.

Hei whitiki ake i a tatou  
E haere nei ki te moana  
Me whirinaki ranei tatou katoa  
Ki tenei karakia tawhito  
Na o tatou tipuna

### Karakia

#### Kaea;

Tēnā! Rurukutia te waka!  
Rurukutia te kei tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te ihu tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te Kōwhao tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te mata tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia ngā Rauawa tapunui a Taane!  
Tēnā! Rurukutia!

#### Katoa;

Hei! Hā! Hei!!

#### Mihi maioha a nga Kaitiaki

Ahakoia te aha  
Ka mau mahara tonutia  
Te wharaunga ki te moana  
Koia ra  
E ngakaunui ana nga Kaitiaki  
Ka pera ano tenei haerenga mai  
E maumaharatia ai e koutou  
Mo ake tonu atu, ano  
Arohanui tonu

Na Nga Kaitiaki

## SINCERE GREETINGS

Warm greetings to us all

Following is a sincere message  
From all of our Trustees  
To you all who are here  
Are very important guests  
For you have granted  
A great honour  
To us, your hosts  
Welcome, welcome, well met

In order to brace ourselves  
About to proceed to the ocean  
May we invite you all to share  
In this ancient invocation  
From our ancestors

### Invocation

#### Leader:

Now! Bless this boat  
Bless the sacred stern of Taane!  
Bless the sacred prow of Taane!  
Bless the sacred hull of Taane!  
Bless the sacred figurehead of Taane!  
Bless the sacred side boards of Taane!  
Now!, Bless them!

#### All:

Hei! Ha! Hei!!

#### Sincere greeting from the Trustees

Come what may  
One always remembers  
A voyage out to sea.  
So be it  
Trustees earnestly hope  
That this visit will also be so  
Very memorable to you all  
For ever more as well  
With much love

From The Trustees

## APPENDIX

The following passage is an explanation by TePene Mamaku of TeTeko about this ancient karakia (incantation) used in olden times to clear a waka (canoe) prior to making a new voyage. His comments are entirely in te reo Maori (the Maori language) and he makes some very interesting and pertinent comments about adaption to suit the modern world that we live in now.

I have carefully extracted parts of this old karakia into a modern setting that could be legitimately and respectfully used for voyages made by our dolphin watching expeditions. I have also set the revised modern karakia into a format whereby all voyagers can participate in a meaningful and respectful manner. For informative purposes an English translation is included, although the karakia needs to be recited entirely in the Maori language, the original language of Aotearoa/New Zealand. If participants prefer to use the English language then that is probably acceptable as noted in the following comment by Te Pene Mamaku, contained in the full extract appended to this report.

E ai ki ngā kōrero,  
ngā tangata hari i ēnei karakia,  
tohunga, ahakoa nui atu rātou  
i tērā e whakapāe ana ētahi, kia kotahi  
noa iho te tohunga.  
Engari, ko tērā e āhua kore ana taku  
ngākau e whakāe,  
ko tērā, e pai ma te wahine ēnei karakia  
tūturu tawhito e hari  
Na tēnei ahau i whakamāori ai  
i ētahi o ngā whitinga karakia,  
kia pānuitia i roto i te reo o  
tauiwi, kia whai wāhi ai te wahine ki  
te whakaputa i tō rātou ake mana,  
Kia hāere ngātahi ai hoki te Ao tawhito,  
me te Ao hou.  
Ēngari, ngā karakia tūturu o te Ao Tawhito,  
auā, tēnā pea, ma te wā.

*(translation)*

*Some would say,  
Such karakia should be led  
By tohunga solely or collectively,  
Or others would assert, only one  
Tohunga solely.  
But on that my conscience  
tends to disagree,  
For, it is fine that women conduct  
such original and old karakia.  
Hence I have generalized some  
excerpts of karakia so that  
they can be recited in foreign tongues  
and thereby also allow women a  
chance to express their own integrity.  
Thereby uniting the Old world with  
The New world  
However, there is uncertainty,  
for the traditional karakia  
Of the Old world, perhaps, over  
time it will be resolved?.*

Here is my adaption that I recommend we use in the flyer that we give to our clients  
[starts]

**Kaea; Tēnā! Rurukutia te waka!**  
Rurukutia te kei tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te ihu tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te Kōwhao tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te mata tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia ngā Rauawa tapunui a Taane!  
Tēnā! Rurukutia!

**Leader: Now! Bless this boat**  
Bless the sacred stem of Taane!  
Bless the sacred prow of Taane!  
Bless the sacred hull of Taane!  
Bless the sacred figurehead of Taane!  
Bless the sacred side boards of Taane!  
Now!, Bless them!

Kaihoe; Hei! Hā! Hei!!

Voyagers/Crew: Hei! Ha! Hei!!

[Ends]

[Note: Taane is the traditional Maori God of Forests, provider of the canoe timber]  
Excerpt from a discussion document provided by Te Pene Mamaku of Te Teko

Ngā karakia whakamaanu waka. .

Ka piki ngā kaihautū me ngā kaihoe ki runga o te waka.  
Ko tā rātou ake ruruku tēnei, i ngā wāhanga o te waka.

Kaea; Tēnā! Rurukutia te waka!  
Rurukutia te kei tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te ihu tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te Kōwhao tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia te mata tapunui a Taane!  
Rurukutia ngā Rauawa tapunui a Taane!  
Tēnā! Rurukutia!  
Kaihoe; Hei! Hā! Hei!!  
Pākia mai e ngā hoe, kia pā a Tangaroa kia Taane.

I konei kua tū rīpeka ngā hoe ki te mihi,  
ā, ka tere te waka.

Ka puta te reo o te wahine.

He kōrero mo te āhua hari i ēnei karakia;

Ka tāea te hari karakia whakamaanu waka, e te tangata kotahi,  
nui atu hoki. E ai ki ngā kōrero, ngā tangata hari i ēnei karakia,  
he  
tohunga, ahakoa nui atu rātou i tērā e whakapāe ana ētahi, kia kotahi

noa iho te tohunga. Engari, ko tērā e āhua kore ana taku ngākau e  
whakāe,

ko tērā, e pai ma te wahine ēnei karakia tūturu tawhito e hari. Na  
tēnei ahau

i whakamāori ai i ētahi o ngā whitinga karakia, kia pānuitia i roto i  
te reo ō

tauwi, kia whai wāhi ai te wahine ki te whakaputa i tō rātou ake  
mana,

Kia hāere ngātahi ai hoki te Ao tawhito, me te Ao hou.

Ēngari, ngā karakia tūturu o te Ao Tawhito, auā, tēnā pea, ma te wā.