

The Pouakani Report 1993

3 Perspectives of Land and People

3.1 Introduction

Some useful information about the nature of the physical environment and the people who occupied the land can be derived from the accounts of Pakeha travellers in the nineteenth century. From these descriptions we can put together a picture of the landscapes of the upper Waikato valley and Lake Taupo before the massive transformations of bush clearance, farm development and exotic forestry in the twentieth century. It was not an empty region. Although large areas appeared desolate, there were many clusters of kainga, small settlements of perhaps up to 20 or 30 people, scattered along the bush margins, by lake shore or river, and associated with areas of surface geothermal activity. Unlike the lowland forests of the North Island there were large expanses of fern, scrub and tussock on the volcanic plateau, and only scattered patches of bush around the shores of Lake Taupo. The ranges to the west of the lake were clothed with dense podocarp forest.

J C Bidwill described patterns of settlement around Taupo in the late 1830s:

I should think the population of the pas on the lake could not be less than 5000. The country around I do not think can be populous; it is too mountainous and bare of wood, and the Mowries [sic] only grow potatoes in land which is just cleared, and after about three crops abandon it, and clear another portion of forest. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:1}

Bidwell pondered the cause of so little forest land around Taupo. He did not believe it was all the result of human activity. Potatoes had only been introduced less than fifty years earlier, and few other crops were grown:

Although I do not think the growth of potatoes sufficient to account for the absence of forest over a great part of the country - perhaps more than half - yet it is certain the wood had decreased, from some cause or other, within no great distance of time; as I constantly found logs and roots lying in the wet ground of barren moors, where they could not have been brought by any natural causes; and they were too distant from any place where they grow at present, as well as too useless, to have been conveyed there. The natives now yearly destroy large quantities of land, by their wasteful system of agriculture and in time there will be no timberland left: but this cause has not been long in operation, and is inadequate to the visible effects on the face of the country.

Wood is excessively scarce near Towpo [sic], except in places inaccessible, and land fit for the cultivation of potatoes equally so Were they to take half the care in the cultivation of the potato they do

in that of the Kormera [Kumara] or sweet potato, they might grow it in hundreds of places which are now only covered with fern, and are in progress towards becoming barren; owing to the constant fires which the dry nature of that plant causes to spread in a most destructive manner. A person who paid attention to the subject might easily tell how many years had elapsed since the forest was cut down in any particular place by observing the height of the fern. In the first year, after its cultivation for potatoes has been discontinued, the fern springs up ten, or even thirteen feet in height, gradually dwindles down to six inches and at last vanishes altogether: it is then replaced by a short wiry grass, growing in small tufts, about a foot apart, with nothing between, and presenting the most desolate appearance. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:2}

Frederick von Hochstetter, who travelled in the Taupo region in 1859, also commented on the "potatoe-fields and native huts" on the slopes of Tutukau:

It is an old Maori custom dating from the times of war to establish at remote and less accessible points, usually in large forests, stations and plantings, upon which the people might fall back in case of need. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:3}

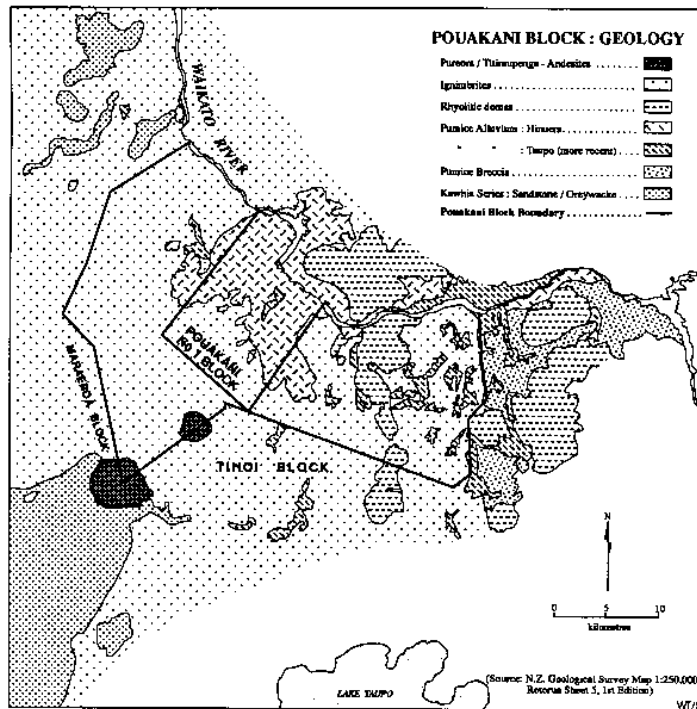
The geologist L I Grange also speculated on the reasons for so much land cleared of forest in the Taupo district. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:4} He noted the extensive patches of forest in the Mokai and Oruanui areas, "Totara logs strew the ground at many points in the open country, a fact suggesting that the forest was formerly more extensive". Reports of "charred totara stumps at the base of Tauhara", patches of "hummocky ground" and "abundant logs of charred wood" in pumice or ash deposits "remote from existing forest areas" all indicated more extensive forests in the past. He considered the effects of a volcanic eruption and ash shower:

The eruption of this ash probably destroyed much of the forest cover. The tendency of forest patches to occupy hill-tops and steep slopes from which ash would be quickly removed, and the occurrence of the chief areas of woodland west of Taupo, where the prevailing wind would reduce the amount of ash, support this hypothesis. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:5}

Whatever the reasons - ash deposited from past volcanic eruptions, fires which raced out of control through the fern into forests, deliberate clearing of forest - all contributed to the destruction of forest cover around Lake Taupo.

The north Taupo environment provided a range of ecological situations including forest, fern, tussock, swamp, lake and river, all which provided a range of resources for successful Maori occupation of the region. In addition, in selected localities were the areas of surface geothermal activity which provided warmth in a harsh climate, heat for cooking and the therapeutic qualities of healing muds and hot pools. Such areas with a range of resources on the margins of the forest were centres of permanent settlement. The open tussock areas in between patches of bush were also important resources as hunting and foraging grounds, but not permanently occupied. Fern

grounds were also significant but the use of fern root (aruhe) as food declined with the introduction of potatoes in the first decades of the nineteenth century.



Map 3.1

H Meade described the area of Tutukau/Oruanui in 1864 as being "much richer and more wooded" than land he had crossed from the north on his way from Rotorua. The settlements, including Puna, Puke Tarata and Oruanui, were at the margins of the bush areas, and were probably typical:

Slept in a large whare at Puke Tarata - the Maories [sic] on one side and we on the other, with a blazing fire in the middle, but which went out and left us miserably cold

The natives about here keep neither pigs, poultry nor livestock of any kind, and the difficulty of transport from the coast is so great, that with the exception of an occasional pigeon, he does not taste meat more than two or three times a year

The pah [Oruanui] is strongly situated on the crest of a small hill, surrounded by a high stockade consisting of a double row of slab-stake fencing, with flanking angles; and lined with a chain of open and covered rifle pits.

There being no raupo to be had here or at Puke Tarata, the whares are built of wood, and roofed with the bark of the Totara tree. It is difficult to keep these wooden whares warm as we found to our cost last night.

At Puke Tarata and in the pah the inhabitants have consequently built most of their dwellings in the style of a "wharepuni" ... the whole of the house below ground except the roof, and even that plastered over with earth to the thickness of a foot or more; and having no communication with the open air save through the narrow door, which fits quite closely. Hot, stifling and abominably unwholesome.

The hills surrounding Oruanui pah are covered with forest. There is plenty of open land in the valley which is watered by a small stream, but the natives plant all their potatoes in the woods where the soil is much richer. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:6}

While Pakeha travellers may have seen the region north and west of Lake Taupo as wild, dreary, desolate waste land, to Maori every place had meaning. Some travellers noted this without comprehending the full significance:

When travelling with them, another interesting fact was that they seemed to take a pride in being able to define thoroughly all the natural features of their country. Each mountain and hill had its special name, and every valley and plain and river down to the smallest stream, each being called after some characteristic feature or legendary tale connected with it; whilst every tree, plant, bird, and insect was known by a designation which betokened either its appearance or habits. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:7}

It was not only natural features but also practical knowledge of places where food, fibre and other resources were obtainable that were significant. There were also spiritual qualities of places that had special significance as wahi tapu (sacred places including burial grounds, urupa), places associated with past battles or other incidents involving important ancestors, or places where the mauri (life force or essence of a place and its people) were said to be preserved. Such things were not usually discussed in detail with Pakeha travellers, although occasionally some references to wahi tapu were made. Ensign Best recorded an incident near Maungatautari in 1841:

On the way we passed the graves of several chiefs who had fallen in battle; on one of these was a stone head which I alarmed the Mauries [Maori] very much by touching; one of them declared that the Spirit would certainly rise in the night and avenge itself on me; he appeared to feel the danger I was in very much. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:8}

Meade also commented on social aspects of Maori settlement patterns when he discovered "that my guide has a failing common amongst even the best of Maori warriors - a childish fear of darkness and solitude". He noted, "Though few in numbers, the Maoris are an eminently sociable and gregarious race. They are never found living alone". He contrasted the isolation of many European colonists, shepherds and trappers living in situations which a Maori would not tolerate, "their superstitious fears, barely scotched - not killed - by the teaching of the missionaries, would people each overhanging rock or lonely cave with some fresh horror to be feared, some malignant spirit of evil". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:9} Meade, the British military man, failed to appreciate the spiritual qualities (taha wairua) of the

land, the wahi tapu, the associations with ancestors, and the mauri, which underlie Maori attitudes to land and identity. Such spiritual dimensions and protective spirits are qualities to be respected and feared, because if the taha wairua is not acknowledged appropriately, things will not go well with traveller or local resident.

Meade noted a form of wahi tapu near Oruanui, pointed out by his guide, Poihipi, "a cairn of earth and stones which marks the death-place of his last and favourite wife, who died last year whilst on a journey with him to the coast". Such monuments were not unusual, it seems:

We have at different times passed many of these monuments, often marking a battle-scene where some warrior chief had fallen in savage strife in the good old days of spear and mere [club].

Some of them were surmounted by a grim-looking head, carved out of wood or stone; others had merely a post and flax mat. They serve only however to "tapu" the actual death place of the deceased - the graves themselves are neatly fenced in on the top of a hill near a settlement. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:10}

Urupa (burial grounds) were also wahi tapu. The influence of Christianity in the nineteenth century encouraged the fenced graveyards described by Meade. Traditionally, burials were made and after a year or so, the bones were exhumed (hahunga) and deposited in a safe place. Around Taupo, such repositories were usually in a cave, in a cliff or other secluded and inaccessible place, often deep in the forest.

In general, the favourite site for permanent settlement was one within easy reach of forest, water, cultivable land and geothermal heat. Some places had particular strategic significance or were refuges. J H Kerry-Nicholls noted a pa on the "Tihoi Plains" called Kahakaharoa on the Pikopiko stream: "At one time there had been a considerable native settlement here, but now the whole place was nearly abandoned". He described it as "a very wild, dreary looking place, situated in a rock-bound inaccessible spot, right at the base of the Hurakia Mountains". At Kahakaharoa he was told about "a tradition among all the tribes of the existence at one time of a gigantic lizard, which is said to have inhabited the caves and rocky places of the North Island". However he could not determine whether "this was in fact a real or fabulous reptile". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:11} A reptile like creature called ngarara is not an unusual tradition, and was often regarded as a protector of local settlements, or a particular wahi tapu.

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3.2 Pakeha Descriptions of Pouakani Block

There are few Pakeha accounts of the Pouakani area in the nineteenth century. In April 1841 a party of travellers including Ernest Dieffenbach, the naturalist employed by the New Zealand Company, Ensign Best, a naval officer on leave from his ship, and two others, Mr Merrett and Captain Symonds, travelled through the area. Dieffenbach and Best left written accounts of their journey which provide the most detailed descriptions of the land and the people. From Maungatautari, the party travelled upstream, along the west bank of the Waikato river. Best described the view from a hill near Mangakino, and the route to Horaaruhe:

On attaining the top of the hill a thick mist prevented my seeing the Wai Kato which rolled betwixt precipitous cliffs perhaps two hundred feet high. I could hear the roaring of the waters but could not distinguish the rapids described by my friends. On the opposite side of the river a most extraordinary scene presented itself: mass upon mass of Pumice stone and volcanic ashes lay piled in the utmost confusion a picture of Chaos and utter desolation not a tree or green thing was to be seen we stopped an hour to breakfast and then resumed our route through a country broken and fissured in every direction the soil was nothing but pumice stone and ashes on which nothing grew but some miserable Tufted grass crossed the Wai Papa [a tributary stream below Mangakino] over which there was a very romantic bridge suspended on ropes the road way was very narrow and made of a kind of long basket woven out of brushwood immediately under the bridge the river dashed down a precipice of thirty or forty feet. We now crossed two high and very steep ranges and these passed the scene changed into a succession of ravines, the largest of which appears to have been the ancient bed of the Wai Kato we walked until five and then halted. Weather threatening.

6th Under weigh soon after eight our road still lay through ravines of a similar nature to those we travelled through yesterday and the country was still dreary in the extreme. We crossed Monga Kino [Mangakino] a free mountain stream taking us above our middles. All these rivers were evidently low and must be utterly impassable in a fresh. At twelve a party of Mauries [sic] met us with a present of Potatoes the finest I had ever seen in New Zealand these we stopped to roast and then walked until about five when we reached a frontier Pah called Oraruhe [Horaaruhe], here we were welcomed by shots and the Iremai [Haere mai]. I am not inclined to form a very good opinion of the Inhabitants who are the wildest Matties I have yet seen but much allowance must be made. This is a frontier Pah.

7th A very free day but our Mauries would not stir Parties were continually going in and out one arrived from Roto Rua and Mukatoo [Maketu]. These people are at present allied and at feud with the people of Matta Matta [Ngati Haua of Matamata district] who are favoured by the Wai Katos this time rebuilding this Pah which is on the Frontier of the Taupo country. In a great war which raged some time it was abandoned and destroyed. Its position is very strong on the top of a steep hill with a swamp at the bottom but at the time we were at it was almost destitute of water. They are now stockading it with a double row of Palisading but on the whole it is a miserable place capable of holding perhaps two hundred of all sorts packed "a la mauri". Most of the fighting men were absent having gone to Otaki

8th A threatening morning with a light rain falling We passed through a beautiful wood principally Totara and Kikatea [kahikatea] and in this were the potato grounds which produced the fine potatoes I have mentioned. The wood grows on the summit of a ridge of hills. After passing the wood we descended into the vallies [sic] or plains and were again in the region of scoriae and stunted grass about three miles walk brought us to the Pah which was even more strongly situated than that we had left. It was on the top of a very steep high conical hill defended on two sides by a very deep ravine. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:12}

Most of this day was spent exploring the hot springs and cooking places at Ohineariki, one of several groups of geothermal features near Mokai. The 9th of May was a Sunday and Best expressed his frustrations in being unable to obtain more food or travel, being "thwarted by a gang of Psalm singing savages". Missionary teaching had already made an impact:

10th. Dieff [Dieffenbach] went to visit some more mineral springs and we with much trouble got our party to start. About eleven we were under weigh our road was as dreary and barren as usual. No People no Birds no Beasts utterly desolate. It rained heavily and we waded through swamps and creeks sometimes nearly up to our middles. Symonds & I contrived to get separated from the rest of the Party and lost our way we had much difficulty in regaining the track again About five we reached Tutuka Monna [Tutakamoana Pa] the strongest position I had yet seen the hill on which it was built rose abruptly with a rapid river running at its base and the path leading up it was in some places over the bare rock and so steep as to require the use of both hands & feet. Sometime ago the Natta Kahounuies [Ngati Kahungunu] attacked the Pah but could not take it. The inhabitants are Natta-Row-Kowas [Ngati Raukawa] at present there are few in the Pah all the fighting men having gone to Otake [Otaki]. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:13}

Dieffenbach's account also began with a description of the view of the Waikato valley from a hill near Mangakino:

On ascending the hill which separated us from it [Waikato River], a novel scene opened before me. Looking to the eastward the land appeared as if the waves of the sea had suddenly become petrified: on the declivities of the low undulations the white and naked clay appeared; in other parts the hillocks were covered with a stunted fern and a coarse discoloured grass; and the brown tint which these imparted to the whole gave it a barren and desolate aspect. The river was not visible from the hill; and in order to see it I was obliged to descend into the deep channel which it had dug out of the soft tufaceous and leucitic lava. The banks which form its channel during freshes are about 150 yards distant from each other, but now the river was confined between banks of six feet high, and within much narrower limits, not being more than fifty yards broad. Its course was from S. by E. to N. by W. In some parts it was deep, and at others it formed rapids; the water was bluish and clear, and marked the near neighbourhood of the snows and glaciers of the Ruapahu [sic], in which it takes its rise.

We had a distant view of Horo Horo, a mountain in which the river Thames [Waihou] has its source; it bore S80°E. We also saw Titiraupena [sic] a pyramidal mountain, with naked black rocks heaped upon its pointed summit, and bearing S20°E.

On the 5th and 6th we passed through a country in the highest degree curious to the geologist. It was broken into a number of hillocks, most irregularly dispersed over the perfectly level surface of the original table-land. On the hillocks themselves most regular terraces were visible in some places, and it was plain that they could have only been produced by a gradual fall of the waters. All these hillocks consisted of tufa, or the before-mentioned lapilli of pumicestone, cemented together. Everywhere flowed little streamlets, and we passed two deep creeks, the Maunga Wio [Mangawhio] and the Waipapa tributaries of the river Waikato. The Waipapa presented a very wild scene. The river, here about forty yards broad, lost itself in successive falls in a deep fissure which it had corroded out of the soft rock. The country now became more desert; as the level land, consisting of the same materials as the hills, was as yet but little decomposed, and nourished only a stunted vegetation of grass and fern, and a plant of the family of the Compositae.

Near the river-courses the soil was better, and bore a good many shrubs. Of animal life nothing was visible, with the exception of the *Cigale Zelandica*, which filled the air with its chirping note, and a brown ground-lark very common in New Zealand. We passed a number of deep holes in the ground, apparently produced by the water infiltrating into the porous substance, and carrying off a quantity of it by forming a subterraneous rivulet. Here and there I found pieces of obsidian, and everything proved that we were fast approaching a great centre of volcanic action. We passed between two isolated and very remarkable hills: that to our left [right?] was called Titiraupena, and its

top was shaped like a lofty cupola: that to our right [left?] was Wakakahu; it was rugged and broken. We were met here by many natives, who had already heard of our approach. We hailed their arrival with even greater delight than they did ours, as for the last two days we had been living on short rations: this they had foreseen, and accordingly brought us several baskets full of food. In the evening we reached their pa, which was called Ahirara [a separate kainga near Horaaruhe pa]. It was situated on the border of a splendid forest of totara, rimu, and matai. The country here became more hilly, the hills belonging to a range which rose into precipitous and fantastic crests, and which may be said to occupy the left shore of the Waikato after that river issues from the lake of Taupo. The pa was surrounded with high and rudely carved fences. It appears that the feeling of security which in the places near the coast has begun to exercise its influence has not yet extended so far inland. The natives have some Christian catechists amongst them, and are occasionally visited by the missionaries from Tauranga and Rotorua. Their number amounts to about 400.

Only three miles distant from this place is another pa, the road to it leading through the hilly forest. This pa stood on a pyramidal hill, which was naturally fortified by deep perpendicular chasms. It contained only a few houses, and had lately been established by a chief who was desirous of being at the head of a tribe. Here we stopped on the 8th, and were received with much kindness by the inmates, as they were relations of our guide: however, a slight disagreement arose on the following day, which was Sunday. They refused us food, saying they had become missionaries of late, and had been told it was the greatest sin to kill a pig or to cook on Sunday. That we demanded it on that day was not our fault, as we had solicited it the day before. Titipa started off to a neighbouring Heathen pa, although the rain fell in torrents, and came back in the afternoon with a pig. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:14}

Hochstetter visited the Taupo district in 1859, travelling from the upper Mokau and Ongarue valleys over the ranges to reach the shores of Lake Taupo about Kuratau:

The long-stretched wooded ridges of the Rangitoto and Tuhua mountains, rising to a height of 3000 feet above the level of the sea, shut out the horizon in a north westerly direction, and only one point attracts the attention by its rather singular form - I am speaking of the Titiraupenga mountain, from the summit of which a bare pyramid towers up resembling a ruined castle. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:15}

On his map "The Southern Part of the Province of Auckland" Hochstetter labelled the area between Titiraupenga and the Waikato river as "Volcanic Tableland 2000 ft. high consisting of trachytic rocks thickly covered with forests and unexplored". This was the caption referred to by Kerry-Nicholls in his description of his journey from west Taupo to Maungatautari in 1883. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:16} On Hochstetter's map a track was marked with the inscription "Overland mail track" between this

caption and the Waikato river, across the area of the Pouakani block. This was the route of the Maori track by which local Maori carried the mail between 1857 and 1863, when the service was stopped by war in the Waikato. By 1883 the area was still largely unknown to Pakeha and, Kerry-Nicholls claimed, to Maori also. But local Maori at Taupo may well have had other motives for telling him "that it was covered in dense bush, and that it would be impossible to travel through it for any distance, and especially on account of the numerous rivers and creeks that would have to be crossed". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:17}

Kerry-Nicholls described the landscape along his route north-west from the Waihaha area of Lake Taupo:

Journeying still further on, we crossed the Te Tihoi Plains, a fine tract of open country extending around the mountains of Titiraupenga as far north as the banks of the Waikato River, and thence north-westerly to the Te Toto [Rangitoto] Ranges. This large area comprising nearly 1000 square miles, was the country described upon the maps as covered with dense bush; and where we had expected to travel through primeval forests we found magnificent open plains, clothed with a rich vegetation of native grasses, and composed of some of the best soil we had met with during our journey.

As we rode over these plains, the scenery was magnificent, as much by reason of the vast scope of country that stretched before us as by the variety of mountain scenery that surrounded the plains in every direction. To the north-east high, forest-clad mountains rose up one above the other in the direction of Ouranui [Oruanui] and the valley of the Waikato, while to the west were rugged, forest-clad ranges, crowned by the towering form of Titiraupenga.

This magnificent mountain, which is one of the highest peaks in the northern portion of the King Country, rises to an altitude of some 4000 feet above the level of the sea. It assumes in general outline the formation of an extensive cone, with a broad base and long, sweeping sides, while its summit is surmounted by a gigantic pinnacle of rock, of a pointed form, and which serves with the great mountain as a conspicuous landmark all over the surrounding country. It is covered from base to summit with dense forests and its enormous gorges and deep ravines give rise to many streams and rivers. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:18}

In one of the ravines flowed the Mangakowiriwiri, "a tremendous gorge of the mountain, flanked on either side by tall precipices of rock Looking down into the deep fissure we could just see the silver streak of water foaming nearly a hundred feet below". The stream was crossed "by means of a very narrow and very primitive footway, which the natives told us was known as the 'Bridge of God'". Between the Mangakowiriwiri and Mangakino rivers was "open undulating country covered with a luxuriant growth of tussock and other native grasses". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:19} The Mangakino was crossed by swimming horses across a ford, and the

travellers continued on to cross the Waipapa river and Rangitoto ranges into the Waipa valley:

We gained the crossing place by a steep winding descent, the mountains with their rocky bluffs on the opposite side of the river being clothed with a dense vegetation of giant trees, while to the right of the track by which we had to descend was a small mountain forming a complete cone, and which was clothed from base to summit with a luxuriant growth of fern and tall manuka. The whole gorge through which the river wound had a very wild and beautiful appearance, while the water, like that of the Waikato, into which it fell after crossing the plains, was as clear as crystal. Beyond the Waipapa we passed through more open country until we neared the Te Toro [Rangitoto] ranges, when mountain, hill, and valley mingled together in a most picturesque way.

It took us several hours to traverse the Te Toto ranges, the track winding about in every direction with deep ravines on either side. Here the vegetation was of the most luxuriant and varied order, but the enormous roots of the great trees made riding very difficult. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:20}

Lawrence Cussen, surveyor, described the land between Titiraupenga and the Waikato river in his evidence before the Native Land Court in 1891:

I am District Surveyor. I carried out the triangulation survey of Tauponui-a-Tia West

I know the land well, on the edge of the bush and mountain side there is a great deal of good land - but towards the Waikato river it is very poor pumice country - some good land at Waipapa - the bushes are good land - totara timber there - the land is not first class but it is good land for Taupo country. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:21}

From these descriptions we can compile a landscape with a backdrop of rugged forested ranges from Hurakia to Rangitoto, in which the volcanic cones of Pureora and Titiraupenga feature prominently. The land which slopes toward Lake Taupo and the Waikato river is undulating, but cut by deep gorges of streams tributary to the lake and Waikato river. Much of this is open tussock, fern or manuka, but the gorges are wooded. To the north of Lake Taupo are large patches of bush. The main settlement areas were on the shores of Lake Taupo, along the bush margins from Hurakia to Titiraupenga, and the bush areas of Mokai and Oruanui.

Waitangi Tribunal, Department of Justice, Wellington.

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3.3 Maori Settlement on Pouakani Block

The Pouakani landscape viewed through Maori eyes in the evidence recorded in the minute books of the Native Land Court reveals a land known and named in considerable detail by its occupants ([map 3.2](#)). The following extract from the evidence of Waraki Kapu describing the kainga around Titiraupenga illustrates this:

Kaiwha: [named 15 adults] and many children
We have plantations and bird snaring places, Ruahinetapu wae is a tutu [bird snaring tree], Rakautahere (a tree with nooses) called Waitoroto, other snaring places, Pungapunga, Te Waipapa, Te Punaimatawhero, Karangaroa, Waituhi, Te Matau, Haru, Tawapiko, Pukekawa, Te Nihinihi and Te Mahau.

Another kainga - Te Hapainga - This kainga is now deserted. Wakapipi was an ancient kainga, also Whatapo, Te Weraroa, Pakaraka (last named where Ha himself lived). At this place Ha planted a Karaka tree which he brought from Kawhia.

Kainga's continued: Tomotomoariki (where Kerekeha and others live), Te Whata, Ahuatawa (plantation), Maropatate (a plantation), Tarekawa (plantation), Waiwhakauru (a plantation), Te Rangipinana (a karaka tree), Owairenga (a plantation), Te Rauwakataua, Waikotukutuku (a miro tree), Te Whanakeroa (bird snaring place). These are all the kaingas at the Titiraupenga end of the block. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:22}

The evidence given to the Native Land Court also suggests a good deal of mobility in settlement patterns. Te Waiti Hohaia commented "we had so many kaingas we travelled from place to place". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:23} The evidence of Werohia Te Hiko is indicative:

I lived at Waimahana first before Kaiwha, the former is a kainga mahinga kumara [a settlement for kumara cultivation]. My father and all Ngati Wairangi planted at the latter before Te Ariki [1851 or 1852]. After that fight all moved to Hapotea and Horaaruhe and Tahataharoa.

Kaiwha was deserted for a time, till after Hinana [1856] when Te Mete, Rangitoheriri te Kawao and Paora went back there. There were two houses there then, a wharepuni [a substantial building for sleeping in, principal house] and a kauta [cooking shelter], the property of Te Mete and Te Kirimate.

I lived at Tahataharoa and Hapotea and Horaaruhe after Potatau was made king [1858]. I was at Orohena [Arohena] at the time of Orakau [1864] and after the fall of that pa returned to Hapotea etc. and was living there when Te Kooti came from Taupo, but was at Kaiwha when the fight took place at Tapapa [1870].

One wharepuni one kauta and one wharau [temporary shelter made of branches] were the only buildings at Kaiwha when Potatau was made King; these were the only houses till N'Apakura came [as refugees after Orakau, 1864]. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:24}

The Waikato river was a food resource but this was not a place for permanent settlement. Werohia Te Hiko described the area between Maraemanuka and Waipapa streams. Along the river bank were:

koura [fresh water crayfish] fisheries and duck snares The kainga mahinga manu [bird snaring camps] ... belonged to our matuas and tupunas [parents and ancestors] down to ourselves. No cultivations there along the river bank, the plantations were all near the bush away from the river. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:25}

Although some claims were made that kumara had been grown at other places than Waimahana, Werohia Te Hiko denied this and said that potatoes were grown at Opahi and Maraemanuka. Perhaps the hot springs at Waimahana provided sufficient warmth, a local micro climate which allowed kumara growing here but not elsewhere. This site is now flooded by Whakamaru hydro lake. There were also "places along the river bank where pohue" was collected. This is a name given to several climbing plants and it is not clear which one is referred to here. "There were no tuturu kainga [permanent settlements] on the Waikato River ... the houses were only temporary, used when fishing and catching birds". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:26}

The importance of the settlements close to the bush is also borne out in the evidence of Eru Te Rangietu who described Ahirara as:

a kainga [village] and mahinga [cultivation], crops of potatoes, corn and tobacco were here planted. I think the fences are still standing. Bird snaring localities are here. At Poroatemarama which is near Ahirara are the tutus [bird snaring trees] Te Kohi and Te Rimu belonging to Natana and Te Poutunoa respectively. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:27}

This evidence also indicates how people of each kainga had their own places to go to obtain food. Important places, such as bird snaring trees, were given distinctive names. Hitiri Te Paerata described the kainga on the Pouakani block, beginning with the settlements below Titiraupenga:

Owairenga was a kainga and cultivations ... the principal houses were at Pukerimu a short distance from Owairenga the largest house was Tataurangi ... Tia's grave is at Otua near Pukerimu

Kaiwha was a large kainga ... Kaiwha Komako and Te Puna kaingas were near one another. There is one large wharepuni at Kaiwha besides many smaller ones

Te Hapainga was an ancient kainga ... from this settlement people went to catch birds Whatapo was another settlement inhabited at the time of our ancestors. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:28}

He added:

Te Waimahana... is situated on both banks of the Waikato River. I lived there and my father before me. The houses of this settlement were not wharepunis but wharetoetoe [ie not substantial buildings but thatched huts], it was merely a kainga for cultivation purposes The cemetery of this kainga is on the Whakamaru Block... at this settlement crops of potatoes were planted and birds were snared

Horaaruhe was a kainga and a pa At this kainga were two large wharepunis one of which was called WairangiIn connection with this settlement were extensive plantationsThe bird snaring places of this kainga were at Waipapa. Ngawhakawhitiwhiti, a Matai tree, was owned by Te Paerata Kaiawha. Ngamataiturua, two Matai trees, belonged to my father. Hamutira a waitahere manu (bird snaring water) belonged to my father. Te Waipopotea belonged to Paora Ngamotu. Since the Hinana feast [1856] no game has been snared at these places

There are two burial grounds in connection with this settlement [Waipapa] one at Kanohikorio and the other at the settlement itself. At this kainga was one large house, Kaingaroa, it is my house. There are extensive cultivations. Mine is the only large house of this settlement. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:29}

The northern margin of the Tuaropaki bush around the present Mokai village was a particularly attractive site. Sheltered from cold southerly winds by the forested slopes to the south, close to swamps which were a source of flax and raupo as well as water fowl, and with several hot springs nearby, this seems to have been an area for permanent settlement. Although several kainga were named in the evidence, the main settlement from the early 1840s was Hapotea. Kainga such as Mokaiteure, Tuhuatahi, Tururu, Te Pa o te Ata and others were small outlying clusters of houses. The kainga were usually unfenced, although fences were constructed around the cultivations to keep out pigs and other livestock. There was a significant fortified site near Hapotea, Te Pa o te Ata, which was periodically occupied. Hitiri Te Paerata stated in his evidence:

Te Pa o te Ata belonged to Te Atainutai, he built it. It is the oldest pa in that part of the block. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:30}

Te Pa o te Ata was the pa of N'Te Kohera and N'Parekawa {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:31}

Te Pa o te Ata is at Hapotea, in it were two large housesFormerly the place was wooded. N'Ha and N'Parewhete Wairangi felled it and planted crops. Hapotea was first occupied at the introduction of Christianity [early 1840s]. Tahataharoa was occupied at the same time There were two principal houses at Hapotea, three small houses and three kauta {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:32}

The evidence given in the minute books in the investigation of the Pouakani block is at times contradictory. This is understandable because it has to be understood in the context of competing claims for ancestral rights to the land and its resources among several hapu whose mana was at stake. However, as the following extracts will indicate, it is clear that there was a lot of interaction between various kainga due to the kin linkages. There was considerable mobility among people moving from one kainga to another, and kainga were periodically abandoned and reconstructed. The evidence of the following people illustrates this.

Wereta Hoani:

It was when the Rev. Mr Whiteley and Takerei came to bring the Gospel that I saw the first clearing at Hapotea, this was before the death of Te Heuheu [1846] - that was the first clearing made there. There were some small clearings before that for crops to feed bird snares. There was a kainga at Hapotea before the first clearing I have spoken of was made. I did not see the clearings made which existed before the large clearing which I saw being made.

I saw one clearing being made at Te Wairoa before the death of Te Heuheu; there were some other clearings made since. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:33}

Hitiri Te Paerata:

Te Paerata [Hitiri's father] was the first to occupy Hapotea and make it a kainga, before the building of Wairangi [meeting house] at Horaaruhe. Other kaingas, Tahataharoa, Waitutu, and Matatu, were established also before the building of that whare.

When I say Te Paerata and others were first to occupy Hapotea, I mean that they reoccupied them, they had been old kaingas of the ancestors. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:34}

Werohia Te Hiko:

Hapotea was a large kainga - whares there for various purposes. One was weather board outside and kakaho [thatched] overhead; it was not a whare puni, but a whare kopai [walled house, cf. house with dug out floor and roof to ground level, a wharepuni]. It was built as a whare karakia [church] {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:35}

Hitiri Te Paerata:

I saw the building of the pallisaded pa at Tahataharoa, it was only a break wind and to operate as a bar against pigs. I was young it was since Christianity. It was no pa at all, only a kainga and was not in a defensible position Hapotea was fenced in the same manner, no carvings. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:36}

Poni Peita described bush clearing and settlement at Hapotea:

We were the first to occupy and made bush clearings, from these we moved to Hapotea proper and made a kainga there, this was the first settlement of Hapotea. Te Paerata objected to our first kainga (because it was close to the forest and he objected to women going and cooked food being taken into the bush, as it was tapu and it would not do for food or women to be in the forest in the winter time when birds were being snared etc.) and that is how it was we shifted to Hapotea. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:37}

Te Rangikaripiripia described Hapotea: "At the time of Hinana [1856] there were three wharepunis, 3 kauta, one house with a chimney, one church and one pataka [food storehouse]". He also stated that "Hapotea took its name from miro tahere", a bird snaring tree which was a miro. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:38} Hitiri Te Paerata denied the statements of Te Rangikaripiripia and others:

As to Hapotea and the houses: There are two whare punis, two kautas, one wharau, two small whares and one house belonging to Poni - no Pataka.

The owners: One wharepuni belonged to Te Paerata, Ngahiku, Ngakao, Te Awaiti and Wereta.

The second wharepuni to Te Hapimana, Rota, Te Oneroa, Te Awaiti, Karapehi, Poni and Matawaia te Momo.

The wharau was Pita's and Te Wharau's, his father in law.
The house said to have been Poni's belonged to Poni and which is said by the other side to have been a church.

As to the small whares one belonged to Ngahiku and one to Rota. The two kautas belonged to the owners of the wharepunis.

These wharepuni fronted on the same marae, the wharau (Pita's) stood upon a slight rise. The others all stood upon flat land - no hollow or anything of the sort. There is a gully runs round behind the whares.

There was never any pataka at Hapotea nor was there any whare with a chimney. There were no other wharau at Hapotea other than the ones I have mentioned. A plum tree there was planted by Poni. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:39}

The two wharepuni were built in the period between 1846 (death of Te Heuheu) and 1856 (Hinana), and remained through the 1860s. By 1884 when Hitiri Te Paerata had left Hapotea to live at Waipapa, the house had been removed, most of the timber being taken to Waipapa. Oriwia Ngakao claimed that "Hapotea became unoccupied at the time or shortly after the Orakau fight [1864]; the residents moved to Waipapa". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:40} The various kainga and mahinga kai were connected by known tracks, and along these routes were named landmarks and other markers. Hitiri Paerata recorded that before 1860 a bridge over the Mangakino river was erected by Te Heuheu Iwikau, Te Paerata and Te Kohika. This was presumably for the mail route started in 1857:

Near this bridge is a holy stone named Poroporo a Raukawa. Another stone [is] named Putaohuatanga after Huatanga the ancestress. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:41}

On a ridge is a place called Whakatangihanga named after Moe because it was there he played his Pukaea (instrument). {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:42}

The variations in the quality of the land were perceived in terms of potential for food resources. Hitiri Paerata commented, "Nothing will grow in the open country at Taupo (Wahi mania)". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:43} Werohia Te Hiko commented, "The soil of Pouakani [block] is uniformly of one kind, pumice gravel and rock (stones). The land immediately around the swamps is better". {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:44} With its proximity to forests, swamps, cultivable land and geothermal resources, clearly the Mokai area was an attractive place in the relatively harsh climate and sterile pumice country north and west of Lake Taupo. The other significant group of settlements were those strung out along the bush margins of Titiraupenga.

There are other elements of the Maori landscape whose significance is less obvious to the visitor. There are rocks incised with spirals, bird forms, canoes and other motifs in places known to local people. One of these was recorded in detail by the (then) National Historic Places Trust before the Waikato river was flooded by the hydro lake behind the Waipapa dam. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:45} Te Rehina (wife of Te Kohika of Ngati Ha) explained in her evidence in the Pouakani block investigation that knowledge of some things about the landscape remain the property and heritage (taonga) of local people resident in that area:

In his time Ngawheo had the keeping of the mauri at Titiraupenga; Ngahiku had that of Tuaropaki. Te Arawaere was also one of the holders of it. This mauri is at Te Tarata. Persons non resident of a district would have nothing to do with the mauri of that district, nor would they see it. {FNREF:0-86472-117-XA:3:46}

The mauri is the life force of a place which is imbued in a stone, rock or other feature which remains tapu because of the presence of the mauri.

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