

Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Orakei Claim

03 The Pacific Winds of Polynesia Pre-1849

3.1 The Origins of Ngati Whatua

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"Whakarongo te taringa ki te hau raki e pupuhi nei, i takea mai i Hawaiki nui . . ." ".... Listen to the north wind blowing from the great Hawaiki", wrote Sir James Henare for the launching of the Polynesian Trust in 1983, for that is what brought the Maori to Aotearoa and made this country a part of the Polynesian home-land. Polynesia, or 'many islands', a name given by European explorers, belies the Polynesian view that their ancestors conceptualised the islands as one home, Hawaiki, and the people as one people. Today the ancestral home is variously called Hawaii, Havaiki, Savaii, Hawaiiiti or Hawaiiiki. These dialectal variations emphasise not the differences but the common origin of many, the descendants of South-East Asian voyagers who peopled the first islands some 3500 years ago, then spread across as many miles of ocean to populate the outer islands until eventually the family extended to Aotearoa (New Zealand). Traditionally, New Zealand and Polynesia constitute one family, the Polynesian Trust points out, the family of Hawaiki. "The story of Polynesia", Sir James continued, "is the story of a people establishing their identity against daunting odds and then maintaining that identity by absorbing and adapting to their needs all outside forces that threaten to overwhelm them." That is also the story of Ngati Whatua. An ancient tribe half as old as time, Ngati Whatua begins before the journeys to Aotearoa. Some say the tribal ancestor, Tumuturnuwhenua, came from the Gods, not from human kind.

Others say the name 'Ngati Whatua' indicates descent from four Gods. But how and when the people came to Aotearoa, is not entirely clear.

Certainly it is not true the Maori came together in a fleet of canoes, about 1350, to wipe out the Moriori and carve out separate territories. That story can not hold, especially in the North as D R Simmons has explained (Simmons, 1976).

According to tradition, Toi came in the dawn of time, one section of his people called Ngati Awa occupying the northern peninsula, another called Ngaoho, after Toi's son Ohomairangi, an area from South Auckland to Tauranga, merging, around Tamaki with other early arrivals to form Waiohau.

Then over a long period a large number of canoes came, landing anywhere from North Cape to East Cape, moving around after landing with crew members settling in dispersed places to be absorbed into the established villages of earlier arrivals. Of the many that made an impact on the north,

Kurahaupo, Mataatua, Mamari, Matahourua, Mahuhu and Moekakara stand out. Because some of these travelled about the country, or because divisions moved to distant places, southern tribes also trace descent from these canoes.

Two deserve special mention. The Tainui canoe passed through this way, some of the crew members settling at Manuka, or Manukau as it is now known. The Arawa canoe arrived at about the same time, later to rest at the Bay of Plenty. Kahumatamomoe, the son of the Arawa canoe captain, was to live for a period at Orakei. The village he established there bore his name, Okahu, and of course it retains that name today. Kahumatamomoe later shifted and made a permanent home in Kaipara, where later, his people were to merge with Ngati Whatua.

Tamaki was a choice spot sought by many, and many sayings explain why - te pai me te whai-rawa o Tamaki - the luxury and wealth of Tamaki, and so it acquired its extended name, Tamaki makau rau, the bride sought by a hundred suitors. We need not record the many challenges and changing occupations over hundreds of years but some in the period up to 1700 stand out, the invasions of Turangi-i-mua, son of Turi the captain of the Aotea canoe, Maki of Waikato, Kawharu of Ngati Whatua, the Hauraki tribes and Rau-tao of Marutuahu.

Kiwi Tamaki of Waiohua held sway in the early 1700's but like all Maori he based his claim not on might but ancestral connections. He included in his ancestry Arawa, Tainui and the people of Toi. The trouble was, as we shall see, many others could boast similar prestigious lines.

And so while parts of the country came in time to be associated with particular canoes, like Tainui in Waikato or Te Arawa in Rotorua, the North was always a mixture of many groups. All were related through intermarriage, but through fighting there was a waxing and waning in ascendancy, an emerging and disappearing, a grouping and re-grouping. Often groups shifted, for territoriality was not at first defined and each could lay claim to the whole of the North as their ancestral entitlement.

When Ngati Whatua emerged as a predominant group in the far North they had already established kin links to many tribes, including the original Ngati Awa, and had connections to several canoes. In their northern remoteness they retained the rituals and arts of their very ancient past (which yet survive in the most distinctive carvings at Orakei marae). But in those days blood relations were alternately friends and foes and through fighting they began a movement south that continued over hundreds of years. They began the process of absorbing and adapting to outside forces that Sir James described, and for which they are now renowned. This process of tribal metamorphosis was still continuing when the Europeans arrived.

In their move south, under the leadership of Kawharu, Ngati Whatua established an ascendancy around Kaipara, where they remain to this day, absorbing members of other tribes, the settlers of Mahuhu canoe, the northern section of Ngaoho and Waiohua, certain of the Kawerau people of Moekakara

canoe, and the section of Te Arawa then living there and who had earlier lived at Orakei. Some had connections with yet others. Kawharu, for example, was part Tainui.

So it is that in this complex world, Maori belong relate and connect. They belong to a tribe but relate and connect to many tribes. They belong to a place but relate and connect to distant places. It was seen more important to belong to the land than to possess a defined part of it, for although the tribes were fiercely independent, they were at once inextricably inter-related.

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3.2 Ngati Whatua of Orakei

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It is important to appreciate the inter-tribal relationships that came into being at Tamaki, for the name 'Ngati Whatua of Orakei' camouflages the descent lines that exist from earlier occupants.

About 1740 Ngati Whatua extended its long move south to Tamaki. There had been earlier skirmishes with the Tamaki people over the previous hundred years or so, leaving more than a few unsettled scores, but eventually Tuperiri and a section of Ngati Whatua called Te Taou, defeated and took Tamaki from Waiohua. Following the pattern of the past they incorporated the Waiohua survivors into their ranks. Waiohua in turn had intermarried with some of Tainui. The marriage of Tuperiri's son to a woman of Tainui-Waiohua lineage cemented a pact and resulted in the restoration of the old name Ngaoho to describe one line of descent. The name Uringutu described the result of other Te Taou alliances. Through common blood and shared destiny the combined group of Te Taou, Ngaoho and Te Uringutu came to live as one, on what is now Greater Auckland.

In 1840, when English settlers came, the Tamaki Maori acknowledged as their paramount chief and leader, Apihai Te Kawau Te Tawa. Though Te Kawau's father, Tarahawaiki was the youngest son of Tuperiri, the lands had been divided between Tuperiri's children and the mana of Tamaki had passed to Te Kawau. He was 'a man of many cousins' who through lineage and leadership brought together under one cloak those of Te Taou, Ngaoho and Te Uringutu. Through his father, Tarahawaiki he linked to Ngati Whatua. His mother, Mokorua held high status on both Waiohua and Tainui lines. Te Kawau himself maintained these connections, living, from time to time, at both Manukau (where he signed the Treaty), and Kaipara.

The unity under Te Kawau needs emphasis, for when English law supplanted tribal law, tribal evolutionary processes were suspended and the Native Land Court awarded land in the area to 'Te Taou, Ngaoho and Te Uringutu', freezing in perpetuity the component parts of those who under Te Kawau, were really one group.

That group came to be called 'Ngati Whatua of Orakei'. It is not clear when the name was first applied. In evidence to us Ani Pihema thought the appellation was of recent origin. She explained her mother's aversion to the use of the name as denigrating the people's link to Tainui through Ngaoho. Clark Tamariki, speaking for herself, her mother Makareta and cousin Rangiaho Puriri and others of the Hawke family pointed out they always used 'Ngaoho' to describe themselves, not Ngati Whatua, and though they are direct descendants of Te Kawau. She went on to say that 'te kei o Tainui' (the

stern of the Tainui canoe) is still their name for the area. She thought the distinction and the lineage from Te Kawau explained many differences of opinion that were to beset Orakei in subsequent years and why, in modern times, her family could not vacate their ancestral village there.

But Te Kawau was the grandson of Tuperiri and there can be no doubt that from the killing of Kiwi Tamaki of Waiohau, Te Taou of Ngati Whatua held the mana of Tamaki isthmus. It is in the nature of tribal dynamics that the name, Ngati Whatua, serves to fix the paramount source of mana and does not deny the existence of other links. Whakapapa (genealogy) not tribal nomenclature remains the means whereby Maori people uphold their status and ancestral rights. The Maori preference for extended relationships makes a nonsense of rigid exclusiveness.

We suspect moreover that some current objections to the name 'Ngati Whatua' reflect more the divisions of recent years, exacerbated by outside pressures to remove the people entirely. For the name has in fact been around for a long time, and does not seem to have caused strife until after the people's continued occupation of Orakei was threatened. Te Kawau himself preferred that name, using it in his land dealings with the Anglican Church and the Crown, in the 1830's and 1840's. Three leading chiefs used only that name in farewell addresses to Governor Grey on behalf of the tribe in 1853 (Davis, 1855:65). The Stout-Ngata Commission in its Report of 1908 referred to "the ancient tribes of Ngaoho, Te Taou and Te Uringutu, more generally known as Ngati Whatua" (1908:). The name appears regularly in the transcript of tribal meetings held at Orakei last century and the trust fund established to support the Orakei church in 1860 was called 'the Ngati Whatua Trust Fund'. We have therefore decided to stay with the name for if we err, then at least we do so in good company and with some precedent, and nor do we thereby deny the important Ngaoho connection.

Indeed we must not. In evidence in the Supreme Court in 1978 the Commissioner of Crown Lands considered Orakei was not ancestral land of the Ngati Whatua for, according to his interpretation, ancestral land is that which was occupied by the various tribes from the time of the arrival of the canoes, a view said to have been confirmed by Mr B P Puriri, then District Officer of the Department of Maori Affairs. We doubt very much that tribal boundaries were fixed following canoe landings in the manner contended, that the canoes arrived together, or that territories were any more certain than state boundaries in Europe over a similar period, (and European states are no less the ancestral lands of current occupants because of it).

The more important point however is that we are talking of Maori ancestral land, and it is proper to use Maori determinators, not those of the Europeans, to settle whose ancestral land it is. The Maori method is clear - it is done by whakapapa, the recitation of ancestral genealogies as is regularly done today. There is not one person of Ngati Whatua who cannot link to the ancient Ngaoho occupation, that begins in the dawn of time, simply by reciting that person's line from Te Kawau.

The people of Orakei belong not only to the invading Te Taou line. The position is rather that by virtue of the Ngaoho connection, the ancestral entitlement of Ngati Whatua in Auckland predates the main canoes.

The point is also that Maori community maintenance is not dependent upon western concepts of statehood and territoriality, particularly in the north. For in the waxing and waning, grouping and re-grouping of the Polynesian explorers in the North over hundreds of years, and in the constant shifting and drifting, the whole of the North belonged to them all - the great mix of Polynesian migrants on the tail of the fish of Maui. It is from that convolution of circumstance that Ngati Whatua of Orakei are tangata whenua of what is now central Auckland, and what is now central Auckland is also their ancestral land.

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03 The Pacific Winds of Polynesia Pre-1849

3.3 The Ngati Whatua Stand

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To maintain their place in Tamaki, Ngati Whatua fought not just with Waiohua. They fought with Ngati Paoa (a section of Tainui in the Marutuahu compact of Hauraki), who had also shifted to Tamaki to occupy lands as far south as Otahuhu. They fought also with other tribes arriving from the south for as we have seen many coveted the isthmus. But tribal warfare in those days did not usually result in extermination. People were not so much wiped out as absorbed into the ranks of victors or required to shift over.

In any event the fights were small compared to the fight against annihilation from diseases introduced by Europeans. Epidemic out-breaks in 1790 and 1810 so weakened the tribe that it was forced to abandon several fighting pa, including a main pa at Maungawhau or Mt Eden. The next disease was the musket. In 1820 Hongi Hika from the north travelled abroad to obtain an advance supply. He used them to settle old scores with Ngati Whatua and others and wreak a havoc unknown to conventional tribal warfare. In the Ngapuhi onslaught that followed, Ngati Paoa on the isthmus were virtually wiped out. The bloodshed was so great that their lands were considered too tapu to return to, and were later readily ceded to the Crown.

Ngati Whatua suffered defeat too, at the great battle at Te Ika Aranganui near Kaiwaka in 1825. Some retreated south and gained protection and succour from the Waikato tribes. Others moved north. Te Kawau went to his relatives at Mahurangi.

The northern tribes did not hold the lands at Tamaki. Their various raids and conquests were not followed by occupation. Ngati Whatua returned when they could, or until the next raid. They lit fires on the land maintaining ownership in accordance with the custom of ahi ka. They made a permanent return in 1835.

They returned to Mangere, Onehunga, Horotiu (Queen Street) and Okahu (Orakei) but the latter was their principal abode. Te Kawau built two fighting Pa there in 1839 and 1843, in case of further raids from Ngapuhi.

Orakei, at this time, was a distinctive geographic entity strategically located on the harbour near the border with Ngati Paoa. Surrounded by water on three sides and with commanding ridges on the fourth it was a well chosen defensive site.

03 The Pacific Winds of Polynesia Pre-1849

3.4 The Ngati Whatua Land

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At that time land was held under Maori customary tenure. As has been seen, before the Europeans arrived it was a tenuous tenure, and as shall be seen, it was still tenuous after they came.

Tenuous or not, the land was important for Ngati Whatua as an economic resource and symbol of their existence - their politics, myth and religion. The extent of the relationship of a tribe to its land is something that has been only imperfectly understood.

As customary land it was a communal resource.

All land was held tribally; there was no general right of private or individual ownership except the right of a Maori to occupy use or cultivate certain portions of the tribal lands subject to the paramount right of the tribe" (Salmond 1909, 1931:87).

Translated to early colonial times, when land could be sold, it was thought

Aa hapu (family group) could not alienate part of its territory without the consent of the rest of the tribe (Metge, 1976:16).

Only the group with the consent of the chief could alienate land (Walker, 1982:69).

This accorded the communal nature of Maori society where individual rights were subordinate to the maintenance of unity and cohesion.

Decisions affecting land, like all decisions of moment, were announced by tribal heads, elders, or a paramount chief, but only after a decision of the tribe as a whole had been sought. The chiefs or elders were rarely divorced from their people. They were not autocrats but the facilitators and locators of consensus.

A chief who persistently flouted majority opinion committed political suicide (Kawharu, 1977:58).

Customary Maori land tenure was displaced, in Orakei as elsewhere in New Zealand, by a system of land ownership with little in common with custom and traditional preference but customary attitudes to the significance of land still survive. It survives with better hopes in Orakei because although the people lost their land, part of it has been restored to them, and is now held on more customary lines.

Tribal authority and tribal unity were also displaced and yet, tribal orientation and the vestiges of tribal authority continue to exist. At Orakei it exists but unity was severely impaired. It reached the nadir of its existence in the protests of 1977 and has only recently shown signs of repair.

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