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Suggested Reference

Edmonds, C. A. (2016). The maintenance of Maori classical literature on the marae. *Knowledge Cultures*, 4(3), 31-43. Retrieved from <https://addletonacademicpublishers.com/contents-kc/859-volume-4-3-2016/2841-the-maintenance-of-maori-classical-literature-on-the-marae#>

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Knowledge Cultures 4(3), 2016
pp. 31–43, ISSN 2327-5731, eISSN 2375-6527

THE MAINTENANCE OF MĀORI CLASSICAL LITERATURE ON THE MARAE

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ABSTRACT. The marae and the institutions of tangihanga (funereal customs) have maintained and sustained the Māori language, its attendant culture and the Māori classical literature that survives today. On these occasions the Māori world view is given full expression in an authentic setting in the 21st century. Tangihanga (or tangi) therefore play an important role in sustaining Māori identity. This article provides an annotated account of the tangi process that demonstrates the Māori world view, gives examples of specific oral literatures from the classical Māori world, and notes educational aspects of how traditional Māori knowledge and language is transmitted and acquired during the tangi process.

Keywords: funereal customs; indigenous knowledge; Māori culture; marae; oratory; tangihanga

Introduction

Māori scholar Hoani Waititi (1926-1965) recognised that the tangihanga (or tangi, customary Māori funereal gathering) plays an enormous role in Māori lives, and incorporated this insight into his second Māori language text *Te Rangatahi II* (Waititi, 1969). The chapter in that textbook titled *Tangihanga* is based on a story of how a family receives word by telephone that one of their members has passed away. In this research, referring to Waititi's story about a tangi is a methodological strategy, a cultural safeguard for the researcher, so this sacred topic may be safely discussed.

The tangihanga has a specific set of associated cultural practices, each with their own corpus of language and discourse. “The bastions of cultural conservatism for the Māori were kinship within the tribal polity, the marae and the institution of the tangi” (Walker, 2004, p. 187). The marae and the institutions of tangihanga have maintained and sustained the Māori

language, its culture and much of the Māori classical literature that survives today. During the tangihanga, as practised today, Māori weep and honour their dead. It is here that Māori religious attitudes, values and practices are transmitted in full force in the language of their ancestors. It is here on such occasions that the Māori culture in te reo Māori is given full expression in an authentic setting in the 21st century, a space where “Māori identity can be understood from knowing a Māori world view” (Ka`ai, 2007, p. 2). Tangihanga therefore play an important role in sustaining Māori identity.

The purpose of this article is to provide an annotated account of the tangi process that demonstrates the Māori world view given full expression in this context on the marae. This account focuses on specific oral literatures and literacies originating in the classical Māori world, which express Māori connections to the dead and ancestors through the various ceremonies and rituals. Also noted are educational aspects of how knowledge and language is transmitted and acquired during the tangi process. On these occasions, knowledge and understandings from te ao tawhito (the past) (Salmond, 1978) are taught and learned in authentic contexts, to be practised by the individual until such time as one is deemed qualified to perform these formal practices away from home marae.

The knowledge of tangihanga drawn on in writing this article is personal, learned through direct participation over a lifetime of membership in a particular tribal group, and without reference to texts, except to satisfy the academic exercise, such as the checking of words and the selection of appropriate quotes and references. This research is ‘insider’ research with an autoethnographic aspect, given that it involves a Māori researcher recording and analysing Māori practices based on her own kinship group membership (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

The Tangi Process Starts

When someone passes away, people are notified immediately: it is common practice that other family and hapū members gather together and awhi (offer support to) the bereaved family. Grief is expressed, karakia (prayers) are offered for the person, who has just passed away and for their family, and speeches may also be made. Meanwhile, the bush telegraph or aka kumara (kumara vine) is at work and the marae is made ready to receive and mourn the deceased. The immediate family are relieved of practical duties by their extended families and hapū, their major role now being to express their sorrow and receive the many, often multitudes, who will come to pay their respects, usually over a three-day period.

The hapū (local people) will set about and prepare to host people over the period of mourning. Food is procured, firewood, if necessary, is gathered,

the marae and its facilities made in readiness. Men and women have specific roles, and children are also expected to help. Young boys usually gather wood for the cooking fires, and young girls prepare the dining tables, however, these tasks are not gender specific. The heavier tasks are usually done by the men, including cooking, the shelling of shellfish and the preparation of vegetables. The women attend to the details of food preparation and dining. The marae grounds are mowed and tidied, the bathroom facilities are freshened. Someone is appointed to manage the kitchen: there are accepted and unspoken responsibilities as to who will maintain the facilities in good condition during the tangihanga.

The wharenuī is the large meeting house that represents an eponymous ancestor, and as the specific place of mourning, often using the mahau (the veranda or sheltered area at the front of the wharenuī), so these spaces are prepared in a traditional manner. For example, whāriki (flax mats, approximately 6'x 4') are laid out in a manner that overlap in a particular direction, then the mattresses and linen are laid out in a traditional way also. The preparation for the deceased is usually done under the direct instruction of a kuia (elderly woman). She will instruct the layout of the mattresses that will receive the deceased and their family. She will attend to photographs of other people, who have passed away and are related to the deceased, which will be hung with the deceased upon arrival. In this way, they are mourned again with the deceased and brought alive in spirit. It is an honour to be part of these preparations as one learns by observing, participating, and doing as one is told. I cannot recall questions being rejected, but maybe when this occurred, it would have been because people may have learned the practices without understanding why they were prepared in such a way.

The marae ātea (the courtyard in front of the wharenuī) is prepared in a special way according to the custom of each sub-tribe and region. It is here on this open forecourt that all formal proceedings begin with a call of welcome by one of the kuia, who will represent Hineteiwaiwa, the female element of mankind and goddess of weaving, created by her father Tānemahuta, god of the forests and of mankind. Here on this forecourt, Tūmataunga, the god of warfare, provides a place for all to express their warlike activities and challenges to the living and dead, just as he expressed his to his other godly siblings, in agreement with Tānemahuta that they must strive to separate their primordial parents Ranginui (father sky) and Papatuanuku (mother earth) (Pomare & Cowan, 1987, p. 3).

In my tribal area, seating for the manuhiri (visitors) is situated to the left of the outstretched arms of the ancestral meeting house. Tangata whenua/iwi kāinga/ hau kāinga (people of the land, of the host marae) are seated to the right of this whare tupuna (ancestral house), when looking out from the house to the marae ātea. It is here on this marae ātea that the tangata whenua will assemble to welcome home their tūpāpaku (deceased) regardless of the

elements. The whānau pani/kirimate (bereaved whānau) wait on the veranda at te roro o te whare (the brain or head of the ancestral house), where their loved one will openly lie in state. The kuia and other family members, mainly the females, will sit to either side of the place where the deceased will lie. Two kuia, sometimes more, depending on the rank of the person, will stand at the pou mua (prayer poles) to pōhiri (welcome) the deceased and his/ her entourage. To their right seated in order of seniority will be the male members of the hapū. The extended families and hapū members will stand behind them to await this homecoming with much expectation, in sorrow and gladness. They prepare to grieve the physical demise of their hapū member, but glad that they may poroporoaki (farewell) the person's spirit in a culturally appropriate and meaningful way, to join the many who have departed to te huinga o te kahurangi (the places where spirits depart to). They are all in readiness to greet the return of this loved member whose waka tūpāpaku (hearse) and family from ngā hau e whā (the four winds –all corners of the country) are now assembling outside the marae.

Upon arrival outside the marae the waka tūpāpaku will back up to the tomokanga (entrance) and the pallbearers prepare to uplift their taonga o te mate (treasured deceased). Meanwhile the manuhiri tuārangi (accompanying entourage) are making final preparations to accompany their taonga onto his/her home marae. Final decisions are being made to ensure that all customary procedures are complied with. This is usually done by a male kaumātua (senior elder) of the manuhiri who ensures: that the pallbearers follow correct procedures in uplifting the tūpāpaku; that the whānau pani are immediately behind the pallbearers, that the main orators are organised, especially the final speaker who may lay the kohā (monetary gift) on behalf of all the people who will accompany the tūpāpaku onto the marae. Once the pallbearers have lifted the tūpāpaku, in readiness to carry him/her onto the marae, the kirimate (family of the deceased) assemble immediately behind them with the elderly kuia at their side in readiness for the impending call from the hau kāinga. Behind them are the huge contingents of visitors who have come to pay their respects. They form a close and tight formation that signals to the hau kāinga (winds of home or iwi kāinga) that the entourage are ready to proceed onto the marae.

Here is when a recognised kuia or respected elder woman of the hau kāinga (home people), representing Hineteiwaiwa (female goddess of weaving) will karanga (herald) the deceased to return in spirit. The first call symbolises Hineteiwaiwa, and the moment the kuia sends out this karanga the marae is deemed tapu (absolutely sacred). All people in the immediate vicinity of the marae forecourt are one with the dead, until the tapu is lifted by whakanoa (removal of tapu). This first karanga is the beginning of all the oratory that will be enacted during this period of mourning. The karanga is women's formal form of expression on the marae atea (formal forecourt),

recognising the significant role of the female in Māori culture and formal events. This initial karanga is a time of enormous respect and emotion. There is absolute silence, and as the call of the kaikaranga pierces the air, it is also a piercing of the heart. The living face, the reality that this will be the last homecoming for this person, as the kaikaranga welcomes his/ her physical form and departing spirit by usually stating, “Hoki wairua mai rā! (Return in spirit)”, followed by the words “Haere mai, haere mai,” which serves the dual purpose of welcoming back the deceased and the accompanying kirmate (bereaved) and manuhiri. This is the signal to move forward through the tomokanga onto the home marae. This invokes a tumultuous expression of grief, in tangi (wailing) and roimata and hūpe (tears and mucus). Amid this outpouring of love and grief expressed by the wailing, the kaikaranga continue their herald of welcome to those embarking onto the marae. The leading women or kuia of the embarking party will reply to the call, acknowledging the call of welcome and also accentuating to the iwi kāinga (local community) that they have returned with the tūpāpaku.

The second call from the iwi kāinga invites the embarking party to bring the spirits of the dead that they have previously lamented from whence they came, so that they may lament them together in unison, with the recently departed of the hau kāinga, and of course, with the present deceased. For Māori, “Man was intermediate between the natural and supernatural world” (Oppenheim, 1973: 13). The second reply from the embarking party will farewell the spirits of all the deceased to te Huinga o te Kahurangi (the spirit world). They will then extend the reply to introduce and profile the tribes within their midst. The third iwi kāinga call welcomes the approaching mourners who in return accept the call. During this time of calling the women will continue their heartfelt wailing, shedding of roimata and hūpe tears and mucus. During this outpouring of grief the pallbearers under the instructions of an elder from the iwi kāinga will lay the deceased at the upoko o te whare (head of the house) so that the tūpāpaku can lie in state openly. This first viewing, when the lid of the coffin is removed, initiates more intense wailing as the waiting kirmate begin anew to face the departure of their loved one.

Marae Oratory in the Tangi Process

At this time, the group who accompanied the deceased and their family are invited to be seated on the manuhiri paepae (formal seating arrangement), the ringawera (kitchen workers) slip away to organise the feeding of the numbers of people who have arrived. When seating themselves the men will arrange themselves at the front as a means of easy movement and as a form of protection for the women seated behind them. The finest of orators take

the front row. On the home front, a similar paepae will arrange themselves with the most senior in the front. Once the sometimes lengthy wailing has subsided people take their respective places on either side of the marae and the whaikōrero (oratorical speeches) begin. Normally the first speaker will start with a tauparapara, such as the following:

Whakarongo ake ki te tangi a te manu	Listen to the call of the bird called the tui
E karanga nei, Tui, tui, tuituia.	Sewing us together in unity
Tuia ki runga, tuia ki raro	Let us unite with the above, unite us with below
Tuia ki roto, tuia ki waho	Let us unite from within, unite us from without
Ka rongō te ao, ka rongō te pō	That those of the living, and those who have passed on may hear
Tuia ki te kāwai tangata	Link us genealogically
I heke mai i Hawaiki nui	Of Hawaiki renowned
I Hawaiki roa	Of Hawaiki distant in time
I Hawaiki pāmamao	Of Hawaiki far away
I te Hono ki Wairua	From the realm of the spirits
Ki te whaiao, ki te ao mārama	To the world of the living
Tihei Mauri ora!	The breath of life

This tauparapara encompasses the Māori philosophy of our origins exhorting us to be united in our purpose. It reminds us of our origins bringing the past and present together, celebrating life. It is common practice that the deceased person's whakapapa is recited, often all the way back to eponymous ancestors as exemplified in the oriori (lullaby) Pōpō:

Ka noho Uru ka noho i a Ngangana;	‘Twas Uru who did abide with Ngangana
Putā mai ki waho ra ko Te Aotu,	And they begat Te Aotu,
Ko Te Aohore, ko Hinetuahoanga	Te Aohore, Hinetuahoanga,
Ko Tangaroa! Ko te Whatu o Poutini, e!	Tangaroa, and the Stone of Poutini!
Kei te kukunetanga mai	The primeval pregnancy began
I Hawaiki ko te ahua ia,	In Hawaiki, when there appeared
Ko Maui-wharekino ka noho i a Pani,	Maui-whare-kino who took Pani to wife

The purpose of this recital is to alert all those present to the dead person's links, so that they may also link themselves accordingly in a spiritual way. This is a way of teaching or reacquainting those present, young and old, of the hapū and tribal whakapapa (genealogy). It also links to outside tribes based on the genealogical ties of the person's parents and forefathers.

The speaker then addresses the tūpāpaku as though he were alive, welcoming him back in spirit to his whare tipuna (ancestral house), to his marae and to the hapū and the families assembled with all their memories of him/ her, using metaphorical expressions such as whakataukāi (proverbs) and pēpeha (ancestral sayings) (Mead & Grove, 2003, p. 9) for example: “Kua hīnga te tōtara o te wao nui a Tāne (The tōtara of the great forest of Tane has fallen)”.

This metaphorical whakatauakī

is used at the death of an important man. As the tōtara is the sturdy giant of the trees of a forest so is the chief among his people. Since Tāne is regarded as the god of the forests he is also the father of mankind, the metaphor is particularly apt. (Mead & Grove, 2003, pp. 153-154)

The speaker will farewell the deceased to the family members who have passed on ahead of him/ extolling the qualities and virtues of the ancestors of the person lying in state. For example, if the deceased had a reputation of being trustworthy and reliable, the speaker may state the proverb “He tangata kī tahi (man of a single word)” (Brougham, 1963, p. 120).

The speaker then turns to the immediate family and once again include in his speech of comfort, wise sayings of the ancestors, for example, if the children are already adults, he may refer to the saying “Kua tipu te pā harakeke (the flax bush has matured)”. The pā harakeke is a metaphor for raising a family. “This expression means that the family has been successfully reared” (Mead & Grove, 2003, p. 275).

He then turns to the manuhiri and welcomes them accordingly having noted the various representations of iwi and speakers, including those both familiar and unfamiliar, as well. Initially, he will address those with whom he is familiar by stating pepehā related to them, for example, if from Ngāti Porou (a tribe from the East Coast of the East Cape region, he may say ‘Haere mai e te rāwhiti (welcome, o sunrise)’. This is the traditional greeting of the South Island Ngāi Tahu people to visitors from the East Coast of the North Island, a reference to the fact that each day the sun first reaches Hikurangi, the mountain in the Tai Rāwhiti or East Coast region.

He will do likewise for the other people amongst the manuhiri with whom he is familiar. He will then use a metaphorical saying that will encompass and include those he is less unfamiliar with, or unknown to him, such as:

Haere mai e ngā wae wae tapu	Welcome, sacred feet (those people who have come to the marae for the first time)
Haere mai e ngā hau e whā	Welcome o ye of the four winds
Haere mai e ngā kārangaranga maha	Welcome to you who are related or known

He will then close his speech with:

Āpiti hono, tātai hono.	Holdfast to the links and bonds
Te hunga mate rātou ki a rātou	Those in the spirit world they unto themselves
Āpiti hono, tātai hono	Holdfast to the links and bonds
Tātou te hunga ora tātou ki a tātou	Those of us of this living world, we unto each other

The hau kāinga will then stand to complement the words of the speaker with an appropriate mōteatea (chant) expressing farewell to the deceased such as the following apakura (dirge):

Haere rā, e hika, koutou ko o mātua Unuhia i te rito o te harakeke, Ka tu i te aroakapa Aku nui aku rahi e, Aku whakatamarahi ki te rangi! Waiho te iwi, māna e mae noa! Kia mate ia nei koe, e hika, Ko Atamira te waka, ko Hotutaihirangi, Ko Tai-o-puapua, ko Te Raru-tua-maheni, Ko Araiteuru, ko Nukutaimemeha; Ko te waka i hiia ai i te whenua nui nei.	Depart, o dear one, with your elders Plucked like the centre shoot of the flax, As you stood in the foremost rank. My renowned one, my noble one. My proud boast oft flung to the heavens! Bereft the tribe, seeking solace all in vain You are gone indeed, dear one, (For your) canoe there are Atamira, Hotutaihirangi, Tai-o-puapua, Te Raro-tua-maheni, Araiteuru and Nukutaimemeha; The canoe which fished up this widespread land.
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In this apakura, “images are drawn from the natural world” such as the flax plant, as well as human attributes, mythology and folklore (McLean & Orbell, 1979, p. 28). When the final speech from the tangata whenua is over, the senior speaker will then use an expression such as “Kua huri te rākau ki a koutou (The stick of oratory is passed to you)” indicating that the pāeke (speaking protocol) of his marae has finished. A speaker from the manuhiri will stand and he may use a tauparapara from his own tribe to identify his tribal affiliations. This is commonly followed by a mihi (acknowledgement) to:

Ka mihi atu ki a Ranginui e tū iho nei Ki a Papatuanuku e hora nei	I pay respect to our Sky Father Ranginui And to our Earth Mother Papatuanuku who lies here before us
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He then may pay respects to:

- the tipuna whare:

Tane Whakapiripiri tena koe	I greet and honour you Tane, You whose magnificent creations unify us today
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- and the marae ātea:

Te marae o Tūmatauenga tena koe	Greetings to you the marae of Tūmatauenga the god of war
Te takahitanga o te hunga kua wheturangitia	The forum once trodden by the orators now celestial beings in the sky.

He then proceeds to honour the deceased, extolling all his or her virtues in equally eloquent and allegorical language, concluding also with an appropriate mōteatea.

More often than not, each side both tangata whenua and manuhiri will share a story, often light hearted, about the exploits of the deceased. They

may also put forward some of the political issues concerning Māori. They might also castigate, reprimand or make disparaging remarks about the deceased or some event, which is not out of place on the marae of Tūmataunga who represents warlike and challenging activities. This is called “ka tutū te puehu” (the dust flies), which sometimes happens literally. This may have been the intention of the speaker, as a way to honour the family, as strange as that may seem, because “Learned sayings were valued because they were cryptic and comparatively obscure. Puns were taken seriously by the Māori, as they have been in most oral or largely oral cultures” (McLean & Orbell, 1979, p. 27)

The final speaker of the manuhiri is usually someone of known ability who can summarise appropriately, and make up for any omissions by previous speakers. At the conclusion of the manuhiri speeches, the final speaker of the manuhiri side, following their mōteatea, will often lay down the koha on the ground, signalling that their side has finished all their speeches, and return to his seat. A male, usually someone being trained to sit on the paepae, is signalled by the tangata whenua to go forward and uplift the koha. This is the first formal duty of someone who is being primed to be a future orator. This person is usually someone who the elders have observed as a regular and committed member of the hapū. This person is versed in Māori protocol and a native speaker of the Māori language. He will most likely, but not necessarily, be of tuakana status (senior rank) in the hapū, genealogically, and have the welfare of his whānau, hapū and iwi at heart. He will have demonstrated knowledge and skills in the traditions, customs and protocols of his people. He has proved his reliability in the eyes of the hapū, and they see him as honourable and possessing potential to uphold the mana of his marae, hapū and iwi in time to come. He goes forward, picks up the koha, and usually uses a pithy saying to acknowledge and thank the manuhiri for their aroha (symbol of sympathy usually in the form of money placed in envelopes) and to lighten the burden of grief.

For example, on one occasion, at the tangihanga of a highly esteemed Ngāti Porou leader, renowned throughout Aotearoa, who had suddenly passed away, seven envelopes containing koha were placed on the marae. The tangata whenua sent seven men, one at a time, to pick up the envelopes. Each one picked up the koha differently, as follows:

- The first one went out and did the pūkana (fearsome eye expressions) to the koha and said, “Ka mau te wehi” (How awesome) and after picking up the koha, returned to the paepae and placed the money in the hands of the appropriate member of the bereaved family;
- The second person went out me te whāterotero (gesticulating with the tongue and making warlike cries) and returned as above;

- The third one went out as if holding a taiaha (long carved war weapon) and doing the appropriate haka steps that accompany this weapon, picked up the third koha envelope

- The fourth silently performed a haka, picked up the envelope;

- Much to the hilarity and amusement of all present, the fifth went out and patted his pocket as though he was collecting the national lottery;

- The sixth went out and walked back carrying the koha as though it was a heavy load, despite the fact it was only an envelope;

- The seventh, not to outdone by his predecessors, picked up the seventh envelope and tossed it over his shoulder and bent with a “Ho! Ho! Ho!” as if he were Santa Claus, struggling to carry his load of Christmas goodies.

None of the above examples are considered disrespectful; indeed quite the opposite. They were honouring the manuhiri for their generous donations to the person lying in state and his or her family, thus lightening the financial burden of a tangihanga. This performance was met with tremendous mirth and appreciation by all, to the extent everyone from the nearby wharekai (dining hall) and kitchen came out to enjoy the Māori sense of humour, of lightening the weight of sorrow.

This humorous example demonstrates the acceptance by Māori of the close relationship between mate and ora (life and death). Māori have an expression “Whānau mai ana te tangata ki te ao nei, ko tōna hoa tata ko te mate (From birth, our constant companion is death). Sometimes the koha may be in the form of a tree to be planted or a greenstone mere, if the person was of extremely high rank. In such cases the taonga (gift) often became imbued with a mauri, an essence or life force that had its own particular characteristics.

The tangata whenua then gesture with words, hands or head that it is time to unite as tangata whenua. The males from the manuhiri side will stand and usually precede the women towards the tangata whenua paepae, where they will greet all the tangata whenua who have assembled, They will gradually make their way along as a long procession, personally greeting family, friends, new acquaintances and loved ones more intimately. The greetings usually take the form of a hongī (pressing of noses), a harīru/rūrū (shaking of hands), a kiss on the cheek, a hug, an embrace, depending on one’s relationship with the person. The personal expressions of sympathy to the deceased and whare mate (family in mourning), often invoke more wailing, especially so because the women now have the opportunity to personally express their aroha, hence the reason, they will often let the men go ahead first.

As people complete their greetings and prepare to leave the immediate area of the deceased, lying in state, they are expected to partake in a simple ceremony of whakanoa (uplifting of tapu), by washing their hands and

sprinkling their heads with water that has been placed to the side of the tipuna whare specifically for this purpose. They are now considered tangata whenua and invited to share a meal together in the wharekai that is usually named for someone, often a woman, and ancestor or chieftainess, who is much respected by the hapū. This signals that the formal pōhiri for this group is complete, however, for the tangata whenua, more often than not there is manuhiri waiting to come on to the marae to tangi the mate. And a similar procedure as for the previous pōhiri is observed.

Continuing and Concluding the Tangi Process

There are many more cultural practices and oratorical observances during the tangihanga, too numerous to elaborate here. I prefer, however, to mention a few of the main ones, so that I bring this narrative to a proper conclusion, albeit in less detail, as it would not be appropriate to leave the tūpāpaku still lying in state.

The manuhiri, who are now considered tangata whenua are called in to the wharekai (dining hall) to share a meal. This is preceded by a karakia, which is usually a Christian grace, conducted by anyone. Those people, who are travelling home, will usually stand to formally thank the kanohi wera, ringawera or tūmau (servants) for the meal prepared for them. A common related saying is “Mā te raho ka tū te ure (The penis needs the testicles to achieve erection)”, which means that without the cooks, the orators and all the other people on the marae would go hungry.

This speech is also accompanied by a light hearted song. Those who intend to remain longer or for the duration of the funeral, will remain and share the kitchen duties or join the tangata whenua on the paepae, for they too are now tangata whenua. This is a sad yet joyous reunion for families and the hapū, for it is at life cycle events such as these that whānau, hapū, iwi, friend, foe, colleagues, etc, can gather to remember and mourn, celebrate, tell stories, share gossip, renew and create new relationships, reciprocate past obligations and responsibilities, and show how we care for each other: all in all, to share life events in an essentially Māori way.

These events perpetuate fundamental principles that tie and bind Māori together; reinforcing the Maori language and Māori cultural practices that affirm our Māoritanga, our being Māori, through observation, participation, and practice. In Māoridom, one must be approved and attested by your own marae and hapū before you take the liberty of performing on other marae. Also, while you may qualify, one cannot assume the responsibilities such as those discussed earlier if your father or parent, or tuakana is still alive, unless this responsibility has been handed over to you.

Depending on the weather, the tūpāpaku may be moved inside the meeting house. If so evening prayers are conducted here, or outside wherever the deceased is lying. The deceased is never left alone. The karakia is conducted by one of the local faiths: in the area I come from, it is either Ringatū, Anglican or both.

Immediately after karakia, there may be a few speeches, but not many. People settle in for the night. Early the next morning before light, the Ringatū tohunga or one of the other priests will conduct early morning karakia, and the day has begun. On the day before the funeral, the tūpāpaku is farewelled by one and all, usually with lots of humour and laughter as they are remembered by their people. There is much singing and general celebration of the deceased and the things they did in their lifetime. At the funeral service, several religious rituals and ceremonies will take place from early morning till the deceased has been uplifted off the marae. As the deceased leaves the precinct of the marae, the marae is made noa (free from tapu) through religious ceremony and karakia. After more religious ceremonies at the urupā (graveyard) the whānau and other mourners will also whakanoa themselves as they did upon leaving the marae. From here the whānau pani are brought back onto the marae and welcomed back to the world of the living. Thereafter follows a great hākari (feast) that still remembers the dead, but emphasises the world of the living. Much more speechmaking and waiata take place. One final ceremony takes place: the hapū, and iwi take the family back to the family home and the house is relieved of any spirit(s) of the recent member just departed. This procedure is called the takahi kāinga (the tramping of the house). The family usually return to the marae to share a final night with the remaining members of their family who may need to travel back to work or other homes, too far away to set out at this late time of the day.

Other ceremonies related to this tangihanga may take place, however, the process at the home marae has come to a conclusion, until the deceased is mourned again at the hura pōhatu (unveiling) of their headstone, which is usually held a year later.

Conclusion

Tangihanga are a crucial ceremony in Māori life. Its cultural practices, oratory and language are the key to the Māori world view. As this article has shown, the marae is an institution from classical Māori society that has survived the impact and onslaught of the western civilisation and is the place where values and philosophies are reaffirmed. The method of learning used on marae is highly effective. Māori need marae for a list of reasons: not just to weep our dead but to rise tall in oratory; to pray; to feast; to house guests;

to have life cycle events such as weddings, reunions; to sing; to dance; to know the richness of life which is truly Māori.

This paper has taken the example of the tangi process to outline some ceremonies and rituals that are essential in Māori customs and tradition. Examples of classical Māori literature have been used to highlight the nature of the Māori world view, which is particularly evident at this auspicious life event. The natural acquisition and active teaching of Māori knowledge in te reo Māori for Māori, by Māori, at such events, plays a key role in reproducing Māori identity in such a way as to retain and sustain mana Māori, now and in the future.

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