

11.08.08

Tena koutou e nga rangatira

I thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning and I am grateful for the gracious way you gave both my husband and I the space to do so. We have been in other formal situations where this was not the case, so we wish to thank you again.

The following is a synopsis of what I was wishing to convey to you all this morning. I have sought and gained permission to do so from Johanna Christensen. And I feel it is important for you to have some idea of these concepts/values of our people.

WAITAHA People of Peace Matriarchal people

Wai = waters	People made up of 80% water	We are at Peace
Taha = container	Bodies are the container	when our waters are still

Waitaha hold to the traditions and philosophy of Rongomaraeroa, a female deity of all things and ways which adhere to a Peaceful way of Living, loving and being.

Waitaha are a people of oral traditions. The concepts, histories, stories, genealogies, songs, prayer etc. are conveyed through the Grandparent generation to our Grandchildren who are chosen from birth to carry the knowledge and wisdoms across the traditions of our peoples. The major role transferred is that of kaitiakitanga or guardianship of the environment, the realm of Tuputupu Whenua Mother Nature and Papatuanuku, Grandmother Earth. This is paramount. We have an unwritten bond spoken of in a proverb which speaks of the 'all will survive through and by women and the earth, or land' 'Na te wahine, na te whenua, ka ora ai te iwi'

You see we are all born of women and the land is personified as a woman and so through the nurturing and nourishing of women and the land, we as people ie. the human race will continue to survive. Hence the guardianship or kaitiakitanga being paramount to the survival of the human race which we the indigenous people of this land and many many lands around the world have been trying so hard to do since colonization. Please understand how difficult this has been. It is almost too late but the remnant wisdom holders keep on trying to be heard and taken seriously.

Papatuanuku is our Grandmother from where we all come. She and Ranginui had many children as the traditional story goes. All are guardians of the different realms. All are alive and well as they struggle with the onslaught and rape of their beloved mother Papatuanuku. Hence global warming, hence earthquakes, hence catastrophic floods, huge hurricanes, typhoons, tempestuous storms etc. etc. etc.

Mauri is another concept which is crucial to the role of the **kaitiaki**, the guardian. Every human being is born with this Mauri. Mauri is also a part of all things, birds, trees, animals, stones, gardens, rivers, lakes all waterways, all things.

What is Mauri? Mauri is the unique spark, the life essence within the being, the thing, the place. Our task is to keep this alive and waxing like the moon. A simple definition of Mauri is to look at the values of respect, acceptance, safety, celebration, laughter and dreaming. In Early Childhood Education we call this, the Deep Song. Imagine if every child is empowered to realize its full potential through those simple values, yes, think about it, they in turn would then consider all living things with reverence through those values would they not? We believe that children should always be left with their Mauri waxing.

So remember Mauri is unique and authentic to the individual thing, being, and place. To mix the mauri of the rivers together in one area as is the proposal for the mighty Waimakariri river and the Rakaia River is a no no!!! It would be disastrous. It transgresses sacredness. It transgresses tapu. And in lore, something always has to pay. This is a fact.

Imagine, if you can, someone messing with your mauri, taking a little bit of yours and yours and yours and mixing it all together, what would it do to your spirit, your wellbeing, your physical. It would mess you up on all those levels. And so it would be and is for all things, places and beings. Think about what colonization has done the world over to people places and things.

Can you understand why kaitiakitanga or guardianship of the Natural Realms is so so crucial to the survival of all things? Can you see how important this role is? This role of kaitiakitanga is what we owe Papatuanuku for the privilege of living in her realms.

To mix the Mauri is bad enough but to do that they have to change the course of the rivers, they have to carve in to the gorge, the gorge where once again there are stories and legends attached. Who do they think they are? So to change the landscape they must think that they are GODS. They well may suffer the wrath of the Gods should this go ahead. Where is the respect for the work of Mother Nature? Where is the respect for our Grandmother Earth? Where is the respect for her son Tangaroa?

There is much talk and awareness of the need for balance to be pertained to our Grandmother Earth. Many people are aware of the devastating effect the exploitation of resources has done to our beloved Grandmother Earth, and usually for the benefit of the few, which is the case here. How many farms will benefit, a little under 400, the thought that they can and need to do this is abominable.

New Zealand espouses to be clean and green, I don't think so. If these people have access to such huge monetary resources wouldn't it be incredible if they find another way to use that for the good of our Grandmother Earth and for those who inhabit her. Imagine pouring that money in to recycling, a strategy which councils are saying 'oh no we can't do that because it is sooo expensive' Now that would go a long way to establishing the Clean Green image we should have and really there is no excuse for that not to happen. We are a small country; it is just a matter of prioritizing. Huh!! If only the money could be used in a positive way for the good of all and for the good of our Grandmother Earth. How come these people have access to such obscene amounts of money to rape our Grandmother Earth in a huge way (because of course we are not blind this will be the first of a chain of these things up and down the country all for the benefit of the few. Our Grandchildren will not have a safe future, they will not have cause to celebrate and there will be no cause for laughter or dreaming because the mauri of the rivers, the land and the people will be dead.

The gentleman who spoke of the minuscule insects he cares about with a passion, in the wetlands at the mouth of the Waimakariri. You see my brothers, this is a classic example of Mauri, he speaks of the rivers drying up and the little creatures being unable to live, that is because of the project miles away in the Wai Aniwaniwa Valley you see the effect, miles away, because we are all connected and as Chief Seattle puts it, 'all things are connected, what happens to the Earth happens to the children of the earth. Man has not woven the web of life, he is but one thread. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself'. It will affect the whole. Not just the immediate things large things in our sight, it will effect every way of life up and down those rivers and streams that this project touches. And we all know how woeful a state they are in at the moment. A project such as this will kill them for ever, and what will there be for our Grandchildren and their grandchildren and so on down forever.

You heard Phillip Deans speak of the river being alive, time and again as he showed us his slides, what he speaks of here is the MAURI of the river, being waxing and therefore alive.

And finally I come to the unborn child within the womb of Papatuanuku. Ruaumoko is his name; he is the child of earthquakes and volcanoes. He stirs within the belly of Papatuanuku all the time, he is very much alive and the foothills of this area are the domain of Ruaumoko. You heard Phillip Deans speak of the fault line on his property regarding the Landfill proposal. And so it is. Now this project in its utter arrogance and ignorance proposes to place this reservoir in this exact vicinity. The people of Coalgate must be in fear and trembling as they sit under the gaze barely 200 meters from the foot of the damn. What the hell is wrong with these people? They are counting on this not happening. We know it will. There are constant shakes and just within the last 10 years there was that series of quakes which shook this area for 18 months or more after a big one which was sourced in the Avoca Valley in the Lake Coleridge area. Imagine that

happening in the Valley of the Rainbows, the Wai Aniwaniwa Valley. It will be as catastrophic as the tsunami in and around Bali 3 years ago if not more so.

My plea is that farming takes a look at themselves as a whole and shift their emphasis from self to community. The world is looking for positive role models in sustainability; this is what they need to be doing. Water is becoming less pure and more scarce. We need to respect this fact, we need to accept the responsibility to do something about it because we can if we think of the greater good rather than the personal gains, this way will ensure the safety of our Mother Nature and Grandmother Earth, when then we can celebrate with our children and grandchildren and great grand children knowing that they will have a positive future to look forward to and to too accept responsibility for and there will be much laughter as we continue to enjoy the beauty of our rivers, lands and environment and we can dream for a beautiful future for the Natural world and humanity.

This is the time of the Grandmothers, the Matriarchy to step forward and show by example the way to a positive future, based on simple and beautiful values of, living in a reverend way with all things and people, loving all things with humility and knowing all that we possess with self discipline.

Take these thoughts and let them guide you in your decision e nga Rangatira.

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.

P.S. Waimakariri means literally, the raging branches. Next time you fly into Christchurch, look down and you will see the patterns as to where this great river has flowed.