

The Evolution of the People of New Zealand

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Maori are not “tangata whenua” – there were prior inhabitants – Dr Ranginui Walker

“The traditions are quite clear: wherever crew disembarked there were already tangata whenua (prior inhabitants). The canoe ancestors of the 14th century merged with these tangata whenua tribes. From this time on the traditions abound with accounts of tribal wars over the land and its resources”. Comment by Dr Ranginui Walker in ‘The New Zealand Book of Events’, page 18, (1986). When the Tiriti o Waitangi was signed the “canoe ancestors of the 14 century” were known a tangata Maori.

Maori tradition also makes it clear that the tangata whenua were light skinned with fair or reddish hair and in some cases, blue eyes. The Te Arawa tribes that moved to Rotorua and Taupo found people already inhabiting these areas. These people were called Ngati Hotu and were described by Te Arawa as, “of non-Maori appearance, having reddish hair and pale skin”. Other names given to the tangata whenua were Patupaiarehe or Turehu. Maori traditions tell of these friendly, peaceful and law abiding people teaching Maori many of their skills and cultures before they either “merged with the tangata Maori” or were exterminated by them. Captain Cook recalls he saw fair skinned Natives with reddish or blonde hair when he visited New Zealand in 1769. Tradition also tells that, the tribal wars over land and resources drove the tangata whenua into extinction.

Dr Ranginui Walker's statement that his ancestors "merged with the tangata whenua" is confirmed as we find fair or red hair appearing in tangata Maori, although the tangata whenua were exterminated as were the peaceful Moriori of the Chatham Islands by the tangata Maori before the British became legally involved in New Zealand.

When the Pakeha started living in New Zealand in the early 19th century, they had no intention of harming the tangata Maori. They treated them with respect, although there were a few unfortunate incidents when the two cultures met. Especially when the Captain and 25 crew of the French ship La Favourite were killed and the crew retaliated by killing 250 tangata Maori and setting fire to their village. Another incident was when the 'tangata Maori' slaughtered the crew, men, women and children when the British ship the Boyd arrived in New Zealand in 1809.

With the signing of the Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840, New Zealand became a British Colony and tangata Maori were given the same rights as the people of England. At the time they signed the Tiriti o Waitangi, they were a distinct race of people called tangata Maori, but as they continued to intermarry of their own free will with the Pakeha, this race no longer exists. The British never tried to exterminate the 'tangata Maori' as the tangata Maori had exterminated the tangata whenua and the Moriori, They treated them with respect by giving them the same rights as the people of England under one flag and one law.

While the Government has done little research into the tangata whenua, they have researched areas of the Waipoua Forest, but the results of this research have been restricted from the public until 2065. What did they find that must be hidden from the public until 2065? While Maori admit that not all burial sites (human remains) are Maori, the Government returns all remains to Maori for reburial or disposal without DNA or other methods of finding their 'true' identity. The Government has

just accepted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, but the people that signed the Tiriti o Waitangi were called tangata Maori not tangata whenua or Indigenous People. Once, again we are being duped by a Government that does not want us to know our true history.

As the people that arrived in the 14th century “merged with the tangata whenua” and became tangata Maori, the tangata Maori merged with the Pakeha and signed the Tiriti o Waitangi to become British Subjects, but once we adopted the Statute of Westminster in 1947 we all became New Zealand Citizens irrespective of race, colour or creed.

While the Tiriti gave tangata Maori protection and one law for all the people of New Zealand, it also gave tangata Maori the responsibility to act within the law. “..... the chief's placed in the hands of the Queen of England, the Sovereignty and authority to make laws. Some sections of the Maori people violated that authority, war arose and blood was spilled. The law came into operation and land was taken in payment. This in itself is Maori custom – revenge – plunder to avenge a wrong. It was their chiefs who ceded that right to the Queen. The confiscations cannot therefore be objected to in the light of the Treaty”. Sir Apirana Ngata, M.A., LL.B.D. M.P., Minister of Native Affairs, 1922.

In the 1940's the Government still under the control of the British Government held inquiries into the alleged breaches of the law against the tangata Maori and any found to be valid had full and final settlements. Once these claims had been settled or rejected as the case may be, New Zealand adopted the Statute of Westminster in 1947 when all the people of New Zealand became New Zealand Citizens under one flag and one law, irrespective of race, colour or creed.

Since this time hundreds of thousands of people from other lands have settled in New Zealand and intermarried with those already here to become New Zealand Citizens.

The End. (c).

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