

CHAPTER THREE

History

Knowledge is of great spiritual significance to Maori. It was the property of Io, the supreme being, gifted to the sons of Rangi and brought in three kete from the treasure house Rangiatea in the twelfth sky by Tane, despite attacks by Whiro, one of his older brothers, on both the upward and return journeys. Each of the three baskets contained a specific set of knowledge: peace, goodness, and love in one; prayers, incantation and ritual in another; and war, agriculture, woodwork, stonework and earthwork in the third.

Maori did not believe that all knowledge was for everyone. Only selected youth were allowed to enter the whare wananga to learn the tribal histories, genealogies, and karakia. These were normally the first or second sons of noble families. Learning and teaching of these subjects was accompanied by a high level of ritual and separation from other members of the community as befitted the associated tapu. There was no questioning, no discussion and no noise at all from learners in a traditional whare wananga.

There were other houses of learning in pre-European times. In Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa, the black arts were taught by tohunga ruanuku in whare maire. Graduates were known as tohunga makutu. Weaving was taught in whare pora, also known as whare porapora or whare takutaku.

Knowledge is a taonga, or a collection of taonga, to Maori. As Joan Metge said (Smith 1986), 'It has mana and confers mana. It should be coveted and aspired to but not too easily attained. Therefore it should

be protected with barriers tough enough to test the commitment and perseverance of its seekers.'

On a day-to-day basis, knowledge was imparted to young people in two main ways. In one of these, a skilled adult (*puukenga*) took a young person under his or her wing for a period of time ranging from hours to years in an apprenticeship arrangement. In the other, children learned through exposure, in small groups, by being around and increasingly involved in the activities of the community. The traditional Maori teaching style, outside the *whare wananga*, was opportunistic, communal, and integrated with daily life. This pre-European system met the needs of Maori communities and did not involve trained, qualified or registered teachers.

The arrival of the missionaries introduced Maori to the Christian God, to reading, to writing and to a whole new way of being, 'Christian civilisation'. The missionaries' sole aim was to convert Maori to Christianity, thereby saving their souls. The missions themselves generally consisted of some fixed buildings and not a lot of funding from head office. In order to survive, the missions needed to become self-supporting or nearly so, and this required farms and teaching Maori various industrial skills. In order for Maori converts to convert more Maori, they had to be able to read the Bible. Learning to read meant learning to read the Bible. As those Maori whom the missionaries and their converts were targeting spoke only Maori, the Bible was translated into Maori, and the converts learned to read Maori rather than English.

Thomas Kendall, who had been sent here by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), opened the first missionary school in New Zealand in 1816 at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands. The school opened with thirty-three children. The schoolroom had the teacher and European children on a slightly raised platform separated from the Maori students by a low partition. This was not a feature of later mission schools.

Kendall noted four attributes of Maori children in a European education system that is still relevant today. One, the Maori children were active rather than docile. Kendall described himself in personal correspondence as surrounded by children in class, 'and perhaps while one is repeating his

lesson, another will be playing with [my] feet, another taking away [my] hat, and another his book', yet their manner was such that Kendall could not be angry with them.

Two, the children came to school if they were fed. They had to spend several hours each day catching or harvesting their meal. When the food ran out the school closed down.

Three, they were quick learners. Unfortunately Kendall had neither teacher training nor resources, and lessons consisted of the children chanting rote replies to standard phrases.

Four, parents 'came and took their children away whenever they wanted them' (Barrington & Beaglehole 1974). Kendall's school closed in 1818 when it ran out of supplies.

With the arrival of Henry Williams in 1823, further schools were established. These were boarding schools where most of the children lived at the mission station, away from their families, as part of the missionary's family. The Wesleyans established a mission station at Whangaroa in 1822. Barrington and Beaglehole comment: 'Within a short time they had built schools, but faced difficulties of exactly the same nature as their CMS counterparts. Some form of bribery seemed necessary to ensure regular attendance; yet there was not enough food in the settlement to feed the pupils. The children were found difficult to control though quick to learn ...'

Soon more Maori than the missionaries could teach wanted to learn how to read and write. The mission schools reached their zenith in the 1830s and 1840s, and a large number of 'by Maori for Maori' schools opened in kainga, loosely connected with the mission station schools. Parr (1961) reported that in 1840 almost every villages in the Thames and Waikato districts had its own school. The only book available was the Bible, or those parts of it that had been translated into Maori. In 1834 William Colenso set up a printing press at the Church Mission Station in Paihia. After the arrival of the Roman Catholics in 1838 a huge number of Bibles and prayer books were imported. Barrington and Beaglehole estimate that by 1845 there was a copy of the Bible or a prayerbook in Maori for every adult Maori.

The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 provides a convenient symbol, a formal mark, that two powerful new forces had joined the missionaries in their interaction with Maori. These were the settlers, with their desire for self-government, and the British Crown with its desire to preserve, protect and civilise the Maori. The Crown saw education of the Maori as a vital civilising influence. Civilisation and the English language went hand in hand. The overall goal was well expressed in 1835 by Lord Macaulay who predicted that his proposed education system for India would lead to 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect'.

In the 1840s and 1850s the Crown supported the development of the mission schools (Anglican, Roman Catholic and Wesleyan) that were run on the four general principles set out in the Education Ordinance of 1847. This was intended to apply to the education of both Maori and non-Maori children. Its four general principles were, according to Barrington and Beaglehole, that there must be religious education, industrial training and instruction in the English language, and that the government was to appoint inspectors who would inspect and examine each school each year.

The requirement for industrial training reflected the need to build a country. The first school inspections did not take place until 1852. Both Maori and the Crown made significant land grants to house and support schools. However, the schools did not have much money and preferred to reduce expenditure rather than student numbers, with the result that school inspectors consistently reported that students were inadequately fed, clothed and housed, and that there were not enough teachers or assistants. There was also a general feeling that those schools located near their students' villages did rather better than those located in Auckland, to which students had to relocate.

By the late 1850s the system established by the 1847 ordinance was recognised as failing. It did not reach many Maori, those schools with the fewest students received the most money per student, and only the churches could establish funded new schools. After a tortuous political process the Native Schools Act 1858 was passed. This granted £7000

annually for seven years but made no provision for the establishment of new schools. Barrington and Beaglehole summarise: 'It was limited to schools in connection with some religious body, and aid was only to be given where pupils were both boarded and educated. Instruction in the English language and in the ordinary subjects of English primary education, and industrial training, were also required.' The maximum grant per student was £10 per annum, but only two thirds of that actually reached the school, the rest being retained by the churches for buildings and as a reserve. It simply was not enough, and Governor Grey's vision of self-supporting schools where the pupils farmed the land was never realised. There was no support for village day schools, and although these continued to be started, with enthusiasm, by villagers, they closed quickly. The New Zealand Wars, beginning with the war in the Waikato, closed down almost all of the schools and ended the missionary period in Maori education.

From the 1860s, a settler government ruled New Zealand. The settlers wanted land above all else. They were not interested in funding a large government bureaucracy or public service, and they certainly were not interested in according any special privileges to Maori.

The Native Schools Act 1867 provided for the establishment of schools for Maori that would be eligible for funding from the Colonial Treasurer provided that Maori contributed at least an acre of land for the school site as well as the school books, half the cost of buildings and maintenance, and a quarter of the teacher's salary. All Native schools that received government funding were required to teach the English language. Few new schools were established in the early years of this legislation (according to Barrington and Beaglehole, there were thirteen by 1870 with 219 pupils) because Maori communities did not have much money. By 1875 there were 592 boys and 351 girls attending village day schools established under the Act.

In 1875 the governance structure of New Zealand was radically changed with the abolition of the provincial governments. The Education Act 1877 established a national, free, secular and compulsory (for non-Maori) state-funded system of primary schools administered by ten regional

education boards. This system, under the control of the Education Department, was quite separate from the centrally administered Native primary schools. Maori students were able to attend state primary schools and Pakeha children were able to attend Native schools. In remote areas the Native school was often the only non-boarding option for the non-Maori child.

In 1879 there were fifty-seven Native primary schools and their administration was transferred from the Department of Native Affairs to the Education Department. In 1880 the *Native Schools Code* was published. This attempted to set a common curriculum that was a watered-down version of that offered in New Zealand primary schools, and provided education to Standard Four only. In the later years of the nineteenth century, carpentry and other industrial skills were introduced into the curriculum and teachers at Native schools were encouraged to hold evening classes for adult Maori. However, at all times the teaching of English remained the chief mission of Native schools. This was difficult as English was truly a foreign language at Native schools. Maori was spoken at all times outside school, and only the teacher and his family could be relied on to speak English as a first language. In many schools the teachers were untrained, and for some teaching was the latest in a long line of occupations tried without success.

The Native schools grew in numbers and were supported by Maori communities. They were also more expensive to operate than state primary schools (£8 2s per pupil compared to £3 6s in 1886, according to Barrington and Beaglehole) and, predictably, during the recession of the 1880s serious consideration was given to bringing the Native schools under the control of the regional education boards. James Pope, Inspector of Maori Schools, made this response when the option was put to him by a parliamentary committee in 1891: 'How can it be expected that these two cases, so dissimilar in every respect, could be dealt with under an Act and with an organisation designed to meet the needs of only one of them?' Some Native schools did become state primary schools. In some cases this was because of their whitening as more Pakeha settlers entered a rural area. In other cases this followed rising academic achievement.

However, many Maori communities objected to losing their local school and it remained a Native school.

In 1897 a revised *Native Schools Code* was introduced and teaching extended to Standard Six. However, very few Maori pupils achieved the proficiency certificate. In 1906 only thirteen half-caste or Maori children out of 3952 attending board (state) primary schools attained this, as did twenty-nine of the 4174 pupils attending Native schools. However, the majority of the twenty-nine were Pakeha children attending Native schools. From 1909 there were always more Maori children enrolled in state primary schools than in Native schools. Their lack of English language skills was a recognised barrier to Maori success in board schools.

In 1930 the Education Department surveyed 1000 students from Standard Four and above in Native schools. It found that the Maori children were at least one year older than Europeans in the same class. This is also reflected in the proficiency certificate achievement rate – about 2 per cent of Maori enrolled at either Native or state schools each year compared to about 7.5 per cent of Pakeha. Almost all the Maori students at Native schools spoke only Maori at home.

Maori and the Crown shared a common goal with the village schools: to teach Maori English and some other basics for life in the Pakeha world. The Crown liked to think this was a step toward assimilation, the creation of a brown-skinned Pakeha, while Maori had a viewpoint much more like Apirana Ngata's, that the village school would introduce Maori to the skills required to compete in the white man's world, but they would still remain Maori.

Some Maori students demonstrated ability and a capacity for secondary education, perhaps even for university. The Church-run boarding schools filled this niche from the 1880s. The Education Department funded places at boarding schools for Native school students who had passed Standard Four with credit. Most boarding schools extended primary education to Standard Six but at Te Aute, under headmaster John Thornton, boys were provided with something approaching an English grammar school curriculum with the aim of qualifying for entrance to university.

Ngata, Peter Buck and Maui Pomare all studied at Te Aute. These three all contributed to a debate that took place in the early years of the twentieth century on the goals of Maori education. Ngata and Buck wished Maori to be distributed among all occupations, including the professions, whether or not they then chose to work in Maori communities. Pomare disagreed, believing that Maori education should focus on preparing Maori for vocations that would benefit Maori communities, not individual Maori scholars. Pomare saw the cultivation of Maori land by Maori as more important than the teaching of Latin. Barrington and Beaglehole write: 'These views tended to reinforce those already held by senior officials in the Education Department, who believed that higher education of an academic nature was only suitable for the exceptional Maori child, and that a more practical, vocational education was better suited to the majority.' There was a strong view that educated Maori should return to work in Maori communities, not among Pakeha.

In the 1930s the first Maori were admitted to teacher training colleges. DG Ball has this to say (Barrington & Beaglehole 1974):

I still feel keenly one disappointment, following the admission of Maori students, in the 1930s, to the teachers training colleges. I had hoped and planned that fully qualified Maori teachers would bring vitality to the Maori side of the school and that this would lead to a better understanding of the peculiar difficulties the Maori child had to face in a Pakeha situation. In the main, this proved to be a vain hope, for these students were those who had been successful in acquiring a European-type of education; their training at the teachers colleges had reinforced the resulting neglect of their Maori background, and in the classroom they often adopted without question the traditional European practices with which they were familiar.

The native school system, with its emphasis on teaching English and on 'civilising', with classes in health, hygiene, moral teaching and manual skills, continued to deliver a watered-down state primary school syllabus to Maori until the 1960s. The existence of what was arguably a segregated school system was out of step with world opinion following the 1954

decision of the United States Supreme Court which ended segregated education in the Southern States.

In 1960 the Hunn report recommended a speeding-up of the process by which Maori communities were transferring Native schools to the state school system, as this would hasten integration of the races. In 1962 the Commission on Education recommended the transfer of Maori schools (as the Native schools were renamed in 1947) to board control within ten years. The Advisory Committee on Maori Education endorsed this proposal in 1966, and in 1969 the remaining 105 Maori schools were transferred to education board control.

It has become fashionable for writers to disparage the Native school system. The starting point for such criticism is normally the sometimes physical punishment meted out to children who spoke Maori in the school grounds. We wish to take this opportunity to offer thanks to the large number of Pakeha teachers and families who gave up the town life and chose to live in isolated rural Maori communities with rudimentary facilities where they were the only white faces, immersing themselves in village life. These dedicated souls did not do it for the money. They did it for the people, and for that Maori were, and should always, be grateful. Maori had 'their' schools because of them, and to those critics of corporal punishment we say that in the vast majority of cases Maori parents who wanted their children to learn English at school supported this. They spoke Maori at all other times.

We also express our gratitude to the long line of administrators and inspectors of Native/Maori schools. Their aroha for Maori is indisputable and they fought battles for Maori within the Education Department and with Parliament on many occasions.

To those critics of the Native school system, we say that these schools met the educational needs of our tipuna who attended them better than today's schools meet the needs of our children. The Native schools were not closed because of evidence that Maori children did better in mainstream schools. They were closed because this suited the agenda of politicians and of Education Department bureaucrats, and the anti-segregation laws in America provided a convenient rationale.

Mainstream schools did not meet, have not met and will not meet the needs of Maori. As Ball puts it (Barrington & Beaglehole 1974), 'Following the influx of Maori pupils into the public schools, the sad truth began to be accepted that the Maori child seemed unable to cope successfully in that environment.'

The Hunn Report is rightly regarded as a watershed. At the time, Hunn, a lawyer, had been acting permanent head of the Maori Affairs Department for over a year. His attitude, a major advance from the previous policy of assimilation is expressed clearly:

Integration, as stated, implies some preservation of Maori culture. Much of it, though, has already departed and only the fittest elements (worthiest of preservation) have survived the onset of civilization. In the course of centuries, Britain passed through integration to assimilation. Signs are not wanting that that may be the destiny of the two races in New Zealand in the distant future.

Integration was assimilation slowed down. In 1962, Ralph Hanan, Minister of Maori Affairs, said on the establishment of the Maori Education Foundation recommended in the Hunn report that he aimed 'to have equality of educational attainment between Maori and non-Maori in this generation'. Twenty years later, in 1982, 69 per cent of Maori candidates for School Certificate failed the papers they sat, compared to 43 per cent of Pakeha. The Maori failure rates in some individual subjects are shown in Table 3, 'Maori failure rates in School Certificate 1982'.

Table 3: *Maori failure rates in School Certificate 1982*

Subject	Number of Maori candidates	Passed	Failure rate
English	6197	1700	73%
Science	2753	953	66%
Mathematics	4380	1583	64%
Home Economics	763	121	84%
Engineering Workshop	515	93	82%

On 31 May 1983 Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan, MP for Southern Maori, asked the Minister of Education, Merv Wellington, 'Is the Minister satisfied with the way the New Zealand education system is meeting Maori needs?' He replied, 'Yes. Moreover many Maori people have explained to me how angry they are with criticisms by the Honourable Member that Maori young people do not perform adequately at school.'

This is a truly stunning reply in view of the 1982 School Certificate results. In order to understand it, we need to revisit the educational theory of the time. This 'cultural deficit' ideology persists today and was well articulated in the 1997 report *Maori Participation and Performance in Education: a literature review and research programme* for the Ministry of Education by Chapple, Jeffries and Walker. Chapple et al locate the cause for lower Maori achievement in the lower socio-economic status of Maori and in associated attitudes and choices made by Maori parents. Maori parents have lower levels of educational achievement than non-Maori parents; there are fewer educational resources in Maori homes and larger numbers of children; and Maori parents are not as supportive of local schools. According to the report, these factors explain most of the under-achievement by Maori. This type of analysis concludes that schools are not part of the problem. The problem is Maori kids, Maori families and their socio-economic deprivation. According to this thinking, schools are doing as well as can be expected given the poor material coming from Maori homes.

This type of analysis leads to the bigotry of low expectations, exemplified in the Minister's reply where Maori under-achievement is accepted as normal. Yes, many Maori parents have low opinions of the local mainstream schools available to their children. Yes, many Maori children do behave poorly in a mainstream school. Yes, on the whole, Maori are less well off than non-Maori and there are fewer educational resources and more kids in Maori homes. However, this does not mean that as a nation we should accept lower levels of Maori achievement in education.

The error in the 1997 analysis by Chapple, Jeffries and Walker, in the Coleman report and in multiple publications since, is the assumption that

all schools are equal or near enough to equal for any differences in school quality to be ignored. This type of analysis sees schools as like McDonald's – providing a consistent quality product wherever they are located. This assumption is false.

Schools in poor areas, brown schools, are generally of lesser quality than schools in wealthy areas, despite the greater government funding these low-decile schools receive. Many teachers and principals able to get jobs in a better part of town do so – some teachers at low-decile schools have applied for and been rejected for jobs at better schools. The members of the board of trustees at low-decile schools are often mothers and tradespeople rather than accountants, lawyers and people familiar with running a medium-sized business. The communities of low-decile schools are less well off and can contribute less material wealth to the school.

It is also true that some schools do Maori more harm than good. Some schools are major contributors to, even precipitants of, Maori youth suicide and attempted suicide. Some schools exacerbate rather than ameliorate the disadvantages that accompany Maori as they commence their formal schooling.

One solution is the removal of under-achieving Maori children from mainstream schools, where those schools are among the many that are institutionally incapable of producing Maori educational achievement. The right schooling can completely make up for the 'cultural deficit' and socio-economic disadvantage identified by many researchers.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, many Maori were angry with the education system. Maori had accepted the mission schools with their aim of saving the Maori, the colonial schools with their aim of civilising the Maori, and the settler schools with their aim of producing a docile working class, because they saw education as an entry point into the Pakeha world of material wealth. However, Maori had been locked out of success in the education system and by the late 1970s the very survival of the Maori language was under threat.

In 1930 Apirana Ngata wrote to the Minister of Education, Harry Atmore: 'Maori parents do not like their children being taught in Maori,

even in the Maori schools, as they argue that the children are sent there to learn English and the ways of the English. The [Maori] language should be the language of the home.' By the 1970s Te Reo Maori was thought to be dying. Few Maori parents were fluent in the language. They had been brought up by their parents to speak English. Indeed, it seemed quite possible that spoken Maori would die as the grandparents and great-grandparents passed on.

This threat generated the kohanga reo movement. Native speakers of Maori committed to passing on their language skills to the babies and young children. But kohanga reo are not just concerned with language skills. They are also about passing on a way of living as Maori and about empowering the parents, that generation missing from Te Ao Maori.

The first kohanga reo opened in 1982. One hundred kohanga reo opened in 1982 with the support of the Department of Maori Affairs: by 1994, and still with little in the way of government funding, there were 800 kohanga reo attended by 14,000 pre-schoolers.

In 1990, the newly formed Ministry of Education became responsible for kohanga reo which became part of the early childhood education sector. The accompanying regulatory pressures, and the ongoing pressure to deliver the early childhood education curriculum, have threatened the kaupapa of kohanga reo. However, the movement has remained steadfast, and although the number of kohanga reo has reduced and continues to reduce, along with total enrolments, the kaupapa survives.

The first kura kaupapa Maori opened in 1985. The idea was, and remains, to provide schooling in the Maori language and in a Maori environment through the compulsory education years. The different character of kura kaupapa has been captured well by Reedy and by McKinley. In 1990, Reedy visited six kura kaupapa Maori as the basis for his fourth report for the Research on Development Project. He noted ongoing academic progress and increasing proficiency in Maori language, as well as the huge energy and commitment of teachers. However, many very effective teachers were neither trained nor registered. He says:

All kura have shown a capacity to involve kaumatua and parents to help out in a range of activities at the kura. They range from cleaning, elementary maintenance work, tacking up pictures (art work) to classroom activities such as hearing children read and assisting in the reinforcement and development of te reo.

Kura kaupapa Maori generally require the active involvement of parents at all levels. McKinley (2000) in her report on Maori parents and education notes:

Teachers in bilingual-units and principals of schools with bilingual-units expected more of their parents than those in mainstream schools. They all expected parents to attend whanau hui, help fundraise for annual whanau trips such as a noho marae, and generally be committed to, and supportive of, the type of initiative that they had chosen . . . At each kura we interviewed the whanau rather than the principal or teachers, because the whanau made all the decisions, and ensured they were implemented . . . The whanau development guidelines at one kura demanded full participation of whanau in the governance, management, and delivery functions of the school. This kura required parents of the children in the junior school to accompany them on school trips, to accompany their children to kura on Waitangi day and Anzac day, and to attend whanau hui. Parents were expected to enter the kura in all roles, including teachers, helpers, facilitators, supporters, administrators, coaches, bus drivers, and relievers . . . Parents at this kura changed their lifestyle so they could be part of the kura.

This different way of being a school has produced what ERO sees as variable quality. At the time of the 2002 report *The Performance of Kura Kaupapa Maori* (ERO 2002) there were sixty-two kura kaupapa, with around 5000 enrolled students, an average of eighty-four per kura. These were about 3 per cent of all Maori student enrolments in schools. (Kura are small schools and as such they can be expected to have difficulties with curriculum coverage, especially if they are teaching at secondary school level, and with management.) The report concluded that:

- Forty-six per cent of kura kaupapa were not able to demonstrate that they provided students with broad and effective coverage of all areas of the curriculum. This figure is better than that for composite schools as a whole but worse than that for small primary schools.
 - Fifty-six per cent of kura lacked effective mechanisms to assess the progress and needs of their students. This figure is comparable to that for other similar-sized schools.
 - There were concerns about aspects of student safety at 27 per cent of kura.
 - Poor personnel management was found in 67 per cent of kura.
 - Fifty-six per cent of kura did not have effective self-review.
 - Just over 50 per cent of kura were not on the regular review cycle. ERO planned to return to them early to determine if their performance had improved.
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