

CHAPTER 4

Nga Tikanga Maori

The Whanau

The basic social unit in Maori society was the whanau, an extended family which included three generations. At its head were the kaumatua and kuia, the male and female elders of the group. They were the storehouses of knowledge, the minders and mentors of children. Their adult sons and daughters, together with their spouses and children made up the whanau so that it may have numbered up to twenty or thirty people. The whanau, depending on size, occupied one or several sleeping houses, known as wharepuni. Large whanau had their own compound in the papakainga, or village settlement. If they lived in a fortified pa, the whanau occupied its own clearly defined space. Cooking and eating was done outdoors at a kauta, because taking food into the sanctity of the sleeping place was a violation of tapu. The main function of the whanau was the procreation and nurture of children. In the absence of parents engaged in gardening or other activities related to the food quest, all other adults in the vicinity were *in loco parentis*. This meant that in the whanau children were used to receiving care and affection from many people besides their parents. In fact, as mokopuna they were probably more influenced by their grandparents, the kaumatua and kuia, in their upbringing. In the security of the whanau the loss of a parent by death or desertion was not such a traumatic matter. The whanau also looked after its own aged or debilitated members. The old people were not only revered for their wisdom but also valued for their own contribution in minding the young and performing tasks useful to the livelihood of the group. Light tasks, such as rolling twine, weaving or the time-consuming task of grinding an adze could be done to an advanced age. The whanau provided its own workforce for its subsistence activities in hunting, fishing and gathering of wild plant foods. It was self-sufficient in most matters except defence, a fact of existence recognised in the aphorism that 'a house which stands alone is food for fire'.¹

The Hapu

As a whanau expanded over succeeding generations it acquired the status of a hapu, or sub-tribe. But achievement of hapu status was not automatic. The conditions under which identity as a hapu was recognised included the emergence of a leader with mana derived from founding ancestors through his or her whakapapa, skill in diplomacy, ability to strengthen the identity of the hapu by political marriages, and fighting prowess. A combination of these factors defined a hapu's identity as a land-holding political entity. Once territorial control of the hapu's turangawaewae or standing in relation to other hapu was confirmed, then the name of the founding leader was adopted as the name of the hapu. Although most hapu names were preceded by a clan prefix such as Ngati, Nga, Ngai, Aitanga (people or descendants of), the word whanau was also used to designate a sub-tribe indicating the hapu's derivation from an extended family such as Te Whanau a Apanui, or Te Whanau a Ruataupare.

Children whose parents belonged to different hapu could claim membership in two hapu, but in practice, identification with the hapu of residence was much stronger. The other hapu did, however, exist as an alternative place of residence or even refuge should the need arise.

Hapu ranged in size from 200 to 300 people. Several small related hapu might occupy a single pa, while a larger hapu may have had a whole pa to itself. At first the chief and his house symbolised the hapu, but in time the whareniui or large carved ancestral house, replaced the chief's house as the enduring symbol.

The hapu was the main political unit that controlled a defined stretch of tribal territory. Ideally, the territory would have a sea frontage with particular inshore fisheries such as shellfish beds being the property of a hapu. Inland tribes made similar claims of ownership over stretches of streams, rivers and lakes. The hapu undertook all the major tasks necessary for group survival. The members co-operated in large-scale fishing operations, major land-use projects such as building fortifications, and the production of major capital assets like canoes and meeting houses. The viability of a hapu was dependent on its capability of holding and defending its territory against others. Therefore, one of its major political functions was defence and the maintenance of alliances with other related hapu of the tribe. When a hapu got too large it became unstable and a section would split off, usually under the leadership of a teina, or junior brother of the chief, who, with his followers, established his own whanau and eventually hapu.²

The Iwi

The largest effective political grouping was the iwi, or tribe. The iwi was composed of related hapu from a common ancestor. Canoe ancestors, or one of their descendants who had great mana, were used as points of reference for the definition of iwi identity. Although the hapu of an iwi were not above quarrelling and even fighting with one another, generally they stayed on amicable terms and co-operated with each other in defence of tribal territory against other tribes. The chiefs of the component hapu units of an iwi regarded themselves as coequals, although there was a hierarchy in terms of tuakana and teina relationships of senior and junior descent. Some large iwi confederations on the East Coast, at Taupo and in the Waikato developed the concept of a paramount chief to integrate the iwi into a more cohesive political unit in relation to other tribes. The iwi was at its most effective in defending tribal territory against enemy tribes.³

The largest social grouping of Maori society was the waka, comprised of a loose confederation of tribes based on the ancestral canoes of the fourteenth century. The tribes of waka confederations usually occupied contiguous territory, such as Te Arawa at Rotorua and Tuwharetoa at Taupo. But that was not always the case. Ngaiterangi at Tauranga were separated at Maketu by Te Arawa from the co-tribes of their waka at Whakatane, Opotiki and Maungapohatu. The waka was only a very loose ideological bond. The iwi of a waka, like the sub-tribes of a tribe, often fought each other. But should tribes from other waka invade their domain, the waka bond would be used to form an alliance against the intruders.⁴

Social Rank

Internally, hapu and iwi were stratified into three classes: rangatira (chiefs), tutua (commoners) and taurekareka (slaves). Rank and leadership were based on seniority of descent from founding ancestors. At the head of the rangatira class was the ariki, who was the first-born in the senior male line. His teina, or junior brothers, were the rangatira. An ariki was respected for the qualities of tapu, mana, ihi and wehi (awesome power) which he inherited from his ancestors. However, these qualities could be increased by prowess in war, wise rule and generous behaviour to his people. On the other hand, they could easily be diminished by mean behaviour or unwise rule. A first-born female in the senior line was known as an ariki tapairu. She had certain ceremonial functions attached to her high rank as well as being the

custodian of some rituals. Like the ariki, she was an extremely tapu person and was accorded the respect that one would associate with a princess or a queen. In some instances, a chief's daughter was also accorded the status of a pūhi maiden, a virgin princess. Her virtue was guarded day and night by female attendants. This made her more desirable as a bride when her father sought a political alliance with a powerful chief. Young men of rank often went on expeditions to pay court to a pūhi. The traditions are full of accounts of young men who succeeded in winning a pūhi and being revered as founding ancestors. One of the most famous of such unions was that between Turongo of the Waikato confederation of tribes and Mahinarangi of the East Coast tribes. However, occasionally headstrong women escaped betrothal by eloping with a lover of their choice, as happened in the case of Hinemoa and Tutanekai of the Arawa confederation of tribes.

The *tutua*, or commoner class, were all other members of the hapu who theoretically could claim descent from the founding ancestor. But because they were of junior descent lines that diverged away from the senior line in succeeding generations, they were to all intents and purposes not chiefs and therefore were commoners. This divergence from the main line meant that junior members of a hapu had a tendency to split off and start their own hapu.

The *taurekareka* were slaves taken into captivity after defeat in war. They lived with their masters and did the menial tasks of cooking, padding canoes, fetching wood and water, or acted as arms bearers in war. They were not restricted physically, because more often than not they chose not to run away. This was because their own hapu preferred to regard them as dead rather than attempting to rescue them. The children of slaves taken as wives, husbands or concubines by their masters were born free members of the hapu. Slaves were also known as *mokai*, or pets, because of the services they rendered their masters. They were also valued for their productive capacity and ability to add to the wealth of a chief. Slaves who lost the goodwill of their masters were likely to be killed at any time and consumed.⁵

The Tohunga

In addition to the three main classes there was a fourth class of specialists, known as *tohunga*. This was the generic term for an expert in the various fields of human endeavour. There were different grades of *tohunga* depending on their specialty. At one level were the artisans and artists such as the *tohunga tarai waka* (canoe-builder), *tohunga*

hanga whare, (house-builder), *tohunga ta moko* (tattooist) and *tohunga whakairo* (carver). Some families tended to specialise in one or more of these fields. At another level were the *tohunga ahurewa* (high priests) and *tohunga makutu* (shaman). These *tohunga* were trained in their own *whare wananga* (schools of learning). The highest grade of *tohunga* was the *tohunga ahurewa*, who was trained in a *whare wananga* that met in the winter months over a period of up to seven years. The curriculum included astronomy, genealogy, faith-healing and a large repertoire of chants and *karakia* for planting, felling trees, building houses and canoes, making war, healing the sick and farewelling the dead. The *tohunga ahurewa* also had to learn the arts of white magic, to command the elements and call up supernatural forces. Graduates of this school had to pass difficult tests such as blasting the *mauri* (life force) of a plant or tree, or killing a bird in flight by the power of *karakia* alone.

Tohunga makutu were the counterparts of *tohunga ahurewa*. They trained in a lower grade school known as the *whare maire* (house of black arts). They were often rejects from the *whare wananga*. *Tohunga makutu* were greatly feared for their ability to *makutu*, that is, cast spells to make people sick or to kill them. Despite the fear of *tohunga makutu*, they were tolerated as a necessary evil, one of the elements for controlling human behaviour.⁶

Social control in Maori society was maintained by an interlocking system of rank, *mana*, *utu*, and spiritual beliefs pertaining to *tapu*, *mauri* and *makutu*. The Tawhaki myth laid down the axiom that the injunctions of superiors must be obeyed under pain of death. It also taught that the penalty for breaking the law of *tapu* was death. *Tapu* was a spiritual force which emanated from the celestial realm of the gods. It had three dimensions of sacredness, prohibition and uncleanness. All three kinds of *tapu* had to be treated with great care. Objects that had no *tapu* attached to them were *noa* (common or profane) and could be handled freely. *Tapu* in the sacred sense applied to people of rank, places of worship and ancestral houses. *Tapu* in the prohibited sense applied to pursuits such as carving. Women and children were prohibited by *tapu* from going near *tohunga whakairo* while they were at work. *Tapu* in the unclean sense applied to menstrual blood, which prevented women from gardening or other pursuits connected with food. Similarly, the *tohunga ta moko* was in a state of *tapu* in the unclean sense because of the blood that flowed from the practice of his craft. He was prohibited from touching food himself and had to be fed by an attendant.⁷

Tapu

Tapu was an all-pervasive force that touched many facets of Maori life. Personal tapu enhanced the dignity of the individual. The higher the rank, the greater the personal tapu. The most sacred part of a person was the head. Articles of toilet, such as combs which came in contact with the head or head dress, were tapu by contagion. It was a breach of tapu to put such things where food was prepared. Sickness, death and urupa (cemeteries) were tapu in the unclean sense. The tapu pertaining to death and cemeteries had to be ritually removed by washing hands before resuming normal activities. Sacred precincts known as wahi tapu included mountains, tahu (places of worship), caves and hollow trees where bones were deposited, and wai tapu, the sacred waters where people bathed to cure illness. One of the most useful applications of tapu in controlling human behaviour was as a sanction to the institution of a rahui. The rahui was a prohibition to institute a closed season on some valued natural resource such as the forest or sea to allow bird and fish life to recover. A rahui was also imposed in the event of death by drowning over a defined area where it occurred. The time the rahui remained in force depended on how soon the body was recovered. No one dared transgress a rahui under penalty of death.⁸

The power of tapu to control behaviour derived from spiritual beliefs concerning human nature. Maori believed in a tripartite division of human beings into tinana (body), mauri (life force), and wairua (spirit). It was thought that the spirit could leave the body at will during the experience of a dream and return again. But death ensued if the mauri left the body. If a person became ill, it was thought to be the mauri that was not well. It was believed that there were evil spirits waiting to attack a person's mauri, but they were kept at bay by benevolent protection of the gods. If one offended the gods by breaking the laws of tapu, the gods withdrew their protection. The person then sickened and died if the offence was a serious one.

The power of makutu worked in the same way. If a person gave some serious offence to another, such as committing adultery, the aggrieved party could seek utu by enlisting the services of a tohunga makutu. Besides casting a spell, the tohunga put up a signpost indicating to the selected victim that a makutu was on him. On coming across the sign the victim's mauri would be startled. The physical response triggered by fear pumped adrenalin into the blood stream sending the heart leaping, and the pulse racing was thought to be the

mauri coming under the influence of the makutu. The victim became withdrawn, sickened and, in serious cases, died. But the power of the shaman was not irrevocable; a makutu could be countered by the tohunga ahurewa.

Beliefs concerning the principle of the mauri were not confined to human beings. It was thought all living things possessed a mauri. If crops did not flourish or fish were not plentiful, it was because their mauri was weak. The tohunga resolved the problem by concentrating the mauri of a valued resource, such as the kumara, in a durable symbol in the form of a suitably shaped stone. He then prayed over the mauri to strengthen it and to assure fertility and abundance. The mauri was hidden away so that enemies could not blast it with black magic. These practices concerning the mauri were aimed at controlling unpredictable natural forces. Each valued resource, such as the sea, forest and gardens, were imbued with mauri. Even a pa, as a living organism, had its own mauri for the well-being of its inhabitants.⁹

Utū

The mediation of social control by rank, tapu and spiritual beliefs was supplemented by the principle of utu. There were several dimensions to the meaning of utu. At its simplest level, utu meant equivalence or payment. Gift-giving to others, in the form of garden produce or fish from a successful expedition, was a widely practised custom in Maori society that cemented social ties. But the gift set up imbalance between the recipient and the giver. At some later date, equivalence was restored when the recipient gave a return gift after a successful hunt or food-foraging expedition. In this case, gift-giving and utu mediated warm and enduring social relations of mutual support.

At a more serious level, utu meant compensation for some injury. The misdemeanour of adultery, for instance, disturbed social relations for which the aggrieved party sought compensation. If the compensation was not given voluntarily, then it was sought by the custom of a taua muru. This was a raiding party which wiped out the offence by plundering the goods of the offender. Sometimes physical punishment was meted out as well. The most serious level of utu was revenge against other hapu or iwi for past defeats or encroachment on territory. Infidelity of a wife or harsh treatment of a wife by her husband if they were of different hapu were offences that called for utu by making war. This is why brothers-in-law were considered as potential enemies. Utu between sub-tribes and tribes by making war was one way of

regulating their relationships concerning territory and rights over the reproductive power of women. That these were the major 'take', or causes, of war, is emphasised in the proverb that 'women and land are the reasons why men perish'.¹⁰

Whenua

Maori attachment to land is rooted in mythology, tradition and the long history of tribal wars. Mythology conceived the earth as Papatuanuku, the earth mother, from whose bosom sprang plants, birds, animals and fish for human sustenance. Therefore the earth was loved as a mother is loved. The eternal nature of the earth in relation to man's brief life span is encapsulated in the aphorism 'man perishes but land remains'. When man dies, he is thought of as returning to the bosom of the earth mother, where he is met by his ancestor Hinenuitepo.

The maritime traditions of ancestral voyages of discovery and settlement of new lands is one of the deeply rooted sentiments of Maori attachment to land. That sentiment was amplified by traditions of generations of occupation of dwelling places, tilling of garden lands and fighting to defend them against others. Tribal wars served to demarcate territorial boundaries. The bones of buried ancestors, and blood spilt in the defence of territory, hallowed the land as a gift from the ancestors to their descendants and future generations. Each generation was bonded to the land at birth by the custom of planting the afterbirth, also known as whenua, in the land. When a child's pito (umbilical cord) was cut and buried with the afterbirth in the land, it was known as an iho whenua. The iho is the core, the centre portion of the cord which is between the child and the whenua, symbolising the connection to the land. The iho whenua of a child of rank was marked by the planting of a tree. The tree was named as the iho whenua of that child and signified ownership as well as connection to the land. The iho whenua was cited in any disputes over territory.

The turangawaewae, the standing and identity of a people, was defined by their territory. In time the territorial boundary marks of prominent physical features such as mountains, rivers, lakes, streams or distinctive landforms, came to symbolise the chief and his tribe. That symbolism was expressed in sayings and figures of speech in oratory on the marae. The following are some of the widely known aphorisms in the repertoire of an orator wanting to pay tribute to a host tribe:

Ko Tongarito te maunga, ko Taupo te moana, ko Te Heuheu te tangata. Tongarito is the mountain, Taupo is the sea, and Te Heuheu is the man. Ko Hikurangi te maunga, ko Waiapu te awa, ko Porourangi te tangata. Hikurangi is the mountain, Waiapu is the river and Porourangi is the man.

Waikato raniwha rau, he piko, he raniwha.

Waikato of a hundred monsters, on every bend is a monster.

Warfare

Crossing the territorial boundaries of another tribe was fraught with danger, not only because of past hostilities but because of dangers from local demons and guardian spirits called kaitiaki. These had to be placated by rites of entry known as ururu whenua. War parties, known as taua, tried to advance into enemy territory unobserved so as to maintain the element of surprise. Maori defensive positions were so well chosen to take advantage of natural landforms, and reinforced with palisades, ring ditches and fighting stages, that they were difficult to take with weapons of the stone age. The basic strategies for taking a pa relied on surprise attacks, feint assaults and mock retreats to lure the defenders out into the open. Traditions abound with accounts of pa that had never been taken by storm or siege eventually falling to cunning, sagacity and trickery on the part of the attackers. The strategies of deception were as many and varied as the human imagination could devise. They included disguise, impersonation and the use of decoys. Occasionally however, pa were taken by brute force, especially when the attackers were led by a chief with exceptional courage or physical prowess. But the preference in the conduct of war was to rely on subtlety instead of force.

The basic tenets of Maori warfare, as laid down in mythology and practised in the tribal wars of traditional times, were simple but effective. They revolved around respect for the prowess of the enemy, discovering his strength, neutralising it and attacking him at his weak point. *Vayda*¹¹ offers some interesting observations on the frequency of fighting among tribes. Because there was a strict account kept of debit and credit with enemies, there was always some tribe in arrears with another. When one group was defeated, it retired from the field to its hinterland or mountain fastness, where it kept its *ahi ka* (domestic fires) alight on its land, thus keeping its title to the land warm while it built up its strength. When a tribe felt strong enough, it would drive out its enemies and reoccupy habitation sites. The defeat of the invaders set up another cycle of revenge and counter-revenge. Thus *Vayda*

defined peace as 'a temporary absence of hostilities which were liable to be renewed as soon as the defeated tribe were prepared to square its account'. Therefore, tribes had to be always on the alert to fight, although being ready to fight was not, as Vayda whimsically remarks, the same thing as fighting. There were long periods when there was no fighting.

It is difficult to gauge the casualty rate in tribal wars conducted with no projectile weapons such as throwing spears and bows and arrows. The main weapons were short and long clubs used in close-quarter fighting. Therefore, where combat occurred in the open, the losing side could easily retreat and make off by scattering in different directions. Another difficulty in assessing the mortality rate in warfare was the tendency to exaggerate victories. Traditional accounts of battles often claimed the enemy were exterminated to a man, or only one survivor escaped to tell the tale. On the other hand the traditions also cite stories of chiefs stopping pursuit of fleeing enemies because it was not considered proper to exterminate opponents to whom one was related. However, that same convention did not stop them from cannibal feasting on the fish of Tumatauenga. Eating an enemy was more than a symbolic ingestion of mana. It was the ultimate debasement to be passed through the alimentary canal and emerge as excrement.

One of the recognised titles to land was *whenua rauapatu*, land taken by conquest. But the land had to be occupied for a long time for the title to become permanent. It was not an easy title to maintain because a precondition was a series of victories over most if not all the related hapu in a tribe. Maori warfare was more characterised by one tribe attacking an enemy and returning to their own territory. However, when one group was displaced by a more powerful tribe, the displaced group looked for land elsewhere by displacing another group weaker than themselves.

Just as there were recognised customs for the conduct of war, there were also conventions for making peace. The first step was for the side losing a battle to ask for peace. The exchange of weapons to cement the peace was known as the *tatau pounamu* (greenstone door). But the *tatau pounamu* was recognised as a male peace which could be abrogated by either party when it suited them. A more enduring peace was a woman's peace, where women were exchanged with the victors. The marriages secured a peace that was more enduring than that involving only an exchange of weapons.

Wero

Since tribal wars were endemic for almost 500 years, the approach of any sizeable party of people from another hapu or iwi was always a matter of concern. The *tangata whenua* had to determine whether the visitors were hostile or friendly. The sentry, on sighting a party of strangers approaching, alerted the inhabitants of the pa, who prepared to receive or repel them. The rituals of encounter determined how the *tangata whenua* responded to the strangers. A warrior sallied forth from the safety of the pa to challenge the visitors with a *wero*, which consisted of a highly ritualised display of weaponry with the *taiaha*, the favourite longstaff weapon in single combat. During the whole of his performance as he advanced, the warrior faced his adversaries and kept his eyes on them. Should anyone break ranks to intercept him, the warrior had to be ready to defend himself or to turn and flee back to the safety of the pa. If the visitors were hostile, it was considered a good omen if they could kill the challenger before he made it back to the pa. To this end the visitors designated the fastest runner in their ranks to try to catch him. Because of this danger, the challenger had to be fleet-footed as well as a skilled exponent of the *taiaha*. If the visitors came in peace and the challenger got right up to them without being threatened, he placed a dart before them. When the visitors picked up the dart, the challenger turned and led them into the pa. Even so, the challenger kept his eyes over his shoulder in case of treachery until they were inside the courtyard.

The Welcome

As visitors entered the *marae*, the courtyard in front of the ancestral house of the chief, they were welcomed by the high-pitched *karanga* (call) of a *kuia*. The reason for the first voice to be raised in welcome being that of a woman was because of her power to negate *tapu* and evil spiritual influences. Visitors from afar came as *waewae tapu* (strangers with sacred feet), and with them came the accompanying spirits of their own ancestors. The *tapu* and spirits that came with the guests had to be neutralised in case they conflicted with those of the *tangata whenua*, and so the woman's voice was the first step in the process that allowed the guests to come closer. On entering, a *kaumatua* among the visitors recited a *waerea*, a chant, to counter any negative spiritual influences among the host tribe. The *manuhiri* (guests) maintained a spatial separation from the *tangata whenua* by stopping short of crossing the *marae*. At that point both paid homage to their mutual

dead, while the *kuia* keened their sorrow for the departed with the haunting melodic *tangi*. After a while the hosts signalled the guests to come forward and be seated on the *marae*, thereby diminishing the distance between them. The *kaumatua* then made their *mihi* (formal speeches of welcome). After the visitors replied with their *whaikorero*, the distance between visitors and hosts was closed at a signal from the latter for the guests to come forward and *hongi* (press noses).

The sharing of food which followed was the final negation of the alien *tapu* of the guests. The *manuhiri* and the *tangata whenua* were then able to intermingle freely.¹² But as a precaution against some possible negative spiritual influences being retained among the visitors, a female figure was carved on the door lintel of the guest-house. Any residual spirits and *tapu* were discharged and negated by *mana wahine*, that is the dual generative and destructive power of the female sex. This binary opposition in the female genitals is conceptualised as *te whare o te tangata* (the house of men) and *te whare o aitu* (the house of death). The womb and the female sex are the house that both created and destroyed the culture *hero Maui*.

Tangihanga

The death of an important person was one occasion when the tribes and sub-tribes came together in unity and peace to farewell the dead. After death, the body of a deceased person was dressed in its finest cloak, the hair oiled and decked with feathers, and the face smeared with red ochre. The body was usually trussed in the sitting position and placed on view in the porch of the house. Among some tribes a special platform, and in some cases a rough shelter, was built for the deceased to lie in state. The chief mourners, who were usually the closest female kin of the deceased, kept vigil over the corpse until burial. It was their duty to wait for the deceased and the collective dead of the tribe as each party of visitors arrived to pay their last respects. The mourners also expressed their grief by singing well-known dirges and laments. Although it was often stated in the orations and farewell speeches that death was requited by a liberal flow of tears and mucus, women sometimes lacerated their bosoms with flakes of obsidian as an expression of grief. The women also wore wreaths of *kawakawa* leaves on their heads as a symbol of mourning.

In reply to the speeches of welcome to the *tangi*, it was not unusual for speakers on behalf of the visitors to address their remarks directly to the deceased person as if he were still alive. The orators used

elaborate figures of speech, likening the dead person to the broken horn of the crescent moon, or the fall of the shelter-giving totara tree in the great forest of Tane. As each orator finished eulogising the dead person, they bade him farewell and exhorted him to traverse the broad pathway of Tane to *Hawaiki-nui*, *Hawaiki-roa*, *Hawaiki-pamamao*, the gathering place of spirits. It was only at this separation between the living and the dead that the orators turned to their hosts and thanked them formally for their welcome. For the duration of a *tangi* the visitors were housed and fed by the host tribe. In traditional times, a *tangi* may have gone on for up to two and even three weeks. In Maori thought, death was regarded as a gradual process. That is why *pororoaki* (farewell speeches) were made directly to the deceased. Death was not final until the onset of physical decay. When the body was buried, the *tangi* concluded with a *hakari*, the funeral feast of farewell to the dead.

Hahunga

Although the burial was in some cases the final disposal of the body, the custom of exhumation known as *hahunga* was widely practised. The *hahunga* was a matter of prestige and appears to have been practised mainly with people of rank. There was a public assembly on the *marae* to welcome the exhumed bones back. Speeches of welcome were made to the bones of the deceased, who were mentioned by name. They were eulogised and farewellled for the last time and the bones then deposited in a secret place where they could not be disturbed. The bones of chiefs were enclosed in carved burial chests and hidden in caves or hollow trees. The effigy on the burial chest was made to look horrific in the dim light of a cave so as to frighten off stray intruders. Like the *tangi*, the *hahunga* concluded with a feast.

The customary practices of the Maori surrounding the *tangi* were seen by Oppenheim¹³ as a significant cultural expression of the Maori's reaction to death. In traditional times, the full-scale *tangi* appears to have been reserved for people of the highest prestige and it marked the beginning of the process of adjustment to a change in social relations. The death of a chief left vacant a power position that had to be filled. There was a danger that rivalry for the position between surviving chiefs would cause factions and the splitting-up of a hapu under different leaders. According to Oppenheim, the *tangi* was a mechanism for continuity. Firstly, it promoted unity in bereavement. Secondly, if the chief had already nominated his successor

before his death the tangi facilitated the recognition of the new chief by all who attended. However, where no successor had been nominated, the chief who took the initiatives for conducting and controlling the arrangements for the tangi usually emerged as the recognised natural leader. The hahunga gave final notice of the chief's death and the fact that succession had been established. It was only when the new chief was secure in his position that he initiated the hahunga for his predecessor. The political effect of the hahunga was to bring the group together and validate the succession of the new chief by associating him with the relics of the dead chief. The hahunga feast was an important element in the recognition and legitimation of the chief's mana because not only was he responsible for its organisation, but he was also its main provider.

Hakari

The institution of the hakari, whether for a tangi, hahunga, wedding or inter-tribal feast, was symbolic of chiefly and tribal mana. The feast reflected deeply held values related to food, power and prestige. Throughout the year, except for the summer months, the food quest pre-empted a good deal of time and energy. Because of the seasonal nature of natural resources and gardening produce, food had to be accumulated for future use during winter months. To this end, white-bait, fish, eels, sharks, pipi and potted pigeons were preserved by cooking, smoking or sun-drying, and storage pits were filled with kumara. Only the accumulation of surplus above daily needs enabled a chief and his people to provide for the various feasts that occurred throughout the year.

When guests from other tribes attended a hakari, the reputation of the hosts rose or fell according to their ability to be lavish with food. Each tribe strove to provide the best of the local delicacies for visitors. Coastal tribes fed their guests with kaimoana (seafood) such as fish, shellfish, crayfish and edible seaweed. Inland tribes fed their guests on eels, freshwater crayfish and shellfish, and above all, potted birds. Food, as a major symbol for the expression of tribal mana, was put on large display stages at feasts given between hapu or between tribes. Some of these food stages recorded in historic times were up to twenty-five metres in height, five metres wide and sixty metres long. The aim was to impress visitors with a veritable mountain of food. Quantities of food recorded at intertribal feasts were stupendous. Firth¹⁴ cites a feast given by Te Wherowhero at Remuera in 1844 where the provisions

included six large albatrosses, nineteen calabashes of shark oil, several tonnes of fish, 20,000 dried eels, great quantities of pigs, and baskets of potatoes. Any food that was left over was gifted to the guests as they departed. At one feast at Ohaeawai in 1831, Firth noted that 3,000 bushels of kumara were given away as presents. Feasts and gift-giving on this scale were more than an expression of generosity. They were also expressions of incurred reciprocal obligations and political relations.

Generosity with food as a cardinal value also cemented internal relations within a hapu. Firth¹⁵ noted that aristocratic birth by itself was not sufficient to maintain the position of a chief, he had to be generous to his own people as well as outsiders to maintain their respect and loyalty. The institutions of polygamy and slavery enabled the chief to accumulate wealth by way of food and manufactured articles. Certain chiefly prerogatives such as gifts of first fruits by his people, or a share in the catch from a successful individual hunting expedition, added to the chief's store of wealth. From this store he initiated gift exchanges with his own people. A faithful follower was rewarded with a gift of choice food from the chief's store or a fine mat. The follower became more obliged to the chief and reciprocated in kind, often with an even larger counter-gift. The chief had several such exchange relationships going at the same time, so that his wealth was in constant circulation among his people. By acting as a distributing agent for wealth, rather than accumulating it for personal aggrandisement, the chief strengthened his mana and maintained the loyalty and cohesiveness of his people.