

COMBINED CONCEPTS – by Anahera Herbert-Graves



Under tikanga there are many combined concepts that help us make sense of the universe and better manage our place in it.

They often come in pairs or other multiples, and well known examples include *tika*

pono and *aro**ha*, *te iti me te rahi*; and most fundamental, *mana* and *tapu*.

The [Rev. Maori Marsden](#), in his article 'God, Man and Universe: A Maori View', defines *mana* in its double aspect of authority and power as 'lawful permission delegated by the gods to their human agents and accompanied by the endowment of spiritual power to act on their behalf and in accordance with their revealed will'. This delegation of authority is shown in dynamic signs or works of power.

He also warned: Authority and power in this sense must be clearly distinguished since it is clear that to exercise spiritual power outside the limits delegated is to abuse the gift, and results either in its withdrawal or in that power running rampant and causing harm to the agent and others.

He then used a beautifully simple analogy to make the distinction clearer. A person approaches a traffic crossing and the lights turn red. He has power to cross but no permission. The lights turn green but his car stalls at that moment. He has permission to cross, but no power. His car starts and the lights remain green. He now has both authority and power to proceed

Another set of combined concepts that has become increasingly important for us to understand are those of *takohanga* and *kaitiakitanga*. The meanings of these two words encompass, but are not limited to, what the English call *responsibility* and *accountability*. Without understanding these concepts, I would have been prone to believing the lie that Kawanatanga and Corporate agencies are responsible for everything, but accountable for nothing.

In a recent example of this lie, a murderous paedophile was released from prison on unsupervised parole, and was then enabled by [Corrections](#), [Police](#), [Internal Affairs](#), and [Customs](#) agencies to escape to Brazil. The resultant duck-shoving and buck passing from these agencies' leaders is the complete opposite to Rangatiratanga.

So too is the behaviour of [Corporate leaders](#) who, having admitted to fraud, don't offer to repay a single cent to their investors, but do instruct their lawyers to appeal the severity of their sentence. Kei hea te kaitiakitanga?

Similarly oppositional to Rangatiratanga is the behaviour of [Iwi Corporates](#) who try to usurp *mana whenua* and *kaitiakitanga* from whanau and hapu, and then place those combined concepts under the power and authority of the Kawanatanga. Kei hea te takohanga? We may delegate it from time to time, but we will always remain accountable.

An understanding of these universal truths can be taught to our uri in all places, times and things. But in my experience whanau and hapu councils are the best place to teach them, and the many combined concepts that exist and operate under tikanga help us to do that.

