

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI IN 1840 – edited by Anahera Herbert-Graves

¹ Like everything else in the [Māori](#) world, [Te Tiriti o Waitangi](#) has a [whakapapa](#) and a history. While [Matike Mai o Aotearoa](#) do not detail that history in their report, they do briefly summarise several facts about the political understanding of Māori in 1840 that are especially relevant to the whakapapa and history of Te Tiriti.

In 1840, Te Tiriti flowed naturally from [tikanga](#), [He Whakaputanga](#) and the understanding of [mana](#) as a distinct [concept of power](#).

In 1840, Te Tiriti signified the same wish for the independent yet interdependent political relationships that are evident in He Whakaputanga.

In 1840, all [lwi](#) and [Hapū](#) continued to know and exercise their mana as culturally unique and independent polities. In fact those who had signed He Whakaputanga had just recently reaffirmed that fact, some only a few months before the 6th of February.

In 1840, every lwi had a long history of treaty-making. In [Ngāti Kahungunu](#) for example, it was a part of the diplomatic lexicon and was known as *mahi tūhono*, the work which brings people together. It was an expression of mana, and every lwi and Hapū has examples of treating with others, both before and after 1840.

Treaty-making did not fall out of the sky on an unsuspecting people in 1840.

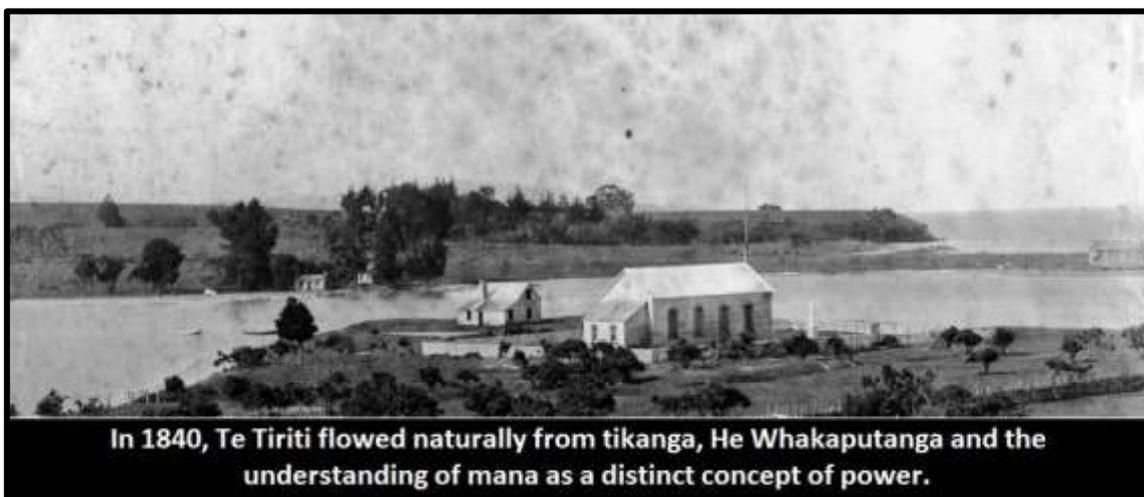
In 1840, in areas like the north, where the greatest concentration of [Pākehā](#) had arrived, the [rangatira](#) had been concerned for some time about the behaviour of those [manuhiri](#). But their increasing presence did not alter the fundamental legal and political perceptions which lwi and Hapū had about their own authority and place in the world.

In 1840 The Pākehā presence was still just a mere blip in time, and our people perceived them according to a view of the world determined by tikanga and the absolute certainty of mana as the concept of power.

In 1840, lwi and Hapū wished to formalise the relationship with the [British Crown](#) for a number of different political and economic reasons, and they were clear about the tikanga, as well as the political criteria, which that relationship had to meet if it was to be legitimate in Māori terms.

In fact it is obvious that in 1840 the rangatira could only act according to tikanga and commit the people to a relationship with the Crown that was [tika](#) in Māori constitutional and cultural terms. Logic, common sense and the simple realities of the time all confirm that.

Just as a [marae](#) expects the rangatira of any manuhiri to monitor the behaviour of his or her [rōpu](#) and ensure it behaves, so the lwi and Hapū in 1840 treated with the Crown in the expectation that it would bring order to the Pākehā manuhiri who had come, and were still coming, onto the “marae” that is [Aotearoa](#).



¹ Thirteenth edited extract from pp. 50 – 51 of [He Whakaaro Here Whakaumu Mō Aotearoa – The Report of Matike Mai o Aotearoa](#)