

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

By Dame Anne Salmond

Dame Anne Salmond notes that, "The research for this account was carried out in the 1980s, and first published in *Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans*. At that time I had the privilege of working with local kaumātua and kuia as well as the *Endeavour* logs and journals, and different chapters were presented and checked on marae. Since then new stories have come to light, but as is right and proper, those accounts are in the hands of whānau, hapū and iwi."

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First Encounters 1:

In Aotearoa New Zealand, we live at the heart of the world's largest ocean. The Pacific covers almost a third of the earth's surface. Maybe fifty million years ago, our islands floated away from Gondwanaland, with its plants and animals. Other creatures flew, floated or were blown here. After a long oceanic or airborne journey, they arrived in this remote, beautiful archipelago, with its reefs and beaches, forests and mountains, lakes and rivers, very different from their homelands. This sparked rapid innovation, and new forms of life emerged. The very first encounters were between the land itself, and new kinds of plants and animals.

First Encounters 2:

As the Māori proverb says, *Whatu ngarongaro te tangata, Toi tū te whenua* – while people come and go, the land always stands. In the days of sail, Aotearoa was a very difficult place to reach, and this was the last significant land mass on earth to be found and settled by human beings. In order to explore the Pacific, the ancestors of Māori had to invent blue water sailing. At least 20,000 years ago, these voyagers made the first deep sea crossings. Over the generations they developed fast, flexible craft and learned to navigate by the stars, sailing from island to island across this vast ocean. Finally they set off on the long, hazardous journeys north, east and south to Hawai'i, Rapa-nui (Easter Island) and Aotearoa.

When the first Polynesian explorers arrived in Aotearoa, they found a country very different from their tropical homelands. The climate was colder, and the islands much larger. As they sailed around the coastline, the voyagers found new kinds of stone for their tools, harbours teeming with fish and forests full of birds, some of them flightless, including one of the largest birds on earth, the moa. These plants and animals had been living together for millions of years, and many were unique to this country. Some explorers returned home with sailing directions to the new land, while others settled around the coastline. The new settlers brought with them the arts of fishing, gardening, building, carving and tattoo, along with knowledge associated with various atua (powerful ancestors). They also brought kurī (Polynesian dogs) and kiore (Polynesian rats), and various plants, although of these, only the hue (gourd), uhi (yam) and kūmara (sweet potato) survived. In this much cooler climate, the Polynesian ancestors had to invent new ways of building their houses, to garden and to make clothing out of harakeke (flax) instead of bark-cloth. As they cleared forests for gardens and harvested food from the bush, reefs and sea, some birds, shellfish and fish became scarce, while others (especially the moa, their best source of meat) died out altogether.

Over the generations as they became tāngata whenua (people of the land), the tohunga (priestly experts) passed on ways of living with land and sea, and stories about the creation of the world; Hawaiki, the island homeland; and the feats of their voyaging ancestors. They saw the world as one vast whakapapa (genealogy), a living network linking land and sky, people and ancestors, plants and animals together. The pace of change was fast, as different ways of life, art forms and ideas emerged in different parts of the country. This second set of encounters was between the settlers from East Polynesia, and the islands of Aotearoa.

First Encounters 3:

Like the first Polynesian voyagers, the first Western explorers who arrived in New Zealand, Abel Tasman and James Cook, faced formidable challenges. In order to cross the Pacific and reach these remote islands, European mariners had to perfect the art of sailing for long periods over great distances. In October 1769 when the *Endeavour* made its landfall on the East Coast of New Zealand, the scientists on board were sure that they had discovered Terra Australis Incognita, the Unknown Southern Continent.

At that time in Europe, too, life was in a phase of explosive innovation. Modernity began in the 1760s in Europe, just as the *Endeavour* brought the first Europeans ashore in New Zealand. The Royal Society of London, which had sponsored James Cook's expedition, was at the cutting edge of the Enlightenment, with many new inventions in the arts, manufacturing, agriculture, governance and science.

The *Endeavour* was on a scientific voyage to the Pacific to observe the Transit of Venus. By measuring the passage of this planet across the face of the sun, scientists hoped to estimate the size of the solar system. Expeditions were sent to different places around the globe to make these observations, including Tahiti, which had recently been found for Europe by Captain Wallis of the Royal Navy.

When the *Endeavour* arrived in Tahiti, the local people greeted them with caution. Captain Wallis had already demonstrated the power of British muskets and cannons. Cook and his men set up a fortified camp on Point Venus where they were visited by a priest named Tupaia, who was fascinated by the artists, the scientists and their astronomical equipment. Tupaia was a 'black leg' 'aroi from Ra'iatea, a star navigator and high priest of 'Oro, the god of fertility and war. The 'aroi were artists, performers, warriors, priests and explorers who carried their gods with them on long inter-island voyages. Tupaia and his Tahitian allies had just been defeated in battle, and when the *Endeavour* sailed from Tahiti, Tupaia decided to go with them.

As they sailed through the Society Islands, Tupaia piloted the ship, guiding the crew through coral reefs and the ceremonies of arrival. Although the high priest tried to persuade Cook to sail west to Tonga, which he had previously visited, Cook had orders to sail south to search for Terra Australis. When they headed into far southern waters, Tupaia worked with Cook and Joseph Banks, the wealthy young botanist who led the Royal Society party, on an extraordinary chart of islands across the Pacific.

In early October 1769 after two months at sea, thousands of dolphins frolicked around the ship, and land-roosting birds flew overhead. At last on 6 October, when the surgeon's boy at the masthead sighted land, Banks rejoiced, certain that they had found the Unknown Southern Continent. That night the crew celebrated, and Nicholas Young was rewarded with a gallon of rum. The winds were contrary, however, and it wasn't until 8 October that the ship anchored off Oneroa, a long, curving beach at Tūranganui-a Kiwa (now Gisborne). That afternoon Cook with his officers and scientists went ashore, landing on the northern bank of the Tūranganui River before crossing the river to collect new species of plants.

Soon afterwards, shots rang out. When Cook and his companions raced back to the boats, they learned that four boys who had been left guarding the yawl had wandered off to the beach. Confronted by four men armed with long spears, the boys ran back to the boat and frantically tried to row out to sea. When one of these men raised his spear to throw it, the coxswain fired two warning shots, and when the man failed to put down his weapon, the coxswain shot him through the heart. This was Te Maro, a rangatira from Ngāti Oneone.

Just as the Europeans had never seen a wero (ceremonial challenge) before, Te Maro and his companions knew nothing about guns. When local Māori sighted the *Endeavour*, some thought it was a floating island, while others thought it might be a great ancestral bird, or a weird craft crewed by ancestors. When Te Maro dropped dead, no-one knew what had killed him. From that time on, the strangers were regarded as hostile.

The following morning when Cook and his companions returned ashore, they were accompanied by the high priest Tupaia. Warriors lined up along the south bank of the river, performing an impassioned haka (war chant). When Tupaia called out to them, saying that he and his party had come in peace and only

wanted fresh food and water, they understood what he was saying. Eventually Tupaia persuaded one man to put down his weapon and swim across the river to Te Toka-ā-Taiau, a sacred rock. Cook put down his weapon and approached him, and they greeted each other with a hongī (pressing noses).

Soon other warriors swam across the river and mingled with the *Endeavour's* men, trying to grab at their weapons. When one man seized the surgeon's sword and brandished it in triumph, the Europeans and Tupaia opened fire, wounding three of these men and killing Te Rākau, a rangatira from Rongowhakaata. According to oral histories, these warriors had come to confront the strangers and seize the *Endeavour*, to avenge the shooting of Te Maro.

Before the *Endeavour* sailed from England, the Earl of Morton, the President of the Royal Society, had given Cook a set of 'Hints' that acknowledged the rights of indigenous peoples to defend their own lands:

[They are] the natural, and in the strictest sense of the word, the legal possessors of the several Regions they inhabit.

No European Nation has a right to occupy any part of their country, or settle among them without their voluntary consent.

The Earl also urged Cook to avoid violence against these people. Aware that he had breached these instructions, Cook set off across the bay in the boats, and when two fishing canoes approached, he decided to try and capture their crews, give them gifts and treat them kindly. As the sailors tried to intercept one of these canoes, however, its crew resisted, throwing paddles, anchor stones and even fish at the Europeans. Cook's men fired, and at least three of these men were killed. As Banks exclaimed in his journal that night, "Thus ends the most disagreeable day My life has yet seen, black be the mark for it and heaven send that such may never return to embitter future reflection." At the same time the officers were impressed by the courage with which Māori defended themselves, noting that even as their comrades fell beside them, "they Did Not Seem the Least Daunted or Frighted."

During this clash, three young fishermen were captured and taken on board the *Endeavour*. As soon as they realised that they were not about to be killed, they became quite cheerful, performing a haka, talking with Tupaia and telling him that their enemies lived on the opposite side of the bay. When Cook took them ashore the next morning, landing beside the Tūranganui River, they begged to be taken to the south end of the bay instead. As a party of warriors approached, they recognised a senior kinsman, who spoke with Tupaia. This man crossed the river, performed a tapu-raising ritual over the body of Te Rākau and took the young boys in his care. Because of the clashes with Māori, Cook had been unable to renew the ship's supplies of fresh food and water, and he named Tūranganui 'Poverty Bay,' because 'it afforded us no one thing we wanted.'

Soon after setting sail, the *Endeavour* was becalmed off Te Kuri ā Paoa, a white-cliffed headland named after his dog by Paoa, the captain of the Horouta canoe. Several canoes came out which hung back until a small canoe from Tūranga approached, carrying the man who had greeted Cook on Te Toka ā Taiau. When he came on board, this man invited Tupaia and his companions to return to the bay, but Cook had already decided to head south. As the crews of the other canoes boarded the ship, Tupaia talked with them, showing them his tattooed thighs and answering their questions. These people exchanged clothing, ornaments, weapons and a set of finely painted and carved paddles with Cook and his companions, even offering them a canoe to take them ashore. This was the first peaceful meeting between Māori and Europeans.

As the wind freshened that evening and the *Endeavour* sailed south along the Māhia peninsula, a high

chief, dignified and richly dressed, came on board. After inspecting this weird vessel he returned ashore, taking with him three young men who had spent the night on board after the exchanges off Te Kuri ā Paoa. Off Waikawa, an island at the tip of the Māhia peninsula, the site of an ancestral school of learning associated with the Tākitimu canoe, fleets of waka came out to challenge the ship, led by tohunga (priestly experts) chanting karakia (incantations). After one warrior bared his buttocks at the strangers, Monkhouse (the ship's surgeon) climbed on to the taffrail and mimicked the gesture, provoking an infuriated haka as the ship's cannons fired overhead.

After several more clashes with waka taua (war canoes) packed with warriors, Tupaia's young companion Taiato was seized as he climbed down the ship's side to barter with the crew of a large canoe. The sailors fired into this craft and Taiato was rescued, and the *Endeavour* headed north again, leaving the name 'Cape Kidnappers' as a reminder of this incident. Sailing past Tūranga-nui-a-kiwa, the *Endeavour* arrived off Anaura Bay where another ariki (high chief) and his companion, both dressed in fine feather cloaks, came on board to invite them ashore.

This ariki, Te Whakatātare-o-te-rangi, was the leader of Te Aitanga-ā-Hauiti, a kin group based at Uawa. Curious about the strangers, he escorted them ashore where they visited a small village and inspected large, meticulously weeded, hillside gardens of kūmara, taro, gourds and a few aute (bark-cloth). It was windy, however, and when Banks tried to return to the ship, his canoe capsized in the surf, giving him a soaking. Te Whakatātare decided to take them to Uawa instead, where there was a sheltered anchorage and plenty of fresh food and water.

When they arrived at Uawa, with its sweet-scented flowering trees, gardens, river and forests, the artist Sydney Parkinson called it a 'second Paradise.' As the sailors collected firewood and filled the water barrels, the officers wandered about ashore, marvelling at the gardens, carved houses and canoes, and the fine mats woven by local women. The only fortified site they saw was in ruins, and the people were living in peace. Tupaia slept ashore in a cave where he talked with the high priest of Te Rāwheoro, an ancestral school of learning famed for carving, canoe-building and ancestral knowledge, exchanging news about ancestral gods, voyaging adventures and life in the homeland, Hawaiki.

The Uawa women were proud and feisty, and unlike those in Tahiti, refused to have sex with the sailors. Cook, Banks and Tupaia also visited an offshore island, Pourewa, where the young ariki (high chief) Hinematiaro lived, and they acquired a carved wall panel from a decorated house that was evidently still being completed. When Tupaia questioned the local people about the practice of eating people, they confirmed it. As Cook noted, 'They eat their enemies Slane in Battell – this seems to come from custom and not from a Savage dispossession this they cannot be charged with – they appear to have but few Vices. Their behaviour was free from treachery.'

After a peaceful week in Uawa, the *Endeavour* sailed around East Cape into a bay where they were chased by a long double canoe packed with warriors who threw stones at the ship, smashing the stern windows. Cook ordered the cannons to be fired overhead and the canoe raced back to shore, inspiring Cook to name Whangaparaoa 'Cape Runaway.' As they sailed along a wide, curving coastline, admiring the fleets of canoes lined up along the beaches, large fortified settlements and extensive gardens, Cook called this the 'Bay of Plenty'.

When the *Endeavour* sailed into Whitianga ('Mercury Bay'), where Cook planned to observe the Transit of Mercury, they were challenged by fishermen in small dugout canoes. These men told Tupaia that they had been raided by their enemies from the north, who destroyed their houses and took all their goods. During this visit, Cook and his companions visited Wharetaewa Pa, a fortified site inhabited by Ngāti Hei, and

another group who were visiting the bay, 'keeping their fires alight' by gathering shellfish and fern-root. These people slept out in the open, the men encircling the women and children, their weapons propped up against the trees.

One of these children, a boy named Te Horeta Taniwha, later recounted his memories of the strangers:

In the days long past, . . . we lived at Whitianga, and a vessel came there, and when our old men saw the ship they said it was an atua, a god, and the people on board were tupua, strange beings or 'goblins'. The ship came to anchor, and the boats pulled on shore. As our old men looked at the manner in which they came on shore, the rowers pulling with their backs to the bows of the boat, the old people said, 'Yes, it is so: these people are goblins; their eyes are at the back of their heads; they pull on shore with their backs to the land to which they are going.'

These goblins went into the forest, and also climbed up the hill to our pa (fort) at Whitianga (Mercury Bay). They collected grasses from the cliffs, and kept knocking at the stones on the beach, and we said, 'Why are these acts done by these goblins?' We and the women gathered stones and grass of all sorts, and gave to these goblins. Some of the stones they liked, and put them into their bags, the rest they threw away; and when we gave them the grass and branches of trees they stood and talked to us, or they uttered the words of their language. Perhaps they were asking questions, and, as we did not know their language, we laughed, and these goblins also laughed, so we were pleased.

From Whitianga the *Endeavour* headed north, sailing round the end of the Coromandel Peninsula, another sacred site where people gathered to confront the strangers. Two carved canoes came out, their crews performing the haka and hurling stones against the side of the ship, and when Tupaia ordered them to stop, they replied defiantly:

'Come ashore only and we will kill you all.' Well, said Tupia, but while we are at sea you have no manner of Business with us, the Sea is our property as much as yours. Such reasoning from an Indian who had not the smallest hint from any of us surprizd me much.'

As the ship sailed into the Hauraki gulf, two men came out who greeted Tupaia by name. Encouraged by this sign of friendship, Cook ordered the boats to be lowered and rowed up a river 'as wide as the Thames' to Oruarangi Pa, where they were given a warm welcome. With its sheltered waters and towering forests of kahikatea trees, Joseph Banks described the 'Thames' as a perfect site for European settlement.

After this brief visit, the *Endeavour* headed north again, sailing past the Waitemata harbour. Off the Cavalli Islands they were challenged by fleets of canoes, whose crews ignored Tupaia's admonitions. Standing on the poop of the ship, Cook was pelted with stones and fired his musket at one of his assailants, hitting him in the face with small shot. In contrary winds, they turned south again and sought refuge in a deep, sheltered anchorage that Cook named the 'Bay of Islands.'

In the Bay, Tapua (the father of Patuone and Waka Nene, who later signed the Treaty of Waitangi) and other important chiefs came on board and were given gifts, including red garments and salt pork. Many years later, Patuone described this encounter:

Tapua went on board the ship, and the leader of the goblins presented him with a red garment and with the salt flesh of an animal. It was cooked flesh, with both fat and lean meat on the one piece. Tapua took it and gave it to his son and daughter, Patuone and Tari. Food of this kind had not been known to the Māori; they found it to be sweet, and very good.

When the ship anchored off Motuarohia Island, the crews of several canoes came alongside and tried to seize the anchor buoy. More shots were fired, and more warriors were wounded. As Cook and his companions landed on the island, fleets of canoes sailed around it, dropping off parties of warriors who circled around the strangers, almost cutting them off. When the taua (war party) advanced, chanting a haka, Cook drew a line in the sand and told them not to cross it; and as several groups of warriors tried to seize the boats the marines opened fire, wounding them with small shot and ball. In the fighting that followed, more men were shot. This bloody encounter ended only when the *Endeavour* fired its cannons overhead, and the warriors retreated, astounded by the flame and thunder of the guns.

After this battle, there were no further clashes. The *Endeavour's* men wandered about the bay, impressed by its large fertile gardens, fortified sites and villages, and fleets of long carved canoes. Like the Bay of Plenty, this region was wealthy and densely populated, and the bay was teeming with fish. The local people laughed a little at the ship's fishing nets, which were dwarfed by their own seine nets, some of which were 1000 metres long. When Cook decided to sail from the Bay of Islands, the ship was swept towards the rocks, and disaster was narrowly averted.

As the *Endeavour* headed towards North Cape, canoes came out from Tokerau ('Doubtless Bay') where their crews talked with Tupaia, saying that the land ended not far to the north, and telling him about a voyage that their ancestors had made to a large country where the people ate pigs. When he asked whether they had brought any of these animals back with them, and they said 'No,' he accused them of lying, saying that their ancestors would never have been such fools as to fail to bring pigs back to Aotearoa. Soon afterwards the ship was caught in a violent storm while another vessel, the French ship *St Jean Baptiste* commanded by de Surville, sailed around Murimotu (an island off North Cape) in the opposite direction. Thus the first European ships in two centuries to visit New Zealand missed each other. Off North Cape, the *Endeavour's* crew celebrated Christmas with rum and gannet pie, and according to Banks, 'all hands were as Drunk as our forefathers used to be upon the like occasion'.

The west coast of New Zealand, pounded by storms that roar across the Tasman, is extremely dangerous for sailing vessels. During his brief visit to New Zealand in 1642, Abel Tasman had charted this coast, and as Cook sailed south, he stayed far out to sea until he reached the strait where Tasman had landed. Eager to find a sheltered harbor where the *Endeavour* could be careened and repaired, Cook headed into the strait, sailing through a maze of islands associated with the explorer Kupe into Tōtaranui, or 'Queen Charlotte's Sound' as Cook called it.

As the ship entered the Sound, a tohunga (priest) on the shore performed rituals with feathers and a cloak. The *Endeavour* anchored in Meretoto ('Ship Cove'), with its stream of fresh water, thick forest and sandy beaches. Casting the ship's net, the sailors caught a huge haul of fish. Although the people were curious but friendly, fighting was going on in the Sound, and the visitors soon had their first evidence of kai-tangata (eating people) - a custom that Māori had often described, and which Tupaia decried - although human sacrifice was practiced in the Society Islands.

One afternoon while Cook, Banks and Tupaia were out exploring, they landed on an island in a small cove where a family was cooking their meal. When these people ran away and Cook and his companions inspected their food baskets, they discovered that some of the bones they contained were human. When the family returned to the beach, they told Tupaia that this was an enemy who had been killed in a recent skirmish. In Europe, where witches and warlocks were believed to eat human flesh, cannibalism was regarded with horror. Sailors especially feared the practice, which sometimes took place if men were marooned or cast adrift in small boats, and this incident provoked heated discussions back on board the

Endeavour.

Despite this experience, the crew had little fear of local Māori, who often visited the ship and the shore camp. The sailors roamed around the coves, islands and inlets in the Sound, and an elder named Topaa befriended James Cook, taking him to the summit of a high hill on an island where they set up a post carved with the *Endeavour's* name and the dates of its visit, and hoisted the Union Jack. Topaa told Cook that his people knew of three lands, one to the north which took three months to sail around (the North Island), one nearby (Arapaoa Island) and another large land to the south, Te Waipounamu (the South Island). After this conversation, Cook decided that this country was almost certainly a group of islands, and not part of a great continent. Totaranui was a superb place to rest his men and refit the ship, and it became his favourite anchorage in the Pacific.

After leaving the Sound the *Endeavour* headed south, sailing around Stewart Island before heading north up the west coast of the South Island to Admiralty Bay. By circumnavigating New Zealand, James Cook had proved that these islands were not part of Terra Australis. When the ship returned to Britain, New Zealand was inscribed in the charts of the world, and descriptions of its vast forests, fertile soils, flax, fish and seals inspired a stream of European ships to follow in the *Endeavour's* wake. Joseph Banks was lionised in London, eclipsing James Cook and becoming a friend of King George III, and later, the long-serving President of the Royal Society.

Back in Aotearoa, however, it was Tupaia whom Māori most vividly remembered. In 1773 when the *Adventure*, the companion ship to Cook's *Resolution*, sailed into the Queen Charlotte Sound, Māori paddled out to the ship, led by a tohunga chanting a karakia and calling out Tupaia's name, eager to meet him again. When they were told that Tupaia had died in Batavia, they wept. The same thing happened when the *Adventure* returned to Uawa on the East Coast. The people called out for Tupaia, wept bitterly when they heard he had died, and sang a song composed in his honour.

During the *Endeavour's* six-month voyage around Aotearoa, Tupaia had become a mythical figure. Tales of his arrival from Ra'iatea on board this strange vessel, with its cannons that flashed and thundered, its white-skinned crew with their muskets and their extraordinary cargo, had spread around the country. Tupaia was a star navigator, a high priest from the homeland, and the only person on board the ship who could speak freely with Māori. As a Polynesian aristocrat, he held himself with pride, and could say what he liked about the British. For many Māori, the *Endeavour* was Tupaia's ship, which had carried him from Hawaiki, the ancestral homeland, to Aotearoa:

Whakarongo! Whakarongo! Whakarongo!
Ki te tangi a te manu e karanga nei
Tui, tui, tuituiaa!
Tuia i runga, tuia i raro,
Tuia i roto, tuia i waho,
Tuia i te here tangata
Ka rongo te pō, ka rongo te pō
Tuia i te kāwai tangata i heke mai
I Hawaiki nui, I Hawaiki roa,
I Hawaiki pāmamao
I hono ki te wairua, ki te whai ao
Ki te Ao Mārama!

Listen! Listen! Listen!
To the cry of the bird calling
Bind, join, be one!
Bind above, bind below
Bind within, bind without
Tie the knot of humankind
The night hears, the night hears
Bind the lines of people coming down
From great Hawaiki, from long Hawaiki
From Hawaiki far away
Bind to the spirit, to the day light
To the World of Light!