



Mihimihi

Mihimihi refers to the introductory speeches which take place at the beginning of a gathering or meeting after the more formal pōwhiri. Mihimihi are generally in Māori language and can be given by both males and females.

The purpose of mihimihi is to establish links with other people present. It involves individuals standing to introduce themselves by sharing their whakapapa (genealogy, ancestral ties) and other relevant information. Culturally, it is important for Māori to know and be able to share their whakapapa - to know one's whakapapa is to know one's identity.

Mihimihi can vary in length depending on the reason for the gathering, how well the individuals at the hui know each other and their links to one another.

During a mihimihi, a person will usually identify specific geographical features associated with their tribal area including maunga (mountain), awa (river), moana (sea). They may also identify waka (ancestral canoe), hapū (sub tribe), iwi (tribe), marae and sometimes an eponymous ancestor. This information is considered more important than the individual's own name which accordingly may be the last piece of information disclosed during a mihimihi.

Some people include pepeha - well known set verses that describe their whakapapa links to a particular hapū or iwi.

Here is an example of a simple mihimihi:

Ko (name of your waka) te waka

My canoe is (name of your waka)

Ko (name of your mountain) te maunga

My mountain is (name of your mountain)

Ko (name of your river) te awa

My river is (name of your river)

Ko (name of your tribe) te iwi

My tribe is (name of your tribe)

Ko (name of your sub tribe) te hapū

My sub tribe is (name of your sub tribe)

Ko (name of your chief) te rangatira

(Name of your chief) is the chief

Ko (name of your marae) te marae

My marae is (name of your marae)

Ko (your name) ahau

I am (your name)

Source: <http://www.korero.maori.nz/forlearners/protocols/mihimihi.html>

The cultural concept of identifying with mountains, rivers iwi etc in this context is specific to iwi Māori. Non-Māori are able to introduce themselves using the standard format that does not state mountains etc. If one wishes to affiliated to mountains, rivers etc it is important to use a determiner (te) and not a possessive (tōku) removing the concept of ownership. The use of mountains, rivers etc is often used by non-Māori who have links to landscapes overseas.

eg: Ko Aoraki tōku mauaka. X
My mountain is Aoraki.

Ko Aoraki te mauaka. ✓
My mountain is Aoraki.

Even though in te reo Māori we are saying Aoraki is the mountain, it can be interpreted as saying "My mountain is Aoraki" (The mountain that I affiliated to is Aoraki)