

of people she had known who had passed on, memories had flooded back to her. Old images, smells, impressions and times would come back and she would hold and kiss the photograph, hongis perhaps. She said that she felt their mauri return to her. In this way this old lady has described it far better than I have here. For this old lady memory is not enough. Rather it is what memory can stimulate within the wairua (spirit) of the person that is important. It is in this mysterious world of the spirit, not just that of the intellect, that Maori people interact with the kupu (words), ohaaki (maxims) and maioha (precious words) of their ancestors.

Researching and reading the manuscripts of ancestors is always a spiritual matter. This is especially so if one is reading the words of or words about one's own ancestors. However, reading the words of other people's ancestors still commands respect. If I come across a reference to something my own tupuna have written, I get excited, sometimes my palms get sweaty. For example, I found out that my great grandfather had written several manuscripts of family history but had given them to a Pakeha to take care of, because it was he who prompted the old man to write.

We owe some kind of debt to this Pakeha, but unfortunately he did not let us know that he had them, and neither did our tupuna. Hence, these valuable manuscripts have been lost to us for almost half a century until I found out the name of this Pakeha in a reference book. Then I found that he had published, edited and annotated versions of these manuscripts in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*. This had been sitting right under my nose for several months in the Turnbull. Nothing could describe my joy and excitement in finding these articles and the wealth of information they contained. The reaction of my family to these articles has been very interesting and an otherwise large gap in their knowledge filled.

Subsequently I have found that the originals are in the Auckland Institute and Museum. When I took these articles back to my marae, my family pored all over these manuscripts and read them day in and day out. The preciousness of the writings is better understood when one knows that our tribal prestige or mana is enhanced by knowledge of them. We have a better understanding of the kind of position our tupuna must have taken in tribal affairs, we now know what kind of standing he had amongst other Maori scholars. In essence our mana is maintained more powerfully, with greater ease, having obtained the information written down by our tupuna.

The role that manuscripts of this kind can play in the maintenance of good spiritual health of the iwi must be understood by the librarian and iwi alike. It is important to know both that certain writings exist and to understand the nature of those writings and circumstances surrounding them.