**Mihi? Pepeha? What? Where do I even begin?**

*Here’s a brief outline of what’s what and why its important when introducing yourself in a Māori context.*

*If you are Pākehā – it can be difficult to figure out answers to the different parts – “I don’t have a mountain!” It is quite a different way of thinking, so the challenge is to give the process a fair go and be willing to learn from it.*

*If you are Māori and do not know the answers immediately, that can feel hard and disorientating. Try to sit in this tension and let the process be an opportunity to discover new things. Kia kaha.*

Excerpts extracted from<http://maori.otago.ac.nz/reo-tikanga-treaty/te-reo/mihi>

## **Mihimihi – Introductions/Speeches**

At the beginning of any hui *(gathering*), following the pōwhiri (formal welcome) or the mihi whakatau (a welcome), a round of introductions and speeches – or mihimihi – usually occurs. During this time, people will stand and share a little bit about where they come from and who they are (their pepehā); many also share significant parts of their whakapapa (genealogy).

## **Whakapapa**

While whakapapa is about genealogy (lineage or ancestry), it also literally means to ‘place in layers’ or ‘create a base’. It places people in a wider context, linking us to a common ancestor, our ancestral land, our waterways and our tribal (and sub-tribal) groupings.

Whakapapa is about relationships, with both the land and with people. The name tangata whenua or ‘people (tangata) of the land (whenua)’, our nation’s first people, makes reference to this relationship, as does the term mana whenua, the mana (prestige) held by the people of that place.

Another significant term which highlights this relationship is tūrangawaewae, literally, a place (tūranga) to stand (waewae). Tūrangawaewae tends to be where we were either born or brought up, or alternatively, our ancestral land. It is a place where we feel we have a strong sense of belonging and a deep spiritual connection.

Our tikanga (traditions, practices, beliefs) are derived from whakapapa and dictate the way our society functions, in terms of the ‘lore’ we adhere to as well as the ‘law’ we abide by.

Whakapapa is also about our connections to people and our relationship with them. So often when we meet others, we listen out for “connections to be made” ie: signs of where they come from; it could be a common land feature (e.g.: Ko Aoraki te mauka/Aoraki is my mountain – linking that person to the South Island) or a well-known name (e.g. Ko Brooking te ingoa whānau/Brooking is my last name – linking that person to the East Coast of the North Island).

**One example of a Pepehā**

What follows is a template to begin building your pepehā (an introductory ‘speech’ – based on whakapapa – recited during mihimihi).

There are many ways to structure your pepehā depending on the tradition of where you are from - some people use tōku (indicating that something belongs to them, or that they belong to it) a sense of submission, whereas others use te (a singular ‘the’) – for example:

**Ko Kapukataumahaka tōku māunga** - Mt Cargill is my mountain
**Ko Kapukataumahaka te māunga** - Mt Cargill is the mountain (to which I affiliate)

If you are Pakeha its probably better to use ‘te…’ rather than ‘tōku…’

Just make sure you develop your pepehā with good intent and ensure that, it is delivered with both humility and respect. This is a learning journey!

**It is important to begin and end your pepehā, your mihimihi with an appropriate greeting.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tēnā tātou katoa Hōnore ki te Atua****Korōria ki te Atua** | ***Greetings to all of us.*** ***Honour to God******Glory to God.*** |
| Ko\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ te Maunga | The mountain that I affiliate to is: |
| Ko\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ te Awa / Roto / Moana  | The river/lake/sea that I affiliate to is: |
| Ko\_Ngāti\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ te /ngā Iwi (if more than 1) | My tribe(s) is or are: |
| Ko\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_te Hapū OR VillageKo \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ te ingoa whānau | My sub-tribe / village is:My family name is : |
| Ko\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ te/ ngā Marae ( if more than 1 )OR: Ko \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_te papakāinga. Ko \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_te Whare Karakia | **My marae** is or are:Or **My home base** is: Or **My church** is: |
| **Ko** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**rātou ko** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, **ko** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, **ko** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ōku tūpuna  | **My grandparents** (4 names) are:( On both sides if you know them) |
| Ko \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **rāua ko** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ōku mātua. | **My parents** are: and |
| Ko\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tōku hoa rangatira. | **My husband**/wife is: |
| Ko \_\_\_\_\_\_**ratou ko**\_\_\_\_\_, **ko**\_\_\_\_\_ nga tamariki. | **My children** are ( 2+): |
| Ko\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tōku ingoa. | **My name is** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa** | Therefore, greetings, thrice over |

**Maunga/Mountain:**
This is the mountain or hill(Puke) where your ancestors of at least 3-4 generations ago settled.  This may be here in NZ or their country of origin.
It is not the mountain that you are currently living near or just happen to ski/snowboard down each year.
**Awa / Roto / Moana (Water source):**
 This is the river/lake/sea that feeds either from your mountain/hill or is geographically close to your mountain and settlement area of your ancestors.  Your family's water source provided food and a way to stay clean.  It played an important part in our family's life in being able to survive.  This is why we acknowledge it.

**Waka:**
 This is the ‘ship’ your family came out to NZ on.

**Iwi:**
 Your iwi is the group of people you identify with.  If you are of Māori descent you will have a tribe.  If your family originates from another country, you can list the Māori translation of the name of that country (check out <http://maoridictionary.co.nz/> )
**Hapū :**
 Your hapū is your kinship group, clan, tribe/subtribe. It consisted of a number of *whānau* sharing descent from a common ancestor but sometimes from an important event in the group's history.  If you are not of Māori descent, record your clan or family name from your paternal side.

**Ingoa Whanau:** Your family name.

**Marae/Whare Karakia/Wharenui**
If you are of Māori descent, you will have a Marae.
If you are not of Māori descent, you will need to consider your Turangawaewae'*(standing, place where one has the right to stand - place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and whakapapa/family tree).* This maybe a church (Whare Karakia) or a town community hall (Wharenui).

**Ōku Tūpuna / Mātua :**
Your tūpuna are your biological grandparents/ancestors.  It is important to acknowledge the bloodlines of your family tree.

**Hoa Rangatira:** Wife or husband.

**Tamariki:** Names of your children.

Sources:

<http://arrowtowntereomaori.blogspot.co.nz/2016/07/pepeha-mihi-where-do-i-begin.html>

<http://maori.otago.ac.nz/reo-tikanga-treaty/te-reo/mihi>