The preservation of Maori culture

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I. Introduction

1. Motivation

With vast open spaces filled with stunning rugged landscapes, gorgeous beaches, often spectacular geothermal, volcanic activity, a temperate climate, fascinating animals and plant life, it is no surprise that New Zealand's pure natural environment is so charming that it has become filming location of some movies, for the magnificent natural scenery never fails to add glamour to these movies. Such films as The Lord of the Rings, The Chronicle of the Narnia, King Kong, and Whale Rider have given rise to the popularity of the tourism industry in New Zealand. After watching those films, we were obsessed with the beautiful scenery; as a result, New Zealand caught our attention and we started to explore the beautiful island country---New Zealand.

Besides the wonderful environment, one thing is particular about New Zealand, that is, its policy on protecting the aboriginals—the Moaris. The population in New Zealand is mostly European decent, with the indigenous Moari being the largest minority. Thus, in addition to introducing the geography and environment of New Zealand, the paper will pore into the history of the Moari and existing measures in preserving the culture.

II. Content

A. New Zealand Introduction

a. Geography about New Zealand

New Zealand has two main islands, the North and South Islands. Cook Strait separates the North and South Islands. It has a total area of 268,680 square kilometers (103,738 sq. mi), making it slightly smaller than Italy and Japan and a little larger than the United Kingdom. Each of the South island and the North island has its own unique characteristics: The South Island is the largest island of the two and contains about one quarter of the New Zealand population. The island is divided into east and west by the Southern Alps. The east side of the island is home to the Canterbury Plains while the West Coast is famous for its rough coastlines, with large proportion of native bush, and Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers. The North Island is less mountainous than the South, but is marked by volcanism. The island's tallest mountain, Mount Ruapehu, is an active volcano. Lake Taupo is situated near the
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centre of the North Island and is the largest lake by surface area in the country. The lake lies in a caldera created after the largest eruption in the world in the past seventy thousand years. (#1)

b. The climate
The climate in New Zealand is mostly cool temperate, ranging from 8°C (46°F) in the South Island to 16°C (61°F) in the North Island. Unlike the North Hemisphere, January and February are the warmest months while July is the coldest. Subtropical conditions are seen in Northland.
There are three main factors that influence New Zealand's climate: the first one is its latitude zone location where the prevailing winds flow westerly. Second factor is its oceanic environment. Third goes the mountains, which are considerably high, especially the Southern Alps. (#2)
As a southern hemisphere country, New Zealand’s seasons are the inverse of Europe and North America:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>December - February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>March - May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>June - August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>September - November</td>
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B. Maori culture

a. Origin
There are many theories about the origins of the Maori. The commonly accepted theory
The preservation of Maori culture today, says that the Maori originated in China, and traveled via Taiwan, the Philippines to Indonesia, onto Melanesia and reached Fiji. From there to Samoa and on to the Marquesas and turned South West to Tahiti, thence to the Cook Islands and to Aotearoa (New Zealand). (#3)

However, archaeological and linguistic evidence suggests that several waves of migration came from Eastern Polynesia to New Zealand between AD 800 and 1300. Maori legend says that the Maori came from “Hawaiki”, the mythical homeland about 1000 years ago. When the Maori arrived in Aotearoa (New Zealand), they found a land of volcanic activity and snow capped mountains. Aotearoa is the name for New Zealand in Maori meaning Land of the long white cloud. (#4)

b. The Maori History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Incident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>800 and 1300 B.C.</td>
<td>The Maori arrived in Aotearoa (New Zealand), which means “Land of the long white cloud.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>1642 A.D.</td>
<td>Dutch navigator Abel Tasman was the first European to encounter the Maori; however, four members of his crew were killed in a bloody encounter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1769-1840 A.D.</td>
<td>White people from Europe came to New Zealand: British explorer James Cook established friendly relations with some Maori.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840 A.D.</td>
<td>Representatives of Britain and Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840-1860 A.D.</td>
<td>The Maori was faced with a series of culture shocks brought by</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860-1865 A.D.</td>
<td>After a few conflicts between the Maori and colonist, a war broke out in 1860 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-1900 A.D.</td>
<td>Maori people spoke up and walk to the street to take back their right from colonist. In 1865, the first aborigine local court was set up and then aboriginal schools and voting right and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1935 A.D.</td>
<td>The population of Maori returned to that of in 1850. Two leaders, Wiremu Ratana and Te Puea Harangi, came out and promote land development policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-1961 A.D.</td>
<td>The land development policy met with success. The authority started to call them Maori rather than aborigine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(#5)

d. Tā moko

Tā moko is the permanent body and face marking by Māori. The skin was carved by chisels rather than punctured. This left the skin with grooves, rather than a smooth surface. It is a signal of status and rank; what’s more, it also makes a person more attractive to the opposite sex. (#6)

e. Dance and Art

(1.) The Haka, a war dance, was performed before the onset of war by the Maori last century, but has been immortalized by New Zealand’s Rugby Team the All Blacks, who perform this dance before every game. (#7)

(2.) As so-called Son of Nature, the Maori love to bath in the Nature. They also obtain the materials of their art from seashells, leaves, stones, feathers, flowers and wood. All of them can be made into exquisite and simple artworks and accessories. (#8)

f. Maori Tradition

(*3)
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(1.) The traditional Maori welcome is called a powhiri which is a greeting that involves pressing noses as opposed to a kiss.

(2.) A traditional form of cooking called a Hangi. Stones are heated in a fire using cabbage leaves or watercress to stop the food from burning. The Hangi is still popular and is a viable alternative to a weekend barbecue. The unique taste of food cooked in a Hangi can best be described as steamed food with an earthen flavor. (#9)

C. Measures to preserve Maori culture

1. Education

(1.) There are some policies in New Zealand used to pass on Maori culture. Since Maori culture is an essential part of New Zealand’s education for children, it has become one of the main features of their education. Te Whaariki, an educational policy for New Zealand native children, is written in both English and Maori language to emphasize how much the Maori culture means to New Zealand. Due to the crucial role a language plays in protecting a culture and the tradition of it, the policy suggest that teachers in preschool education should use Maori language as much as possible in their school life. And each classroom should equip with certain amount of Maori books so that children will realize Maori culture shouldn’t be ignored in their daily life. (#10) All Maori institutions have the material of Maori language, and each of them was compiled by Maori. The teachers teach school with Maori language and they even create the new language and nouns by themselves. It is worth our learning that they come up with ideas to avoid losing their language. (#11)

(2.) In addition, there is an institute called New Zealand Maori arts & Crafts Institute, providing people with opportunities to view and admire the Maori unique arts and crafts. It gives people a chance to explore the attractive and abundant Maori culture, and is a great place to show the world about their special history. (#12)

(3.) Apart from the policy and the institute, there’s an annual event in New Zealand’s capital about the Maori artwork and culture called “Maori market.” Maori Market is the largest contemporary meeting of Maori art from over 100 leading and emerging artists. It features paintings, weaving, sculpture, wood, silver, bone, gold, and greenstone carving, clay, Ta Moko or traditional tattoo. It is being staged by Toi Maori, a charitable trust established by artists in 1996 for the promotion of contemporary Maori arts. Maori Market will also feature a fashion parade of contemporary woven fiber and feather shoulder garments, Maori Tourism ventures, Maori food and wine, dealer galleries, Maori art school
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graduate work, and live displays of Ta Moko, clay artists and contemporary jewelry. (#13)

![Logo of Maori Market in 2007.](image)

2. Politics/Working

The Treaty of Waitangi is a treaty first signed on February 6, 1840, by representatives of the British Crown, and various Maori chiefs from the northern North Island of New Zealand. The Treaty established a British governor in New Zealand, recognizing Maori ownership of their lands and other properties, and gave Maori the rights of British subjects. After signing the treaty, European colonists had gradually become the mainstream of New Zealand's politics, economy and society, resulting in the marginalization of the Maori. The resources of New Zealand have been transferred from Maori to the new immigrants. By the time the Maori economy was deprived by the colonists, the Maori cultures have been suppressed. The government even forbade the Maori students to speak Maori language at school; otherwise, they will receive corporal punishment. Although the treatment of Maori has been improved apparently, the marginalization of the Maori in the New Zealand society hasn't reversed thoroughly. On 2008 June 25th, in order to reconcile the disaffection of Maori, New Zealand government and seven iwi, the largest everyday social units in Maori populations signed the largest agreement, which consented to give New Zealand forest property back to seven aborigine tribes for the purpose of compensating Maori people. This made Maori people becoming the biggest owner of New Zealand private forest land. (#14)

III. Conclusion

Around the world there are too many cultures and old civilizations have lost their original customs and even their technology. It's a pity that people don't properly preserve these civilizations at the right time. Nowadays, many archaeologists and historians are trying to rebuild these once-prevailing cultures by what they found in which these culture lived. It goes without saying that it is useless and inefficient, like Maya culture which still remains mysterious although there are many things found. Therefore, we should take some positive actions to save those cultures from disappearing. Fortunately, thanks to the location of New Zealand, the Maori can't go far as to extinguish on account of the fact that it is situated in the southern hemisphere and isolated on the South Pacific Ocean. Most importantly, it's
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time for people to make great effort, such as passing some regulations and enforcing the
law strictly, to preserve those endangered cultures or civilization. Everything is worthwhile
of being saved. As the old saying goes,” it’s better to be late than sorry.” It is the
cultural diversity that makes earth so attractive and precious in the spiritless universes.

IV. Resource

(5)#http://www.jolan.idv.tw/media/ethniccrossing/%E7%B4%90%E8%A5%BF%E8%98%AD.pdf 11/26, 2008

V. Reference

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