

A Cultural Anthropological Study of the Matariki Tradition and the Maori New Year

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I Introduction

This paper focuses on Matariki and the Maori New Year. “Matariki” is a Maori term for the star cluster the Pleiades (also known as Subaru in Japan)¹ located in the star constellation Taurus (see Fig. 1). Matariki was once known as a marker of the Maori New Year in their astronomical knowledge, and the people had customs

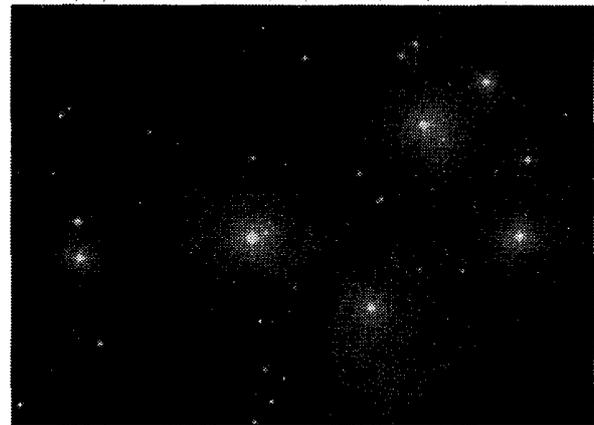


Figure 1. Matariki, the Pleiades
(Credit: NASA/ESA/AURA/Caltech)

related to Matariki. In parallel with the increase of Westerners, the Matariki-based customs including the Maori New Year celebration gradually disappeared for the most part. It was, not to mention, caused by cultural assimilation of the Maori toward the Western style. However, the Maori New Year celebration based on Matariki has begun to come back to life in some areas from around the year 2000 despite people have adopted the Western calendar over one and a half centuries. It is an occasion worthy of special mention in modern New Zealand society in which Euro-centric culture almost occupies.

The most helpful account concerning the Maori star lore including Matariki is said to be the works done by Elsdon Best, who was a notable ethnographer from the

late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. In his books such as *The Astronomical Knowledge of the Maori: Genuine and Empirical* (Best, 1986 [first published in 1922]) and *The Maori Division of Time* (Best, 2002 [first published in 1922]), he mentions former concept of Matariki as well as Maori star lore and its related customs based on the fieldwork. According to his recognition, specific astronomical bodies were certainly worshipped by the Maori with some ceremonies, and Matariki was one of those specific worshipped astronomical bodies which Maori people carefully observed: to know the seasons, to designate the New Year, to determine the timing of planting specific crop, and so on. However, Best declared that available data was not ample (Best, 2002: 73). After his work, not enough attention has been paid to that study for a long time. It is not until the revitalization of Maori New Year celebration appears in recent years that some attention has been paid to it, however, there still remains a discussion over the topic.

In this paper, the present writer deals with the comprehensive Mataiki concept and the revitalization of Maori New Year, mainly taking the following three points into consideration:

- *To review the traditional Matariki concept along with the former cultural practices
- *To discuss the project of the revitalization of the Maori New Year
- *To make clear the today's Matariki concept

The fieldwork was done at two locations in the North Island; the case of national project centered on the National Museum Te Papa in Wellington (the capital of New Zealand) and the case of a local tribal project in Hastings (a small town in Hawke's Bay area in the east), from late May to late June in 2005. The reason why the present writer visited there is that the scale of those two projects is greater than others, and they occupy a leading position². The research mainly depended on observations of those events and interviews with some organizers and participants.

The framework of this paper is as follows: Chapter II refers to the interpretation of Matariki on traditional Maori cultural context. Chapter III is a description of the revitalization of the Maori New Year observed in the fieldwork, and also inquires after

the new aspects of Matariki concept. In Chapter IV, the comprehensive analysis is done accompanied with an illustrated Matariki concept linked with cultural practices. Then the present writer concludes in Chapter V.

II The Interpretation of Matariki in a Traditional Maori Cultural Context

As the former Maori were ocean-going people, it was sure that they had the knowledge of star navigation. It means that they were originally quite familiar with the celestial bodies. After their landing in New Zealand, they empirically developed star lore to survive. Matariki was known as one of the most important astronomical bodies for the Maori. In this chapter, the present writer discusses its interpretation in a traditional cultural context.

(1) Matariki as a Marker of the Maori New Year

In many areas in New Zealand, Matariki played an important role to mark the Maori New Year in former days. The general definition of the beginning of the Maori New Year is often represented by one of the remarks of Elsdon Best. He wrote, "the old Maori year began with the appearance of the first new moon after the helical rising of Matariki (Best, 1986: 11)". The term "helical rising" shows an astronomical phenomenon that indicates the rising of a star (a star cluster, or a star constellation) in the dawn sky just before the sunrise. In the case of Matariki, it occurs in the beginning of the winter season (late May or beginning of June). Best's remark as above indicates one example how to determine the Maori New Year on the east coast of the North Island, in which Matariki is said to have been celebrated with singing, dancing, and feasting; and also worshiped for the bountiful harvest of the coming year. This idea is said to have been shared in many other areas as well as on the east coast. Therefore the definition of the Maori New Year may well be expressed as above as a general opinion.

However, there were some differences regarding the timing of the beginning of the New Year³. People in some regions determined it when Matariki was first seen in the dawn sky. For some other regions, the New Year began with the appearance of the first full moon after Matariki rose. In this way, the timing of New Year is different from

region to region, however, we can see that Matariki often occupied a key position as a marker of the New Year.

In some limited areas, especially in the far north of North Island, people are said to have considered Puanga (the Rigel⁴) as a marker of the New Year rather than Matariki (Best, 1986:15; Best, 2002: 29; Hakaraia, 2004: 29). This case shows the difference regarding the key star of the beginning of the New Year. However, the timing of the New Year is almost the same, for both Matariki and Puanga rise from the dawn horizon at almost the same time: Matariki from the northeast and Puanga from the east. With reference to the significance of Matariki in the far north, according to Best, people there also paid much attention to Matariki as well as Puanga for agricultural reasons (Best, 2005a: 144). This shows that Matariki was also an important astronomical body even in the far north as well as in other areas.

Considering the evidence above, we recognize that Maori people commonly put great weight on the star cluster, Matariki, in former days. We can say for sure then that Matariki was the most representative astronomical body in the Maori New Year season.

(2) Matariki Celebration

When Matariki rose from the northeastern horizon in the dawn sky in the beginning of the winter, many Maori formerly had a custom of greeting it with singing and dancing, which were performed by parties of women, and the greeting was supposed to be done in two ways: a lamenting way for those who had died in the previous year, and a joyful way for welcoming the New Year (Best, 2002: 51; Orbell, 2003: 112-113). Then they enjoyed feasting with their family and relatives. According to some old informants on the east coast, some of those cultural practices were continued by some families until the middle of the twentieth century. Considering the former greetings, Matariki in this context symbolizes a time of sharing binominal oppositions such as: oldness/new, death/living, sadness/joy, and so on. Through expressing or feeling those two factors at the same time, Maori people must have confirmed time flow; have been conscious about the strong connection between their ancestors and the living; and have

shared their emotions. Maori people were in such dual domains (or the boundary) at the same time in the Matariki season.

Flying a kite was also said to have been done in the Maori New Year, and its symbolical meaning was (according to some old informants in the east coast) to connect the sky god (Ranginui) and the earth god (Papatuanuku), or to connect Matariki and Maori people. This case also shows that the Maori New Year season offers them a similar chance as above: a time to connect the inter-space between the two, and also the opportunity to confirm the strong relationship between them.

There is another aspect about the celebration. The New Year season was regarded as the time of misrule, and acts that would normally be unacceptable, could not be punished (e.g. A slave could lie with a Queen and not be punished.) (Leather and Hall, 2004: 63). In other words, this period was a time in which all rules and contracts that usually restricted people were allowed to be reversed. This situation undoubtedly applies to, what V. W. Turner calls, the case of “*communitas*”⁵. The concept “*communitas*” is characteristic of breaking the normal order. The time of releasing people from the strict rules and contracts can be considered as a sort of potential: to satisfy their subconscious desires, or to open up their subconscious cultural factors. This custom is said to have been practiced in pre-European times, however, few detailed accounts can be found about it.

(3) Matariki as a Food-Bringer

It is no wonder that the main concern for the former Maori was how to obtain food. Matariki told people the beginning of the next cycle of getting food, and this cycle was equal to what we call “year”. Matariki in this context functioned as a re-setter of the cycle of getting food, and let people prepare the following cycle.

Matariki was also considered as a sort of “forecaster” or “fortuneteller” for the condition of the coming season. There is a curious example of folklore recorded by Best:

If the stars of Matariki appear to stand wide apart, then a warm and bountiful

season follows; but should they seem to be close together it betokens a cold season marked by scarcity. Another version is that if the stars of this group are indistinctly seen at the time of helical rising, and they seem to quiver or move, then a cold season follows. If they are plainly seen at that time - stand out distinctly - a warm, plentiful season ensues (Best, 2002: 50).

These were examples how to read Matariki. Matariki worked as if it was a “forecaster” (or a “fortuneteller”). The ocular condition of Matariki tells the condition of the coming season. This shows that Maori people worshipped Matariki for its mysterious aspects.

Among the foods the Maori got, the kumara (sweet potato) was the most important food for them (Best, 2005a: 99). It is well known that the kumara was introduced to New Zealand by the Maori from their homeland somewhere in Polynesia. They empirically found the timing of planting kumara. It was from the fourth to the sixth lunar month of the Matariki-based year (different from region to region), which was approximately equal to from September to November (Best, 2005a: 146)⁶. The Matariki-based calendar was practically made use of by the Maori to determine the proper timing for the kumara planting each year.

However, the kumara cultivation needed much care. Best notes the nature of the kumara as follows:

The kumara is a plant of succulent nature and tender growth, liable to be injured by the buffetings of strong and cold winds, therefore, this annual needs a suitable soil and a considerable amount of care and skill in cultivation, much more so than the common potato (Best, 2005a: 110).

Protecting the growth of kumara directly meant protecting the Maori life. As the kumara was sensitive to the climatic condition, the Maori needed some assistance for its safe growth. Hakaraia mentions, “When it sprouted it was necessary to ask for the

protection of Matariki so that the crop would go well (Hakaraia, 2004: 36)”. The ceremony was done with offerings and giving prayers (Hakaraia, 2004: 36). Matariki in this context functions as a “guardian” of cultivation that guaranteed to offer the Maori food each year.

The kumara was harvested in the tenth Maori month, which is approximately equal to March (Te Papa, 2005), the beginning of fall (though there might be some regional diversity). An adequate quantity of foods was stored at that time. Then the Maori waited for the Matariki re-rising from the northeastern horizon in the dawn sky. Another aspect of the Maori New Year celebration was characteristic of (what we call) a thanksgiving toward the Matariki, for it worked as: a marker of the new cycle of obtaining food, a forecaster (or a fortuneteller), and a guardian. The survival history of the Maori bears witness to the strong connection between the reliable food-bringer Matariki and them.

(4) Variations of Matariki Tales

There are many legendary discourses concerning Matariki. The precise number of Matariki tales cannot be counted. It is not hard to imagine that some of them were not handed down to following generations in certain periods, however, some variations can be confirmed as follows (mainly sourced to [Drewery, 2003])⁷: <a> Matariki as seven houses of Gods (People's spirits go to Matariki after their death.), Matariki as eyes of seven chiefs (Seven chiefs keep their eyes on Maori people.), <c> Matariki as a prow of a great canoe, <d> Matariki as a star cluster smashed by the god of the forest called Tane (The beautiful Matariki attracted people so much, then it made Tane jealous. Tane grasped Matariki in the sky and smashed it, however, the smashed star cluster still fascinates people.), and <e> Matariki as a beautiful female or females (Matariki star cluster is considered as a beautiful single female, or one large star in the cluster is considered as a woman called Matariki, and the other six stars are her sisters or daughters living with her.). Those Matariki legends show how Maori people have been interested in the cluster in the former days. The existence of these variations

allows us to notice a certain tendency: the more important (or familiar, or fascinating) one thing is for people, the more tales people create with much affection⁸. It is no wonder that one matter which is important (or familiar, or fascinating) to a large number of people is likely to be much described and/or given special value in addition to its original property. From this point of view, it is sure that Matariki must have been deeply related with Maori people.

III The Revitalization of the Maori New Year⁹ and Matariki

We have been so far reviewing the former aspects of Matariki tradition and its related customs. Most of their knowledge and its related cultural practices, however, disappeared for a long period¹⁰. As Maori people have been assimilated to western culture for the most part, naturally Maoris' intimacy with Matariki was forgotten for a long period. In this chapter, the present writer is going to discuss the revitalized Maori New Year and the new aspects of Matariki concept.

(1) The Start of Revitalization of the Maori New Year

This section refers to the background of the revitalization of Maori New Year based on Matariki. The suggestion was given around 1990s by a Maori man called Canon Wi Te Tau Huata¹¹. He was one of the most famous persons of Ngati Kahungunu¹² in the Hawke's Bay area. He died from a heart attack, however, he is still known to many people and is respected for his deeds and his humanity. He dedicated his life as an Anglican minister¹³, who struggled for the improvement of Maori rights and their lives. His work done all through his life was not only dedicated to them but also contributed to the revitalization of indigenous traditions. In the history of New Zealand, it is well known that many Maori leaders of several denominations of Christianity (as well as some political leaders) have often suggested cultural revitalization and committed themselves to campaigns. It is sure that Canon's suggestion of revitalizing the Maori New Year was influenced by them. His will was to make all Maori notice the importance of regaining the traditional Maori sense of values, in coexistence with a Euro-centric sense of values. Unfortunately, he passed away without seeing the

revitalization of the Maori New Year with his own eyes, however, his will has been passed down to the next generation, and the Maori New Year has come into life from around the year 2000.

(2) New Cultural Practices in the Matariki Tradition: The Case of Te Papa, Wellington (As a National Project)

In the capital city Wellington, Matariki events have been promoted in public since 2002 mainly centered on the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa¹⁴. The New Zealand Herald, which is a nationwide newspaper, reported then as follows: “For the first time, the National Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa, marked Matariki with Activities in the lead-up to its appearance (Bennett, 2002 [June 15th]).” In conjunction with Te Taura Whiri te Reo Maori (Maori Language Commission)¹⁵, Te Papa has published a booklet about Matariki. In addition, in conjunction both with the commission and with the Education Ministry, Te Papa has also published a Matariki calendar¹⁶. Te Papa project is spreading nationwide, and it has been aiming at familiarizing people with Matariki through the diffusion of this booklet and the Matariki calendar, and also a series of events held in Te Papa. Considering the contents of the booklet titled *Matariki: Aotearoa Pacific New Year* (Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Maori [Maori Language Commission], 2005), we see that it is designed as a basic guide to Matariki: its origins, its significance and the opportunities to participate both by children and by adults. The booklet lays special emphasis on how strongly Matariki relates to Maori people, and also recommends them to recognize it in suitable ways as Maori, through taking the Maori Matariki New Year into consideration. The recommended examples are briefly described as follows:

- Make a wish for the New Year when you see the new moon.
- Call whanau¹⁷ and friends together to see the new moon and celebrate the New Year.
- Organize a concert for the Matariki New Year.

- Hold a dance or a party.
- Prepare a feast to farewell the old year and see in the new one.
- Build a kite. Fly it on the first day of the New Year.

(Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Maori [Maori Language Commission], 2005: 12)

The concept is characteristic of easy involvement and having fun at an individual level. The organizer knows the fact that there is much difficulty in letting people link with the Matariki tradition today because most of the former knowledge and customs disappeared a long time ago. Therefore the suggestions are to let people practice the New Year customs in a relaxed and informal way as a means of recognizing the essential Matariki concept.

Te Papa also advertises holding various kinds of events as a series of celebrations. They are, for example; cultural and musical performances, workshops, discussions, starlab sessions, star guided tours, and some activities for children. Those events last for more than two weeks from the beginning of June, the period in which Matariki appears. Te Papa welcomes all people who are interested in Matariki and the Maori New Year. According to one of the Te Papa staff, much attention has been paid to the Maori Matariki New Year by various people since Te Papa started those events. The participants and/or audiences there, in fact, consist of various kinds of ethnic groups, not only the Maori but also the non-Maori, from the young to the old.

The cultural and musical performances are very popular among a series of events. In every performance, famous Maori musicians or dance performers attract audiences there. Their presentations are composed of an exquisite harmony of traditional and contemporary styles¹⁸. Some musicians present their music with some former Maori instruments such as; putatara (conch or shell trumpet), Koauau (flute), Purerehua (bull roarer) along with some modern instruments. Some dance performing groups present a creative dance with Maori weapon such as taiaha (club or spear) and mere (short flat weapon) over the contemporary music. In the workshops or the discussions, they cover aspects from a general level to a special level. Topics range over a wide variety of

topics such as tradition, customs, horticulture, medicine, health, and language. Some scholars or Maori experts are invited, and participants are keen on listening or asking. With regard to the starlab session or the star guided tour, Te Papa works in conjunction with the staffs of an observatory in Wellington. People can learn the stars of the Southern Hemisphere and the astronomical knowledge of the Maori in the planetarium. Activities for children use such means as games, storytelling, making Matariki badges and face painting.

Those events in Te Papa take the current New Zealand situation into consideration. In other words, it does not mean that the aim of those events makes people bound just by old formal traditions. We see that the organizer puts an emphasis on encouraging people to learn and familiarize themselves with Maori knowledge, custom and/or sense of value with much interest under the current New Zealand situation.

(3) New Cultural Practices in the Matariki Tradition: The Case in Hastings, Hawke's Bay (As a Tribal Project)

The Maori New Year events are also held in the small town of Hastings, in the Hawke's Bay area. They are mainly organized by a local event-organization centered on a Maori man called Te Rangi Huata. In this section, the present writer is going to discuss the revitalized Maori New Year, mainly referring to the concepts of Te Rangi Huata and his actions. He is, as a matter of fact, a son of the late Canon Huata who suggested the revitalization of the Maori New Year at the end of the twentieth century. Te Rangi Huata was the first man to crystallize his father's will on a large scale from the year 2000. That is, today's Maori New Year celebrations are originally influenced by the suggestion of Canon Huata and also by the action of Te Rangi Huata¹⁹. The Maori New Year events in Te Papa and similar events in other areas, in fact, followed shortly after the commencement of actions by Te Rangi. It means that a local private project had great influence on the nationwide movements.

In the case of Hastings, the New Year celebrations are held in the form of an amusing outdoor festival in a large showground in the suburbs. The festival is

community based, however, everybody is welcome to join the events in a spirit of joy at a reasonable admission. It lasts a couple of days in the beginning of June when Matariki appears. The contents of the festival are characteristic of a series of fun events such as: feasting, farmers' markets, stage performances, fireworks, and other entertainments or attractions. People enjoy feasting with various kinds of foods: not only the traditional Maori steamed food (hangi) but also Thai, Chinese, Indian, and fast food. It is more like multiethnic feasting. In the section of the farmers' markets, seasonal vegetables, crops, and other foods are sold at reasonable prices. The stage performances range across a wide variety. Some seem more traditional and the others seem more contemporary. Among them, the traditional Maori performing arts presented by the local performing team drew great applause from the audience. At the end of the festival, people share exciting time, gazing at vivid fireworks in the night sky.

With reference to the financial affairs of the Maori New Year celebrations in Hastings, they have no support from the government while Te Papa promotes the Matariki-related celebrations in corporation with some national organizations such as the Maori Language Commission and the Education Ministry. The main supporter for the event in Hastings is the Ngati Kahungunu tribe that Te Rangi and the local Maori belong to, and it is generous enough to cover most of the expenses for the event²⁰. According to the organizer, very few events can bring the whole of and wider community together in one place at one time. Owing to the tribal support, this chance has been realized.

In the first festival, it was said to be, what we call, a sort of street party. The number of the participants was very small, however, the first festival was still an epoch-making gathering, for it received a positive response from many people. Not only the Maori but also the Pakeha (the white people), the Pacific Islanders, Asians and some tourists are, in fact, said to have taken much interest toward the event. The festival in Hastings has been growing from a small scale, and much attention is now paid also by the mass media such as TV stations, newspapers, and magazines. According to the organizer, they hold the festival to let the people learn more of Matariki and of the importance of

nature that brings foods. Te Rangi explains the significance of the Matariki celebration to the writer as follows:

The Matariki festival was originally to give thanks to all of the foods we receive. Our ancestors were always conscious about the changing of the nature, and respected it because our lives entirely depended on the condition of our surroundings for food. To know the season was important to survive. The problem is that we no longer depend on the seasons. We just go to the supermarkets for food. In the former days, all the foods were gathered and preserved into the storage, and we hoped for a good harvest in the following season. Since the Westerner began to settle in our land, most of us gradually forgot the fact that the nature had made us alive. Now we are in the world in which we can obtain various kinds of food anytime, and we should not be worry about the shortage of the food all through the year. It means that we have lost the reason to celebrate the season and the nature. We once lost the custom to celebrate the Matariki: the symbol of food-bringer and of our New Year. Now I want all people to recognize the significance of receiving the benefit from our irreplaceable nature.

It is true that people today are not so conscious about the importance of seasons, nature, and foods. The participants or the audiences may come together in the festival just for fun, however, they come to know, more or less, the term Matariki. The function of the festival is to give people the motivation to know some aspects of Matariki and the meaning of its celebration. Such motivation would be created by some impacts or stimulations. By making use of the occasions of feasting, farmers' markets, stage performances, fireworks and other activities, some aspects of Maori Matariki tradition can be expected to be shared by people attending there.

(4) A Perspective on the Maori New Year in the Context of a Multicultural Society

Lastly, the present writer adds a possible perspective on both those Maori New Year festival. Considering the contents of the two festivals (both the national project and the local tribal project), some of them do not seem to be indigenous to Maori (in the strict sense of the term), however, they can also be interpreted as a new form of the Maori Matariki New Year celebration from the point of view of positive inclusive connotations. People in New Zealand consist of various kinds of ethnic groups. Aside from each groups' overall population or its ratio, they reside even in local areas. One of the main reasons why the festival has been developing, possibly, lies in its flexible nature that suits the current multicultural situation. Now the Maori have been grouping for a reorganized tradition that could be accepted by both the Maori and even the non-Maori.

IV The Comprehensive Analysis of Matariki Concept

Here we need comprehensive discussion about the former Matariki concept and the new one through the comparative study between them. Figure 2 shows a concise schematic diagram of Matariki concepts both in former times and in present times.

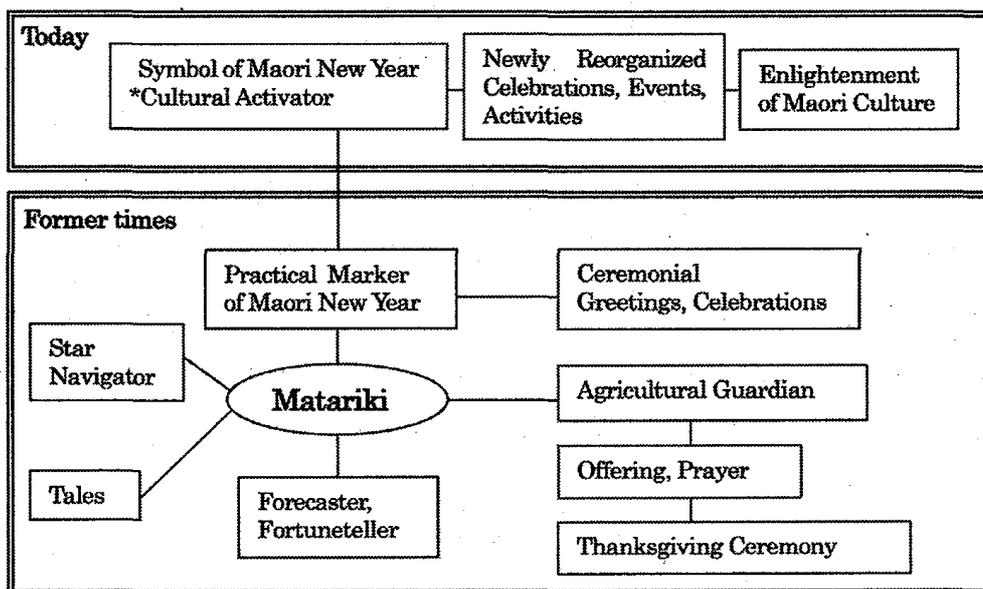


Figure 2. Matariki Concept

The lower part of Figure 2 shows a model of former Maori situation that links the Maori knowledge to Matariki. As the former Maori had been ocean-going people, it was sure that they were familiar with Matariki as a part of their star navigational lore²¹. The Maori empirically began to regard Matariki as a “practical marker” of the New Year, and it functioned as a practical device to know the new cycle of obtaining food. The New Year marker was also a forecaster or fortuneteller for the condition of the coming season. To know that was to closely relate to the result of harvesting. The Maori venerated Matariki as an agricultural guardian as well as a forecaster (or a fortuneteller) for the sake of the safe growth of kumara and its bountiful harvests. Then people dedicated offerings and prayers in the form of a ritual. When they finished harvesting crops, they had to pay their respects to the guardian Matariki. Then Maori people embodied their gratitude into the form of (a sort of) thanksgiving ceremony, and they also hoped for successive bountiful harvests when Matariki re-appeared. As the former Maori life, in this way, had been on good terms with Matariki, they might well have created various kinds of intimate tales.

When considering the former Maori cultural practices linked with Matariki as described above, we see that the concept of the term Matariki does not only show an astronomical body but also shows it as an indispensable factor among their society. (To avoid misleading readers, the present writer must give an additional explanation that Maori society is also closely connected with other critical factors such as: religious factor and genealogical factor.)

Today's Matariki concept (the upper part of Fig. 2) is located as an extension of the former Matariki concept, however, what today's Matariki indicates no longer represents a “practical marker” of the Maori New Year because people now spend their lives following the western calendar. The Matariki in the present context should be expressed as the “symbol (or representation)” of the Maori New Year rather than the previous expression, “practical marker” of the Maori New Year. The term Matariki today is used as a cultural device for heralding the revitalized Maori New Year. The device can be interpreted as a positive connotation because it has got a possibility to

create or promote newly reorganized imaginative activities and customs. The former ceremonial greetings may be reorganized into the forms of outdoor or indoor festivals with traditional and contemporary performing arts. Likewise, the former thanksgiving celebration may appear as farmers' markets or feasting today. Some aspects of former astronomical lore, tales, and other Maori knowledge may be bequeathed to the present generation by means of some learning activities. Through those practices as above, some essences of the former Matariki concept are also passed down to people today. From this point of view, Matariki, the symbol (or representation) of Maori New Year functions as a "cultural activator" for enlightening the Maori culture today.

V Conclusion

This paper attempted to explore the Matariki concept, considering both former cultural practices based on the previous study and the new practices such as a series of events seen in the revitalized Maori New Year celebration. Today's Matariki concept is founded on the former Maori value, being given the present Maori value. Maori people have now come to a certain critical point in which they review their traditional assets they once lost and try to get back them in a form of newly reorganized style that fits current New Zealand situation. The recent movement at once makes us notice the significance of looking back the former cultural assets and the significance of opening up the culture, letting us being aware of multicultural²² coexistence. What we call indigenous cultures all over the world are liable to be swirled away into disappearance under the influence of majority culture, moreover, under the strong wave of globalization. Among them, the revitalized Maori New Year based on Matariki concept shows the dynamic flow of the newly reorganized indigenous culture in the modern world. However, it has just started driving for taking root in New Zealand. Continuous observation and research are needed hereafter for evaluating the new Matariki concept as a cultural activator of the Maori.

Notes

- 1 The star cluster is composed of more than 500 stars, and is known as one of the most visible star clusters in the celestial bodies. Generally speaking, people can see only six or seven brightest stars with the naked eye. As for the Maori, Matariki has been considered to be composed of seven stars in their cultural context.
- 2 The Matariki-related events in Te Papa are strongly supported by some national organizations. The Hawke's Bay area is known as a place where the Matariki tradition was revitalized in public for the first time in New Zealand through the local tribal support. Now similar events are also held by many institutions and organizations in Northland, in Auckland, and in some other areas.
- 3 The information of following two cases are sauced to one of the staffs in Te Papa.
- 4 "Rigel" is the second brightest star in the constellation Orion.
- 5 The concept of "communitas" was suggested by V. W. Turner (Turner, 1969) for the first time. It is considered as a trigger of cultural or social dynamism. The communitas-situation is quite common to see in most of the societies all over the world though each way of practicing is different from society to society.
- 6 Another writer such as Hakaraia describes that the planting was done in the sixth lunar month (Hakaraia, 2004: 36), however, it would be natural that the planting period was diverse in accordance with the climatic condition from region to region.
- 7 All following discourses are mainly informed by (Drewery, 2003), that is a picture storybook, and is concisely to the point of Matariki legends. With reference to only <e>, the present writer also refers to (Best, 2002: 50; Hakaraia, 2004: 16; Leather and Hall, 2004: 63; Orbell, 2003: 112) together with (Drewery, 2003).
- 8 e.g. The various stories of Tane (known as the god of the forest), those of Maui (known as a traditional demi-god) and so on. For more detailed information, cf. (Reed, 2004).
- 9 As described in Chapter II , Maori New Year, in general, begins with the appearance of the first new moon after the helical rising of Matariki. In the case of 2005, for example, the time of rising new moon is 09:55 on June 7th (Carter Observatory, 2005: 7), and the Maori New Year's day falls on June 8th.
- 10 Only in some very limited rural areas or among a few Maori people, Matariki-related customs have scarcely been practiced fragmentally. However, when taking a macroscopic view, we cannot deny that little knowledge about Matariki has passed down among Maori people.
- 11 The following revival story of Matariki is mainly based on an interview with a son of Canon Huata.

- 12 Ngati Kahungunu is a name of the second biggest tribe that mainly resides around Hawke's Bay area in the east of the North Island.
- 13 Canon Huata was also known as a composer who composed Maori style music and songs. They are still often played and/or sung by many people. With reference to his detailed deed, see (Spence, 1994).
- 14 Te Papa was established with a view to preserving and spreading New Zealand's indigenous assets.
- 15 Maori Language Commission is an institution that mainly aims at promoting the Maori language and the Maori sense of value.
- 16 The first month starts from June in this calendar based on traditional knowledge of the seasonal cycle. Each month has an appropriate explanation about Maori customs and their sense of value together with beautiful photographs. See (Te Papa, 2005).
- 17 The term "whanau" is often translated as "extended family". It was once a minimum social unit of Maori group. Though nuclear families are generally seen today, many Maori still keep in close touch with whanau members.
- 18 According to Mead, the styles of Maori performing arts have changed and the tunes have become very modern (Mead, 2003: 253).
- 19 This information is from one of the Te Papa staffs.
- 20 The other supporters are a local newspaper, a radio station, an advertising company, and so on. According to the organizer, they do not go after profits from the festival on an ad hoc reason. The expenditure of the festival sometimes does not meet the amount of reasonable admission, which is no more than a complement for the expenditure. The festival is also supported by many local volunteers. People call Te Rangi a dream maker or a living treasure.
- 21 The fact that one of Matariki legends considers Matariki as a prow of canoe (as seen in Chapter II) suggests: much possibility that Maori made much of Matariki as one of the most important stars in their star navigation knowledge.
- 22 The government has mainly promoted the biculturalism (for the Maori and for the Pakeha). However, strictly speaking, there exists multiculturalism in New Zealand. It is important for us to be generous toward the diversity of other minority cultures.

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