

**PERSPECTIVES ON POWER, CHANGE AND THE STATE FOR CHINESE
IN AOTEAROA**

BEV TSO HONG, KIRSTEN WONG, TZE MING MOK, MENGZHU FU

22 MARCH 12 pm

>>RINGA HĀPAI: (Karakia Whakataka Te Hau). (Te reo Māori). Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, family and friends, all of our whānau who have come and gathered to this event this afternoon. E mihi ana, I want to acknowledge everyone that's made their time to come and share this next hour with us. I'd like to invite you to bring with you all of who you are, your mountains, your oceans, your rivers, all of who you are, what you value into this space.

I'd also like to invite you to bring all of your questions into this space as well because this is a, while it is a panel, it is a Q&A panel. Ko wai au? (Te reo Māori). My name is Valance Smith, I am sitting virtually in my wharenuī here at AUT university, which is Te Pūrengi and I am your Chair for the next hour. It is indeed a treat and an honour to be able to chairing this wonderful whānau that we have in front of us here today.

Before I introduce our whānau there are some housekeeping things that we just want to let everyone know about first and foremost. I just want to confirm with everyone that yes you are in the right place, if you are after the panel on the perspectives on power, change and the state for Chinese in Aotearoa, you are in the right place, don't go to any other bat channel.

Regarding our community code, I'm just going to quickly read through these, I'm sure you would have already seen this a few times if you've been to previous sessions, but be curious, open minded and respectful, be generous, we make generous assumptions, confidentiality, one person one mic, so one person at a time please. Essentially, whānau, if we can keep this forum as respectful as possible and just really underpinning those values, those Māori valuables of tika, pono and aroha, doing the right thing, having our integrity intact and doing what we do with compassion and being mindful of everyone, kapai?

So now I'm going to introduce our panel, whānau because I don't want this to be about the Chair, it's all about the panel and what the panel have got to offer us this morning. So on the panel we are very privileged to have Kirsten Wong with us today. Kapai, a little wave from Kirsten, kapai. We also have Mengzhu Fu, kapai. We also have Bev Tso Hong, kapai. And we also have Tze Ming Mok. Kapai, so that's our panel for today whānau.

Again welcome, but without any further ado I'm going to hand it off to Kirsten to start the first round of introductions for everyone, kei a koe Kirsten.

>>KIRSTEN WONG: Just unmuting myself. Kia ora Valance and kia ora e te whānau. Valance, thank you so much for your beautiful and generous introduction, yeah, awesome.

So tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa, kia ora e te whānau. Ko Kirsten Wong tōku ingoa, (te reo Māori), (Chinese). I just said in Chinese that my name Wong Nang Fung(?) but in English it's Kirsten Wong. And my ancestors on both sides come from Batsia(?) village, which is Whitestone village in Jiansang(?) county which is pretty close to Guangdong city in China. And my grandfather came from there to Te Whanganui-a-Tara in 1895 and we've been here pretty much ever since.

We before we start, I just wanted to say thank you so much for joining us, I know it's your precious lunchtime so, you know, thank you so much. Yeah, it's great having you here. And look giant thanks to Valance and Heather and Rachel and Grant, and I know there's heaps more of you, because I know you guys have been working for totally months and at great speed and detail -- sorry Stu as well, apologies Stu -- and that organisation has really paid off. And you've been amazing and supportive, so thank you very much, and we really appreciate the time that you've given us in your programme.

So a bit of background, the four of us on this call are all sort of connected. So when we got together before the session to work out what we wanted to say, we decided that our different migration backgrounds were really important for understanding why we do what we do.

So as you've gathered, I'm part of the early settler Chinese community. My family didn't actually come that early, about 50 years after the first Chinese settler who came in 1842. But I think we're still up to our fourth generation born here. So by the time I grew up in the 1960s, 70s, I grew up in a super English speaking household. I don't speak Cantonese, my heritage language, but I still grew up very, very Chinese and I have a real big family, my grandmother had 18 children, so you can imagine the number of cousins I had and uncountable really.

So when I grew up it was like kind of this big family eco-system. We didn't even have to go outside the family very much for social interaction, so all the memories, all that history, everybody's stories and experiences from like the 1920s onwards, they were all right there all the time for me.

But when I went outside the family, none of that really existed. So in the Pākehā world all of that was invisible. And I think many of you who have grown up in the 70s and

80s and were not Pākehā will remember those times as being very, very white, very homogenous, and if you weren't Pākehā you were expected to act like a Pākehā because that was how you just had to survive. But living that life for me was very difficult and I've never forgotten that feeling of kind of looking in the mirror and not being able to see my reflection at all, just a sort of blur.

So that was a big rant. But the good news is that the world got better through the 1990s, but that growing up experience really made me question what is a New Zealander, how do I fit as tangata Tiriti and what can I do to contribute. And that kind of put me on the course to what I do now. So I spent most of my life working for Government in policy and comms, but now I'm super lucky to do community and heritage projects, so big shout out to the New Zealand Chinese Association and the Chinese Poll Tax Heritage Trust for supporting that work.

It might help to say the things I've worked on recently are the Ventnor memorial which was unveiled last year, and this commemorates the Chinese gold miners, 499, whose remains were lost in a shipwreck in 1902 off the Hokianga coast. That memorial celebrates our lost ancestors but also our gratitude to Te Roroa and Te Rarawa, Te Hua o te Kawariki Trust who have all cared for our ancestral remains since that time, but also who help us now care for our shared histories.

And that second project is to build an online space for Chinese New Zealand histories, which is a very exciting project, my total dream. And it will be accessible to everyone and especially good for the new history curriculum coming next year. So thank you, I think I took up a bit more space than I meant to. I think Bev you're up next.

>>BEV TSO HONG: Kia ora Kirsten and others. Kia ora koutou katoa, ko Bev Tso Hong tōku ingoa (te reo Māori). So hello everyone (Chinese) my name is Bev Tso Hong and that's a mixture of my English given name, Beverley Ann Hong, and my Chinese ancestral name of Tso so (Chinese), which is lost in translation in the migration process. So my Chinese name is Tso Mung Fong(?). So Tso is my ancestral name, Mung is my unique name and Fong relates to the generation I am in the family lineage. So if I come here during that migration period I may have become Ms Fong.

My whakapapa is the with the Poon Yue clan or county. So in the same migration timeframe as Kirsten was talking about, my great grandfather came to Aotearoa in 1896, he then went back to China and sent his son, my granddad, when he was 18 to come and settle long-term in Aotearoa and my dad was born in Whanganui-a-Tara. My mum,

she came to Aotearoa in 1939 as part of the refugee cohort of women and children when Japan invaded China, yeah, and remained.

And although I was born in Hawera, my formative years were in Te Papaioea Palmerston North, and that's where my mum's whānau settled and it was in the 70s to 80s. And it was the situation where at school or at events the other Chinese, they were cuzzies, they were rellies, so it was very much within that kind of framework. And the things that Kirsten has mentioned around navigating sort of the mainstream culture that you were surviving in outside of the home and the Chinese community kind of aspect and then the insular Chinese community resonates with me strongly.

I think a strong element of -- actually I talked to my mum about it, was trying to ensure that us children fit in to society and fit into the community, and so there was an element of fitting in in terms of I recall, you know, going along in my cheongsam and doing the dances and everything as part of the cultural aspect of the community. And at the other end of the spectrum as kids, my sister Joss and I doing the children's sleep wear cat walk fashion parade at the main department store. So there was this whole range of things.

And I think another thing was, you know, I hadn't actually really thought about it, but someone mentioned to me "how come all the photos of you as kids most often you've actually got wavy hair?" I said "because we got our hair permed all the time as kids". And I talked to mum about it and mum said "it was about fitting in, it was about you guys being able to not feel isolated as part of being in Palmerston North."

I was just going to talk about some of the key elements, I guess, in terms of growing up in terms of my mum and (Chinese), that's my maternal grandparent's, fruit shop, my aunty's market garden and helping out there, my dad's dental surgery and going and cleaning the surgery in the weekends. I think on the one hand from that fitting in aspect, I have been told that I'm more Kiwi than a Kiwi, so I think I might have over-achieved a bit on that front. On the other hand, you know, as always, I've been told I'm too Chinese to fit into this society and I might as well go home, you know, go home sort of kind of stuff.

So it is, it's -- at times I think there was a very conscious decision on my part about how I was going to behave to survive and navigate, and at other times it was just totally overwhelming. But you make your way through, right?

And I think one of the other key elements which has brought me to this place is having a son. So I'm a single mum with a teenage son and he's half-Chinese, half-English/Irish -- I sometimes forget the English but he keeps reminding me. And I think it was really, really important to me that he have a sense of his identity as fourth or so

generation in Aotearoa, but also as a Chinese person. So we went to Yau Yih Yun, which is the Chinese pre-school, he learned Shaolin Kung Fu. Part of that was so that I knew in the future potentially defending himself, but having a sense of pride as to who he was. I think the Covid situation kind of exacerbated that, in that he talked to me about the upped level of anti-racist behaviour on social media at that time and his concerns about it really -- sorry, that's my puppy.

My focus on what I do currently. So I think over time I've got more and more -- I think getting older you get to a point of thinking well now's the time. If there are things I've thought about doing, now is the time to do it, because otherwise when am I going to do it. And I think the Covid aspect has really brought to the fore kind of where things are at. So my focus is very much on strength-based as an approach and the need to live the values that we espouse, because I think a lot of things happen as a reaction to a negative event occurring.

A couple of years ago I was part of the collaborative anti-racism initiative, art initiative which tried to bring together Chinese communities and there were, yeah, lots and lots of collaborators in that and organisations, including New Zealand Chinese Association, Asian Family Services and the Asian Network Incorporated and others across the Chinese community and the arts sector and research and policy and historians such as Kirsten.

I think that really made me realise the importance of actually taking -- showing up and diverse Asian communities having a profile as being part of the conversations. And I think, yeah, so that's kind of where I am at. Very much focused on the and and, which I think is a really important way of thinking about things in terms of plurality and power sharing within the Te Tiriti context, that's and and in terms of where we are and what has gone before, and and in terms of ways of knowing, and that those ways of knowing being on an equal footing, and the and and of whakawhanaungatanga, relationships and connections. In my mind those relationships, and when I reflect on my past and those connections that I've made, they've been the things which have really shaped what I'm doing now and where I might focus on the future, so kia ora. I'm now going to pass you to Tze Ming Mok I think.

>>TZE MING MOK: Kia ora te whānau, kia ora OG aunties -- that's old generation. (Te reo Māori). (Chinese) and all the rest. I am (Chinese) or Tze Ming Mok. Tze Ming Mok is my English name and I'm the southeast Asian representation, I guess, on this panel. My parents are Chinese, Yunnanese and Cantonese, but from Malaysia and Singapore. And as a southeast Asian Chinese, and there's many different kinds of us, not just Malaysian and

Singaporeans, but we're very different in terms of our diaspora histories compared with the straight-out-of-Canton crew. There's this very, very thick extra layer of identity, culture, hundreds of years of diaspora national history, so there's like actual national identities in the way in between.

And very different migration experiences as well within the colonial structure. For example, my family, my parents came here in 1973 as part of the cohort of doctors that New Zealand poached from English-speaking Commonwealth Asian countries to fill a skill shortage that had been created by Britain poaching New Zealand doctors in the 50s and 60s, so it was like this colonial chain migration labour supply situation.

And because I'm the child of doctors, I'm the child of immigrants, doctor immigrants, I think that my immigration cohort is actually the most privileged out of the entire Chinese diaspora here, because of like a range of weird reasons that were a combination of luck and timing. One, we had class privilege, my parents worked as doctors, like straight off the bat not as doctors driving taxis, you know; we had cultural privilege in terms of integration as migrants because we were pre-colonised, like there was no language barrier. There was actually very little cultural barrier, in a way, because we were quite westernised in those countries by the pre-colonisation process. We didn't even experience significant personal racism as new migrants in the 70s and early 80s, because at that time Chinese people weren't being targeted as like a threat. Other groups were being targeted very hard but we just flew under the radar.

So growing up in my early childhood with like fear of racism and racial exclusion, it just wasn't part of my experience. That makes it, like it forms different kinds of people, you know, it was after that first original wave of anti-Chinese racism and before the big anti-Asian backlash of the 90s.

The fourth point is quite interesting, we were not only pre-colonised but also pre-decolonised. We talk a lot about decolonising stuff in these circles, you know, your mind, the curriculum; but remember the baseline meaning of decolonisation was decolonising your country, like as in you do gorilla war and like mass political movements to weaken the British colonial occupying regime, and then like they leave. And like we did that, like Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, we kicked out the British.

And that was in my parents' generation, that was their generation. This is why I sometimes say third world boomers are the best boomers because they actually kicked out the British. And they came here with all these other privileges and good timing, but also with this cultural confidence that comes from being post-colonial Asians. Like it's really a

thing, you know, like "hey we kicked out the British and we speak six languages and we're doctors, what did you do?" Dang ma, okay, I get it, Asians, they're bad arse.

And I grew up also in Mt Roskill in a very multi-ethnic environment so like white school children never crushed my spirit, you know? Which is something I know that happens, even my peers from my weird little micro-generation of children of doctors where they grow up in Remuera or something and white kids were mean to them; white kids weren't mean to me, there weren't enough white kids.

And taken altogether, weirdly it means I didn't have internalised racism growing up, which is very rare and weirdly tragically rare for someone who grew up in New Zealand who's Asian. I just got really lucky. And all it means together is that I'm a massive Karen. Like I'm really entitled because I'm so privileged. Like in the 90s I first experienced overt direct personal racism as part of the Asian invasion backlash and I was like "I am shocked and outraged at this treatment, I demand to speak to the manager of racism." Like it never occurred to me to not speak out, to not get involved in social justice activism because I felt that entitlement, and I just thought why wouldn't I speak out?

Another symptom of having a very small community which was very spread out all over the country in Auckland, we hardly ever saw each other, we had like a circle of family that came at the same time, but there was no policing of you, no-one was telling you to keep your head down.

So because of that I'm best known in Aotearoa probably as a political writer or commentator, occasionally an activist on racism, human rights and Asian issues, including in the active role that Asians and Chinese people should take as tangata Tiriti and support tino rangatiratanga if we're to be real like anti-racists. And I've also worked a lot in the public sector, in NGOs, I currently work for Auckland Council for a special Māori and Pasifika-led socio-economic development unit; essentially trying to support concrete pathways to mana motuhake. And that's where I am, that's my kind of context as your friendly neighbourhood Chinese Karen with like very unique experiences in this diverse diaspora.

So I'd like to hand over now to Mengzhu who's the most recent wave out of us.

>>MENGZHU FU: Tēnā koutou katoa (Chinese), (te reo Māori). My ancestors were nurtured by the mountains of Guizhou, the rivers of Sichuan and the fields of Hunan. My parents and I were born in Tianjin(?) in northern China and I'm the freshest off the plane out of everyone here. My parents and I moved to Tāmaki Makaurau in the mid 1990s. As Tze Ming already referenced that was kind of during the Asian invasion era of New Zealand

xenophobia, so definitely around that time experienced some jarring public and systemic racism as a child.

When I was a teenager in 2005 I got quite heavily involved in youth-based grassroots activism, firstly through the anti-war movement, and not long after that my priorities really shifted towards supporting tino rangatiratanga. And some of the key instigators of that shift were the 2007 so-called anti-terror raids where armed New Zealand Police invaded Ruatoki, and to me that was such a clear example of ongoing colonial state violence. It was also through reading zines like Mellow Yellow by Wai Ho. That was kind of my first encounter with writing about being Asian on colonised land. I hadn't read your essay at that time Tze Ming. As well as reading this book called the Jade Taniwha by Māori Chinese author Jenny Lee Morgan.

But I think it was in particular through meeting incredible people like Dr Moana Jackson that really cemented my understanding about what Te Tiriti meant and what our role as Chinese or Asians on this land are in relation to that. It was through Māori activists, flatmates and friends that I learned the importance of knowing yourself first, being strong in your own culture to better relate to Māori, and that was kind of a key impetus that led me to work with my own community instead of white activists.

So in 2016, along with five other mostly ethnic Chinese friends who were cis women, trans and non-binary people, we had set up Asians Supporting Tino Rangatiratanga. And the name was actually based on a banner that some of us had made for Waitangi in 2010 and one we had stood behind that year. There was only like four of us at the time, and as a group it sort of -- it's grown a lot over the years with much support and guidance from people like Dr Moana Jackson, from Sina Brown-Davis, Alicia Hume(?), Aaron Neoto(?) from Racial Equity Aotearoa, people like Dr Arama Rata and Marama Davidson who have had quite long-standing relationships with.

And the original intent of the group was kind of two-fold. One was to take collective responsibility as Asians for educating and engaging our own people on Te Tiriti through Te Tiriti workshops, partly because Pākehā-organised Treaty workshops are often centred on Pākehā experiences and often culturally unsafe for non-Pākehā tauwiwi, and partly because we should not expect Māori to carry that burden of educational labour.

And the second part was to kind of show up in solidarity for Māori-led movements and mobilise our own communities when we're called to support to be there on the ground, especially for land and border protection against ongoing colonisation. So as an

organisation it's grown from Tāmaki to Pōneke, Ōtepoti and very recently Ōtautahi. So if you're in any of those places, feel free to get in touch if you want to get involved.

A lot of that work has kind of led to informing my current PhD research, which is on Chinese diasporic solidarity with indigenous sovereignty movements in both Aotearoa and Canada-occupied Turtle Island where I also have extended family. And I'm really interested in the kind of possibilities of mutual learning that can happen transnationally, because obviously white supremacists have these transnational links as well. And we thought it's really important that we actually have some historical context to our discussion, so I'm going to pass it now to Kirsten to present some brief history on Chinese in Aotearoa.

>>KIRSTEN WONG: Kia ora Mengzhu, man you're on fire, that's all I can say. It was so good, yeah, so good. Anyway, I'm going to show you injures a super quick wrap up about our history. You'll see some nice pictures soon. Can you see that? Anybody?

>>: Just go back to the first slide Kirsten. Here we go, right, okay, good.

>>KIRSTEN WONG: Okay, well we just thought we'd do a quick run-through of history. So hopefully this will give you a bit of context. The first Chinese came in 1842 for a bunch of reasons, but one was the opium war. In 1839 Britain invaded China because they wanted to sell Indian opium to the Chinese and at that time opium was illegal in China, so pretty much forced trade war. That war ran from a 1839 to 1860 and especially hit the home villages of the early Chinese migrants. So you can see on the left here British troops outside Canton in 1841, and then on the right the British attack on Otiuhu pa which was I think the first attack after the burning of Kororāreka. So definitely colonial forces at work at around about the same time but in different places.

So those first big groups of migrants came the in 1860s from those very areas that were affected by the opium wars, from the Poon Yue area. And very quickly there was a racist backlash, let's say. So many of you know the poll tax, which I won't read it for you again on the right, but you can see some information about that there. But also not only the poll tax, but also the withdrawal of the right to naturalisation from 1908 to 1951 and not being able to get social security benefits, whether you're a naturalised Chinese or not.

So those immigration restrictions, they were only levied against Chinese. You can see from this graph here that it had a very, very strong impact on the numbers of Chinese. So I think the height was 5,000 at the height of the goldmining period up to World War II, and then after World War II you can see a very, very slow increase up to 1986. And that increase was basically natural increase, and some very specialist migration exemptions. So that was the 1939 war refugee intake, some Colombo plan students who had come here and

then applied for residency and then people like Tze Ming's parents who came under the special skills categories, which used to be called the occupational priority list as it's called at one point; but also migration from Pacific, particularly from Samoa and Fiji.

I wanted to quickly show you Tze Ming's beautiful graph which expresses ethnic Chinese as a percentage of New Zealand population. And you can see that after the 1987 immigration reforms, which basically shifted from being a preference towards nationality and ethnically-based migrants to a migration policy based on broad criteria. So after that you can see a huge increase in Chinese migration.

So with that big post-1987 increase, you get again, unfortunately a very strong racist backlash; people being yelled at in the streets, bottled, I remember those days, and there was lots of anti-Asian media all through the early 1990s and that Tom Scott cartoon on the top right is a commentary on that.

But that migration change has really brought massive changes for all of us, and there's so much more energy and diversity in our communities which you can totally see from these photos. I think the big take-out from what we've seen from this image is that we are all different, you know, as Chinese New Zealanders we're all different, we have different histories, but we all live in Aotearoa and this is the commonality that brings us together.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Tēnā koutou katoa te whānau, tēnā koe Kirsten me tēnā o ngā korero.

Whānau, I think the richness of the discussion is going to come with some Q&A. In that I'm sure our panel are going to divulge some of their origin stories, and Mengzhu you mentioned earlier about Moana Jackson, I'm sure some of those stories are going to come out in some of the answers. But I thought at this juncture we might get straight into some questions, whānau, and I'm going to start some of the Q&A right now if that's okay.

Okay, I have got one from Kyle Tan. "Kia ora panel, thanks for the interesting discussion. Te Tiriti has been mentioned a few times in today's webinar. As Chinese leaders in your own communities, do you think there are sufficient awareness of Te Tiriti and our position as tangata Tiriti amongst Chinese in Aotearoa? There also seems to be increasing division among Chinese of different nationalities and political stances. How do you think Te Tiriti can help the Chinese communities to bridge these differences?" And I'll open the floor.

>>MENGZHU FU: I can try and answer that. I don't think there is enough -- I don't think it's sufficient understanding of Te Tiriti, even having grown up here, the kind of schooling that I had really doesn't give you much detail as to what Te Tiriti really meant, it gives you this

kind of idea there's like these two different versions, but actually the only legitimate version is the te reo Māori version, it's not a version it's Te Tiriti. And that Māori never ceded sovereignty, and these kind of misconceptions that still kind of float around because of a lot of Pākehā myths about the Treaty that's been going on for a long time. And I think one of the ways that we can make it more accessible for our communities to learn some of these histories, is for us to take on that responsibility of doing that, educating ourselves and also to make it more accessible linguistically for communities who may not speak fluent English.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Does anyone from the panel want to add on to that kōrero?

>>TZE MING MOK: I think it's an interesting point that was asked about how can Te Tiriti bridge divides between our different communities. And I literally have never thought of it like that, I've like -- because like the ways that we engage our different communities with Te Tiriti work is so different. Like for example, I'm not a leader of my community, but my community pretty much just kind of has the same, I would say the same attitudes to Te Tiriti as like Pākehā New Zealand, because my community is so well-integrated into Pākehā society, we just absorbed all of those lessons.

So where my community, where I see people from my community engaged with Treaty work, it's usually either with Pākehā as a mediating force, like they're in a Pākehā rōpū, like in a group, or they're an Asian supporting tino rangatiratanga. I think all roads lead to Mengzhu as usual with the incredible work that you do, because I think that having an organisation like that and having the focus, which is actually quite a diverse organisation of radicals, yes, but you have to start with the group that takes everyone in. Because when I was starting out with this kind of thinking back in like 15, 20 years ago, I stood in like the hikoi for the foreshore and seabed and I looked out trying to find Asians, and I spotted like three Asians and we were all so happy to see each other, and we were all from different places, different backgrounds. And I thought to myself imagine if we'd like known each other beforehand and could have met up and gone together.

So I think that like a lot of it comes down to organising structures and with the kind of work that Mengzhu does, having set up this organising structure, it's like an incredible focal point and it only is growing in its membership and its reach. And I think that's one of the most important things to do, is to work at that grassroots level of grassroots activists, people who are attracted to activism and have the energy to go back to their communities and spread that word.

- >>BEV TSO HONG: I think related to that, building on what's been just said, is an understanding of ourselves as diverse Chinese communities and the references between bicultural governance Te Tiriti-based and where does the multicultural aspect sit within that plane of reference. And I think, you know, I hear all different kinds of takes on that, because there hasn't been the conversations, I don't think, to start looking at first the history, and I think the curriculum and understanding what's led to this point, but also connecting up with Te Tiriti and having the conversations we're having now is an important part of that.
- >>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora e te whānau, I think this also is a nice segue into Madeleine Fang's question; "there is clearly a lot of grassroots community-based action to foster a sense of belonging for Chinese Asians in Aotearoa as tangata Tiriti. Do you feel that there is much action awareness by Government to foster a more inclusive Te Tiriti-based sense of belonging for everyone, or is it a case of how can we rebuild the master's house with the master's tools?"
- >>MENGZHU FU: I think I'm the only one here that hasn't worked for government, so I don't know what goes on like in every-day processes of it, but government policies and initiatives are not something that I would want to wait for or necessarily have much faith in. I think a lot of this work we need to do on the grassroots level, and the government is also a Crown structure and parliament itself is a violation of Te Tiriti because it's not supposed to have any kind of power or sovereignty over tangata whenua, right. So I guess for those of us who want to see kind of constitutional transformation and Te Tiriti actually honoured, I think the vehicle is more through community than through government.
- >>BEV TSO HONG: I think there's a role for government, but I think that in relation to Te Tiriti, it's about the latter, it's about -- and I think government is grappling with that currently, it's about the reframing, it's about what is a partnership and what is a relationship. Some of the initiatives I've seen, like there's the Welcoming Communities currently.
- So basically I started in the public sector in 87/88 which is when what Kirsten was talking about, the points system, came in. Prior to that new migrants that came to Aotearoa were from like cultures, so they were the like nations, and then with the opening up based on you get certain number of points for skill, age, those kind of things. So it just became a much, you know, it took the colour aspect away from it, if you like.
- And after that there were settlement programmes brought in, and so we've had this real fluctuation of a strong settlement focus simply because I think that's where you have the qualifications and the tax, all that kind of frame of reference that happened because there was I think a lack of initiatives in place for establishing, yeah, those communities of

different cultures when they came to Aotearoa. Same with the refugee sort of quotas and we opened and broadened that too in terms of like nations and others.

And so there have been attempts and there are currently initiatives around that settlement space, there's currently the socio-cohesion consultations going on, but in my mind there has been more of a one way dialogue of the central government offering out rather than more of a collaborative dialogue. And I think it takes -- it's going to take, you know, we're in the space of innovation and transformation, and I think that kind of is what needs to happen as well in terms of shifting the space and shifting the conversation more towards that equal Te Tiriti power sharing kind of base, even at the local community levels hopefully.

>>KIRSTEN WONG: When I think about progress, so I think of the people who have gone before us and I also think of our elders now, you know, I was talking to Aunty Esther Fong when we were up in the Hokianga in Opononi last year, and she grabbed me by the hand and said to me "we must make relationships" -- I shouldn't do that voice should I -- "we must make relationships with tangata whenua, they are our natural allies, and you know when things go well for them, things go better for us." And I think that's really the bottom line.

And, you know, so I think yes, we should do all that civic participation stuff, but I also think that our progress is going to be propelled by actual genuine relationships that aren't mediated by Pākehā. So things like, you know, community to community relationships, ugun(?) to marae relationships, people to people, family to family, all those things in so many different ways are going to make progress, drive it forward and in a really diverse and complex and knitted-together way, yeah, that's what I think. And I think that's what the vision has been for a while. So pleased to be able to pass that on.

>>TZE MING MOK: In terms of -- I've been a civil servant on and off, I'm not really married to the State, kind of in and out, you know, it's like an open relationship. And I've got to say, like the thing with the State is it doesn't just give up power, right, you've got to take it. You either -- the power has to either be taken or like persuade them to see that it's in everyone's best interests so they share it, or you've got to the trick them out of it somehow. And I'm not like super-optimistic that like the State's just going to be like "here have the power, you know, here is your sovereignty".

And it's the grassroots and it's the community that is going to build the forces to take the power back, you know? Like I work a lot in kind of very over time with sort of progressive-sounding social wings of government and, you know, they go through the words and there's frameworks and at the end of the day "are you giving the power back?"

Are you giving the land back, are you giving the budget?" It just comes down to that. And, you know, a lot of the time they can't do that, they're not going to do that until you get to like this complete opportunity point where, you know, you can get Whanau Ora because there was a massive social movement, there was a new political party created, they struck the devil's bargain, you know, I'm talking about the Māori Party struck a devil's bargain with the National Party and they got this one policy, Whanau Ora, which is a great kaupapa Māori approach to holistic public health, right?

These things, these opportunities happen in a very weird strategic way, you can't always predict how they're going to happen. You can't just say we must work within the State, we must work outside the State, because you've got all the activists, they actually move in and out of the public sector and the State system all the time. And that's why it does come down to communities, because the communities are moving in and out of the State structure trying to influence it, trying to steal from it. We're like the tricksters trying to trick the State out of its power. And yeah, that's kind of how I see things.

>>MENGZHU FU: I think that's such an important analysis of power, because like, you know, where can we build power and where power currently exists, and if we kind of shift that power away from State structures and into community then we can really be that force for change. And I think part of that is what you said, Kirsten, was building direct relationships with tangata whenua. I think for too long those relationships have been mediated by Pākehā and mediated in ways that have been really divisive. You know, if you think about the history of anti-Chinese racism in Aotearoa, a lot of that was specifically mobilised and fed to Māori communities so that Chinese would be seen as a threat rather than Pākehā. And a lot of that controversy around Māori Chinese intermarriage was about like the white fear of Māori and Chinese communities becoming allies and becoming families and building that kind of connection and solidarity.

I think just going of what you said before, Kirsten, about honouring those genealogies, I guess, is that those solidarities have been there for a long time and a lot of those stories are not very well-known. I was super appreciative of Dr Moana Jackson for sharing some of those stories with us in 2018 when he was talking about the relevance of Te Tiriti to Asians and some of those earlier stories of Parihaka men in Otago or Dunedin who had defended Chinese miners against white supremacist attacks, and some of the Chinese market gardeners in Waikato were feeding some of the Te Puea-led conscientious objectors from Waikato. Those are the kind of stories I think are really powerful in thinking about our relationships and where we want those to go.

And I just want to like share a quote from that hui that he said, where he said that "Te Tiriti o Waitangi for me welcome people from somewhere else on to our marae. You are welcome, you can live your lives as who you are, but this is the basic kawa, that you will respect the rights of others and you will respect the land and you will work together to make this a better place." And I hope that's something we can carry with us into the future.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora koutou. I'm going to segue into another question from Selvie Balishu Bramanium(?), and she asks "how can we balance the survival mindset of recent migrants with solidarity with tangata whenua? Or is it first generation Asian New Zealanders to be able to step up and be activists, or can we all take part in different ways?" So I suppose that's a question -- so our panel, you are all very much grounded in the Aotearoa context, and so recent migrants coming into Aotearoa can see the social injustice, the inequities, the dishonouring of the Te Tiriti context and recent immigrants, whānau want to do something. What can they do?

>>MENGZHU FU: I mean they can get involved in ASTIR, but I do think there is something to be said about kind of first generation migrants like my parents' generation who were just very focused on surviving and didn't really have energy for other things, but in my generation where we've been privileged to kind of grow up in the education system to be able to speak English without a foreign accent or whatever, like we are in a well-positioned place to do that kind of work and I kind of wouldn't necessarily expect my parents' generation to do that. But I do think there is always a place for people to be involved in some way or another.

>>TZE MING MOK: Yeah, what we call the 1.5 generation, which is you Mengzhu and that's definitely the wave of new young activists that I see on the scene who have so much fresh energy, but they're really rooted in their parents' migration struggles as well. But, you know, I think, as the original question was phrased, everyone has a role to play. In some ways when we've talked about what ASTIR does and how a lot of is even just starting with your parents, right, having conversations with your parents. I never had to have that conversation with my parents. But like a lot of people will -- it's probably the hardest thing, you can go and do a workshop with like some people who voluntarily come to the library and teach them about Te Tiriti, but then it's like what if I have to have the same conversation with my parents? I've never had to have that obstacle, I've never had the aunties breathing over my neck. But I'd be really interested to see -- I know the NZCA itself, it took a long time for it to kind of absorb these ideas and it's like the most

well-established, old Chinese organisation in the country. Maybe, Kirsten, you can shed some light on that.

>>KIRSTEN WONG: Yeah, it is, you know, it's challenging because you have a lot -- especially I want to bring together that idea of diversity again, everybody is really diverse, you know. When we say the Chinese community, actually we're talking about, you know, a whole lot of different views, a whole lot of different migration experiences. So what tends to happen with these larger community groups is, you know, they tend to follow, they tend to -- you know, they tend to follow mainstream sort of ideas. So when ideas sort of flower, you know, when things started to get more mainstream it tends to follow along. But I think the -- not quite sure what I'm saying, I've forgotten. But I think the idea of -- actually maybe, has anyone got anything else to say because I've totally forgotten my train of thought.

>>BEV TSO HONG: I think part of is about, and I think it's some of the exciting stuff we see with the work Vanessa and Tze Ming and Kirsten are doing, is the opportunity of somewhere to show up, somewhere to have a voice, where you're not on your own as a new migrant. And seeing some of those activities, it connects to what I think you're saying, Kirsten, which is around --

>>KIRSTEN WONG: Yeah.

>>BEV TSO HONG: Yeah, there is a -- we can't be in isolation when we're trying to do these things and it has to be in relationship, and it has to be in relationship across to tangata whenua and others as well in how we operate. But as Tze Ming was saying, we've all got a role, but it is all about context, it's all about, you know, where we each are at in our place. And it may be just about reaching out to find out more, or sharing in whatever language, in Mandarin or Cantonese, you know, I think there's a whole range of ways in terms of that.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: I might actually chuck it back to you, Kirsten, and give you an opportunity to answer this question. This is from Paul Teo, which is, "I observe that Asian as a group was not mentioned in the government policy in consultation and agenda, but referred as immigrants, whereas Māori, Pasifika, women etc are referred as groups. I wondered what is the reason behind this."

>>KIRSTEN WONG: You'll have to ask them, but my theory is, forever foreigners. The concept of, well, you know, we go back to our history again and all that anti-Chinese immigration legislation stuff happened in the late 19th century, which just so happened to be the very time when New Zealand's national identity, national Pākehā identity was being formed. So, you know, in some ways that's this concept of making New Zealand as a better Britain of

the south seas necessarily involved othering groups like Indians, Chinese, Syrians, you know, all the people who weren't white. So there's a real hangover now to think that when people are not white then they're not New Zealanders. But especially Asians, yeah, we call it the whole "forever foreigner" thing. That is another complexity.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora e te whānau, thank you very much, Kirsten, for that answer.

Unfortunately it is time to wrap things up. However, on behalf of Decol 2022, on behalf of all the attendees of today's kaupapa, and of course on behalf of all of our partners, I'd like to thank our panel for sharing of their experiences, sharing of their stories, sharing of, you know, what do we do from here on in? And I think all the whanau have actually got a lot of pearls of wisdom to move forward with some of the ideas that you've shared. No reira ki a koutou, Kirsten, Bev, Tze Ming, Mengzhu, I'd like to thank you for being a part of our kaupapa this afternoon. Nō reira e te whānau, do a virtual homai te pakipaki.

And just in closing whānau, the recording will be made available via YouTube and the website, depending on IP agreement terms with each speaker. So I did note that someone wanted to have a copy of some of the -- your slide show, Kirsten, so hopefully that will be made available on the YouTube video to rewatch.

Also whānau to promote the Facebook group, Decol, it says 2020 but I'm sure it's 2022, and just remind people, and there are more sessions coming up, whānau, so just have a look at your schedule and we hope to see you again very soon.

There's also this slide here, whānau, kei te mura o te ahi in partnership with Pecha Kucha, the final day of Te Tiriti-based futures, anti-racism 2022 will be a platform for emerging voices, so check that out as well, whanau. Heoi ano, it is 1 past 1, so without any further ado, e mihi ana ki a koutou katoa. (Te reo Māori). (Closing karakia). Hei konā whānau.