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Benefitting from differences in knowledge, practice and belief: Māori oral traditions and natural hazard science

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Abstract. This paper builds upon earlier work that argued the information and experience contained within the knowledge-practice-belief core of *Mātauranga Māori* [Māori knowledge] is a valuable and neglected source of information and understanding about past catastrophic events in Aotearoa/New Zealand (A/NZ). Here we map Māori oral traditions and practices that relate experience with extreme environmental disturbance (in particular, tsunamis) around the A/NZ coast, compare the findings with geo-archaeological evidence, and discuss the scientific benefits to be gained by considering *pūrākau* as legitimate perspectives on history. Surprisingly, there are both differences and complementarities between traditional Māori narratives and the available geo-archaeological evidence on extreme coastal disturbances. The findings presented here raise important questions about accepted geographies of tsunami risk, their causes and sources of their generation, as well as reasons for the paucity and abundance of information in some regions. Ways in which *Mātauranga Taiao* [Māori environmental knowledge] and contemporary science can be combined to produce new narratives about extreme environmental disturbance along the A/NZ coastline will require not only acceptance of other ways of knowing but also open engagement with Māori that respects their rights to tell their own histories. These efforts are encouraged to revitalise and ground-truth the interpretation of traditional stories, corroborate and/or question previous scientific deductions, and improve our collective understanding of the recurring impact of tectonic, geologic and meteorological-based events across A/NZ.

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