Factors Affecting Development and Interaction

This chapter discusses factors that might have, first, led to the development of differing degrees of complexity and stability in polities in different parts of Fiji; and secondly, resulted in various forms of interaction between polities and between polities and external influences.

General background

Socio-political, historical, archaeological and linguistic information, as gathered from other sources as well as my own enquiries, indicate that southeastern and eastern polities outside the areas directly covered by my research project included highly complex, relatively stable, socio-political confederations or *matanitū*, such as those of Bau, Cakaudrove, Rewa and Verata (see Appendix A).

Research in the field revealed first, a proliferation of small, independent social polities (usually identified as *yavusa*, or descent groups) or simple, generally unstable socio-political federations (sometimes identified as *vanua*) found in western areas in Vuda, Nadi and Nawaka, and in the Yasawa Group; and, secondly, the development of relatively complex and stable socio-political federations or *vanua* found in Rakiraki in the northeast of Viti Levu.

The exploration of factors, internal and external, relating to the unity, identification, structure, dynamics and leadership of polities throughout Fiji indicates that polities in different areas tended to develop to different degrees of complexity and to manifest different degrees of stability (cf. Sahlins 1963).

Internal factors

Variations in the socio-political unity and structure of pre-Colonial polities generally may have resulted from fusion and fission within and between polities, or through federation and confederation. These variations might have been due in part to factors internal to a particular region, such as:

- ease of geographical access between polities;
- availability of planting land in the areas involved;
- access to natural resources;
- or internal to a particular polity, such as:
- insults and quarrels;
- the need for mutual assistance between polities, especially in times of assault by neighbouring polities; and
the expansive careers of ambitious and able leaders such as Cakobau of Bau, with supporting military and naval power.

**External factors**

Variations may also have been due to external factors outlined already, such as:

(a) the multiple settlements of Fiji in earliest times, from the west and from the east;
(b) the impact of Tongan monarchical ideology and expansionist ambitions;
(c) the arrival of European visitors, settlers and traders;
(d) the introduction of Christianity and the arrival of overseas missionaries; and
(e) the degree of influence of Cakobau and the Cakobau Governments of 1867 and 1871.

These factors affected the development and interaction of pre-Colonial Fijian polities to a greater or less degree in different parts at different times, but especially in the west during the somewhat novel circumstances of the 19th century. To make them more readily understandable and to emphasise their significance, I will discuss the backgrounds to, effects from, and reactions in traditional Fijian polities to each of these factors.

**Discussion on external factors**

*(a) The multiple settlements of Fiji in earliest times*

Except for a single ‘palaeolith’—and that of dubious provenance—held in the Fiji Museum, no evidence is currently available that Fiji was settled in pre-Lapita times. The first arrival in Fiji, presumably in the west, of people associated with the Lapita culture was about 2900 BP (Anderson et al. 2001:7). Geoff Clark (2000:253), studying the 1500 years after the end of the Fiji Lapita period in about 2650 BP, was primarily concerned with socio-political divergence in Fiji, and especially when it ‘first began, and the rate, timing and cause of culture change in the archipelago’, whereas this monograph is more concerned with interaction between Tonga and Fiji during this period, especially during late prehistoric and proto-historic times involving Tongan ambitions to dominate Fiji.

Interaction between Tonga and Fiji had long been military, socio-political and marital. The earliest archaeological evidence for Tongan ambitions to impose their authority in Fiji may be the massive defended site at Ulunikoro, Lakeba, dated to about 1000 BP (Best 1984:658). Best suggested that Tongans built this fortress to serve as a base from which they could assert their power initially over the Lau group before extending westwards. Later, Tongans began to move to other parts of Fiji. Fortifications were constructed on Taveuni by 800 BP. Though Frost (1974:118) explained them as defences against migration from the west, they could equally have been erected in anticipation of Tongan aggression from the east.

*(b) The impact of Tongan expansionist ambitions and monarchical ideology*

The impact of Tongan political ambitions on the polities of Fiji was plainly manifested in the Tongan settlement of Lau during the 19th century. As for the west, traditions tell of a Tongan, known in Fiji as Wakanimolikina, who became stranded on the island of Yanuca near Cuvu, Nadroga. Because of his fair skin and good looks, he was chosen to be the chief of the Nadroga people. Other Tongans are said to have landed on the island of Vatulele south of Nadroga, and on Viwa, the furthest west in the Yasawa group. In Nadroga, members of the yavusa of Noi Toga claimed (Gifford 1951b:254; and I have checked with Fijians in the area) to be descendants of Finau Maile Latumai, a chief of Tongatapu who with a number of Tongans was banished from...
Tonga. They sailed first to the island of Serua and then to the southern coast of Nadroga where they settled. Later they moved inland to the magnificent hill fort of Tavuni on the Sigatoka River. Maile is buried on the hill of Serua where he had lived, and present descendants live below Tavuni at Narara and the nearby villages of Malevu and Nawamagi. The Tongan population in Lau increased considerably during the 19th century with the arrival of disaffected chiefs, restless warriors and adventurers.

In later prehistoric times, considerable social intercourse had persisted between Fijian chiefs and Tongans, and the former were fully aware of Tongan expansionist ambitions. These were reflected in the patterns of political, military and religious rivalries.

In proto-historic times, Tongan impact and influence affected the stability of, and interaction between pre-Colonial Fijian polities in two ways. First, the Tongan political ideology of, and ambitions for high chieftainship and, from 1845, knowledge of Tongan monarchy spread to eastern Fiji through marriage and the exchange of visits with Tonga. For many years, considerable social intercourse persisted between Fijian chiefs and Tongans, and the former were fully aware of the Tongan ideology of paramountcy and ambitions for eventual monarchy. Paramountcy was a factor of the patterns of political, military and religious rivalries between the major groups in Tonga; and monarchic ambitions were realised in 1845 in the union of Tonga under the strongest paramount, Tui Kanakopolu, whose baptismal name was Kini Jioji (King George) Taufa‘ahau. He became Tupou I, the first King of Tonga. The Tongan political ideology of paramountcy and achievement of monarchy fired the ambitions of the able eastern Fijian chiefs such as Cakobau. Cakobau, as Vunivalu or war chief of Bau had risen to the position of paramountcy in the major matanitū of Bau by forcefully subordinating and expelling the spiritual chief, Roko Tui Bau. Secondly, the political Tongans living in far-eastern Fiji proceeded to obtrude themselves significantly into Fijian affairs, challenging the chiefs and imposing on the people. This obtrusion developed into an expansionist policy of Tonga to control all Fiji, affected partly under the guise of imposing the Tongan Wesleyan religion, and partly though the sheer military and naval might and resources of Tongans living in Fiji. With the blessings of King Tupou I who was glad to get rid of his troublesome young kinsman, Enele Ma‘afu’otu’itonga came to Lau in 1848 and after some years proceeded to organise and lead the Tongans there. At the same time Tongan teachers came to spread Christianity. Ma‘afu, by intervening in local quarrels, working through the teachers and extending the new faith, proceeded to control the Lomaiviti islands. Then, by assisting Vakawaletabua, Tui Bua, whose mother was Tongan and whose authority was being challenged in Bua, he extended his authority by military might over much of Macuata and Bua on the island of Vanua Levu. He later sent parties of warriors to occupy Beqa and Kadavu. Tui Bua in return assisted in imposing the Tongan Church on the island of Yasawa, where he had traditional connections.

A skilled warrior, statesman, diplomat and administrator, Ma‘afu posed as protector of the missionaries, patron of the traders and friend of Cakobau. Nevertheless, he still maintained and extended the areas where he could impose his authority, if necessary by force. He had two lieutenants, Wainiqolo or Vainikoro, and Semisi Fifita. They terrorised those in the Yasawa Group who opposed the Tongan Church (referred to as the *lotu lasu* or false Christianity by Fijians whom the Wesleyan missionaries had converted). They even interfered in leadership quarrels in Rakiraki.  

(c) Interaction with European visitors, settlers, planters, traders and representatives
The first recorded appearances of Europeans in Fiji were by Tasman in 1643, Cook in 1774 and Bligh in the ship’s launch after the *Bounty* mutiny in 1789. These appearances resulted in no

---

1 Derrick (1946) provides a useful background to such interaction between Fijians and Tongans.
direct contact, although Bligh recorded in his log on 7th May, that he had discovered islands in Fiji and ‘was chased by two large canoes’, probably in the north Yasawa group. In 1794, Captain Wilson in the Arthur on her way from Port Jackson to America was attacked and two crew members were wounded by arrows off the western coast of Viti Levu.

Early European visitors had no social contact with Fijians, except for members of the crew of the Pandora’s tender in 1791. They were looking for the crew of the Bounty, and spent five weeks on an island, perhaps Ono-i-Lau or Matuku, where they were hospitably received by the locals. They were probably the first Europeans to have such close contact with Fijians.

Among the first to settle in Fiji were those who survived shipwrecks or deserted visiting trading vessels; and a number of these became integrated into Fijian society. The first record of Europeans living among the Fijians for any length of time was probably in or about 1800. The United States schooner Argo was wrecked on the Bukatatanoa Reef near Lakeba in the Lau group, and one or two of the crew survived slaughter and cannibalism, and remained in Fiji. One of these was Oliver Slater, who first reported the existence in western Vanua Levu of sandalwood, a commodity much sought after in China, and thereby brought Fiji to the attention of international traders. These traders brought disastrous epidemics of new diseases against which the Fijians had no natural resistance. Tradition refers to the lila balavu or wasting sickness which extended as far west as Rakiraki.

More significant contact began in the 19th century when visiting European vessels sought Fijian help to collect sandalwood or bêche-de-mer, and in return assisted one polity against its rivals. Later to settle were planters, traders and missionaries. They came in close contact with Fijian society, but generally had no intention of forming an integral part of it. Interaction with the Fijians differed greatly, but whether relationships were murderous, disastrous, sexual, or tolerant, these Vavalagi (foreigners) inevitably had an impact on the dynamics of, and interaction between Fijian polities. They were a source of exotic ideas and goods including firearms and metal axes. These could be useful to Fijians, without destroying those elements of pre-contact society which were considered to be vital for maintaining their traditional way of life. Demand for firearms increased, partly as symbols of prestige. At first, the importance of firearms in warfare was exaggerated because Fijians without the help of friendly Vavalagi did not know how to operate them effectively. The noise of a musket discharging could, however, have a devastating effect especially on those who were unaware of their existence. When Nadroga attacked their traditional enemies in Nadi, the attack was preceded by the firing of muskets. The noise was considered by the Nadi people to be that of anitu (supernatural spirits), and they fled from their attackers. On the other hand, Fijians came to realise that these visitors with superior weapons and large vessels could be useful in times of inter-polity war.

The next stage in the development of interaction between Vavalagi and Fijians was when foreign government vessels started to visit the islands for the purposes of exploration and surveying, or to enquire into alleged offences by the Fijians against nationals. In the west, Wilkes, commander of the United States Exploring Expedition, carried out extensive surveys in Fijian waters in 1840. In the Yasawa group, survey work was completed without any clash with the people, although Wilkes remarked (1845) that the endeavours of his surveyors were sometimes watched with not very friendly appearances. This indicated a degree of mutual tolerance singularly absent when survey work was started on the island of Malolo. A boat went ashore and a hostage was taken while members of the crew tried to purchase supplies. The hostage tried to escape and a shot was fired over his head to deter him. The Malolo people thought he had been killed and they retaliated by killing two of the ship’s officers including Wilkes’ nephew. To avenge their deaths and to teach the Fijians a lesson, a party of sixty or seventy was sent ashore to attack and burn...
the villages. Fifty-seven Fijians were killed, the crops were destroyed and the chiefs and people made an abject surrender. In 1853, the Wave, a cutter from Levuka, became becalmed off the island of Malake, Rakiraki, and the islanders captured it and the crew. An expedition of European traders from Levuka went to Malake with the object of making a demonstration of strength to deter the islanders from repeating such an incident. Tui Levuka, who had an old grudge against the islanders, joined the expedition and a group of his warriors turned the demonstration into a massacre. Fourteen islanders were killed and thirteen were captured.

After Christian missions had been established in Fiji, Wesleyan in 1835 and Roman Catholic in 1844, warships of different nationalities, mostly British or French, began to visit Fiji irregularly. For instance, in 1855, fifty men from the USS Vandalia stormed a village on the island of Waya. This was a reprisal for the killing and eating of the crew, including an American, of a boat belonging to the mission teacher and trader, John Binner. This resulted, according to one account, in the killing of twenty defenders.

The arrival of an increasing number of permanent settlers, both planters and traders, resulted in a change to the basic interaction between Vavalagi and Fijians. Instead of living alongside their hosts, some Europeans, with their Fijian or island families, started to form their own communities, such as the little settlement of Levuka on Ovalau, which developed into the first capital of Fiji. These European settlers and traders wanted not only access to land on terms of freehold with which they were familiar but also security of tenure and security to trade, in the face of what they saw to be a lawless and often hostile local population.

Foreign countries started to take a political interest in Fiji. The first representative of any foreign government to be appointed to Fiji was John Brown Williams of Salem who, in 1840, became the United States Commercial Agent in Fiji. His houses on the island of Nukuku and at Lauca, Rewa, were burned, probably accidentally, but some of his property was carried off by Fijians. The American Government began to press Cakobau for compensation, arguing that these houses were on territory under his alleged authority.

The first British Consul, T.W. Pritchard, was appointed to Fiji in 1857 and arrived in 1858 (Pritchard 1866). Owing partly to Pritchard's energetic efforts to encourage immigration to Fiji and partly to favourable reports by Dr Seemann (1862) that the islands were suitable for the growing of cotton, an ever-increasing number of people came from Australia and New Zealand. The former had found that anticipated fortunes in the Australian gold fields were often illusory. The latter wished to escape from the trauma of the Maori Wars. They came, seeking land on which to cultivate cotton or raise sheep. Some were disappointed and left because they found that Pritchard's promises of favourable conditions for settlement were exaggerated. Those who remained settled at first on land along the coast of southeast Viti Levu and in the eastern islands which they understood were under the authority and protection of such powerful paramounts as Cakobau of Bau and Tui Cakau of Cakaudrove; as well as Ma'afu in the Lau group. Cakobau, under an agreement signed by him in 1868, transferred some 200,000 acres of land to the Polynesian Company in Melbourne in payment of compensation for the destruction of Williams' property (France 1969:81). However experience showed that in spite of his claims to the contrary his traditional authority and powers of protection did not cover much of this land, especially up the Rewa River.

Land became scarcer and more expensive in the relatively safe eastern islands and the east of Viti Levu. So some who found themselves forced off their properties up the Rewa River, as well as newcomers who had come to plant and trade, had to look to the north, south-west and west of
Viti Levu. Land was opened up in Rakiraki and its offshore islands, in the river valleys of Nadroga and Ba, and in the plains and deltas of Vuda, Nadi and Nawaka. Some settled in some of the Yasawa islands such as Naviti, and planted cotton or traded.

These western Fijians had had little early experience of or interaction with Europeans, and what they had was scarcely auspicious for the easy development of good neighbourly relationships. Unlike those in the east, they had not come into early contact or interacted with European sandalwood and béche-de-mer traders or with shipwrecked sailors or deserters from vessels. European missionaries had scarcely penetrated so far from their centres in the east, except the unfortunate Reverend Thomas Baker, of whom more later. They may well have been suspicious or hostile in the face of the arrival of these European settlers and traders even though they were but few in numbers in those early days.

In contrast to planters and traders in the east, these first settlers in the west were well outside the traditional spheres of influence of powerful paramounts such as Cakobau in Bau, or Tuia'au or Ma'afu in the east. Local chiefs had comparatively restricted spheres of influence or powers to mediate in the event of quarrels between traditional landowners and Vavalagi settlers. The latter often found themselves in precarious situations involving misunderstandings and disputes. For instance, the first Europeans to settle in the Nadi area were Messrs A. Campbell and C.H.H. Irvine (formerly a planter in Ceylon) who came from New Zealand in 1866 and bought land for thirty muskets, five barrels of gunpowder and six kegs of lead. They found themselves in the midst of a war between three neighbouring villages, and left their land to seek safety. On their return, they found that their house had been damaged and property had been stolen. In 1869 they sold part of their property to the Muir brothers, originally from Scotland but more immediately from Otago, New Zealand. Relations with their Fijian neighbours were reasonably good at first. Then, in 1872, their house was burned by an inland man, apparently because he had been placed on a horse by one of the brothers and had fallen off and injured himself but was not given compensation. It later emerged that he had burned the house on the instructions of a chief who was upset because the Muirs had ploughed up an old village site on what they regarded as their land.

In the same year, the Miller brothers bought some Vuda land from a Sabeto chief whose mother came from Vuda (and therefore he claimed to have rights to the land in question). The Vuda chief sent his son with eleven others to buturaki (stamp on) one of the Millers for wrongfully obtaining the land. News of the buturaki reached other Nadi settlers, and a number of them, with their islander labourers, moved off to Vuda in military array. They surrounded the chief of Vuda, and took the eleven involved in the buturaki to the top of a nearby hill. They flogged them in full view of the villagers, and lectured the chiefs on the enormity of laying hands on a white man. One of the first to settle in the Sigatoka area was an American, G.R. Burt, who was exceptionally unpleasant to his labourers. He was attacked in 1869, and was buturaki, only just escaping with his life. Cakobau and J.B. Thurston, the Acting British Consul, later charged him with nine murders.

The supposedly pan-Fiji Government headed by Cakobau who had been crowned and given the dubious title of King of Bau, was established in 1867 and based in Levuka, with the backing of a number of influential and ambitious local Europeans. It soon became apparent that it had little authority outside the traditional areas of authority of Cakobau, as Vunivalu of Bau.

Living in an area of marginal security, far from likely protection by Cakobau or the Cakobau Government, the Nadi community of fifteen or twenty Europeans developed a spirit of self-sufficiency, symbolised by their uniform of Tokelau hats and Turkey puggarees and by adopting the soubriquet of the Nadi Swells. In 1869, they formed the Nadi Bay Planters Association, and
held regular meetings to promote self-reliance and mutual protection. For instance, they aimed to prevent guns being given to the local Fijian landowners, by preventing further newcomers from purchasing land. On one occasion, they sent the obnoxious Mr Burt back to Sigatoka. One member of this colourful community was George H. Worsley Markham who lived in the area from 1869, having come from Christchurch, New Zealand, though originating in Ulster. One interesting source of information about pre-Colonial Fiji is the Markham diary (1869–1874), though sadly only part of it relating to his time in the west survives. By 1871, those who had settled in the west had so little faith in, or respect for, the far-away Cakobau Government that they either ignored it or actively opposed it.

Such attitudes about the 1867 Government were expressed not only by Europeans living in the west; a general feeling of physical insecurity and danger also prevailed among settlers and traders throughout Viti Levu. The Reverend Thomas Baker was clubbed and eaten in 1867 at Nagagadelavatu in the hills of Navosa. Rewa settlers were driven from their properties up the Rewa River. In August 1871, two European planters on the Ba River were murdered by local Fijians. Government punitive expeditions, if they were undertaken, were unsuccessful, and it was generally realised that the 1867 Government was ineffective and inadequately representative. Settlers and traders, especially in the west, increasingly sought some form of stable government, provision for negotiable land titles and security of land tenure.

This situation was due largely to a quite understandable lack of awareness on the part of settlers about traditional land tenure and the right of chiefs to dispose of land. The most common motive for Fijians to dispose of land was the need to obtain firearms, especially as the ability of Fijians to use muskets improved. To the local chiefs the appearance of new settlers must have appeared as a godsend. Disputes resulted, however, between chiefs or between a chief and his people about the right to sell land owned by polities under his traditional authority.

It was disputed whether a chief had any right to sell the lands of those under his authority or even land of which he was one of the traditional owners. It was also disputed whether he had any traditional authority to sell the land of those whom he had conquered in war. Whatever the ideal principles of land tenure and ignoring whether or not they had any recognised traditional right to sell land, be it their own or of those under their authority or the lands of the conquered, it is evident that chiefs assumed such rights. By virtue of the chiefs’ actual political power over their people or their achieved power over the people they had conquered, the traditional landowners were in no position to disagree. Such situations prevailed not only in the powerful paramountcy in the east but also in the west. Tui Ba for instance sold vast areas of land belonging to people over whom he had some degree of traditional authority. He did so not only as a means of obtaining firearms but also of creating a buffer between his area of authority and those in the interior who were independent of his authority and were ever liable to descend and harass him. In these cases the traditional landowners did not play any part in the negotiations for the sale of their lands and, in reality, the power of the paramount could not be gainsaid.

Those Vavalagi who settled in this buffer zone found that they were in a precarious position. The reality of the situation in Ba soon became clear, when, first, James Macintosh and John Spiers were murdered in 1871, and in 1873 after being continually attacked, the Burns family were speared and clubbed together with twenty of their foreign labourers.

It had already become apparent that the 1867 government was powerless and ineffective, and after meetings of, and discussions by, a wide selection of delegates including those from the west, a new constitution was agreed to. The Constitution Act of Fiji received Royal Assent on 18 August 1871, and the first meeting of the new Legislative Assembly was held in November 1871. The European proponents of Cakobau’s Government had not fully taken into account, first, the limited extent
of Cakobau’s traditional authority especially in the west; secondly and perhaps more importantly, the strength and determination of the independent west and interior of Viti Levu to resist the Government, Cakobau and Christianity; and thirdly, the misunderstandings and disputes about the sale of land and security of tenure. Nevertheless, the European community, in contrast to the European and other legislators, had a significant impact and influence on the Fijian population. In the country areas, they were a source of goods, including arms, which the Fijians wanted; they employed labour, when it was available; many were educated and experienced in trades and professions potentially useful to Fijians; and they could participate directly or indirectly in wars and rivalries between polities. They were, at any rate during the decade immediately prior to Cession in 1874, a factor with differing degrees of influence in the development of and interaction between polities in different parts of Fiji, especially in the West.

\(d\) The introduction of Christianity into Fiji

Rivalries developed between different proponents of the Gospel, as they sought (and sometimes fought) for political support and for converts, and this rivalry impacted on and influenced the Fijian community by splitting it. The first European Wesleyan missionaries arrived from Tonga at Lakeba in October 1835 and the Roman Catholics in 1844. The Tongan settlers came from a Wesleyan background and brought their own brand of Christianity, the Lotu Tonga as it is called in Fiji. The first Tongan attempts to spread Christianity to the west from Lau were doubtless perceived, at any rate in Bau, as a guise for the spreading of Tongan political and military influence. For instance, the Tongans tried to establish a foothold on the island of Yasawa, partly as a base for their expansionist ambitions in Fiji, and partly because Yasawa was a main source of sail mats. They left a teacher there, to spread the beliefs of the Lotu Tonga. Not all Fijians accepted the Tongan brand of Christianity, nor the political influence of the Tongans; and some accepted Roman Catholicism perhaps as a gesture of opposition to the Tongans. The Tongans hastened to squash such opposition to their plans to expand their authority over Fiji; and Fifita, to whom reference has already been made, severely ill-treated the Catholics, flogging, kicking and hitting them. This came to the attention of Father Bréhéret, who complained to the captain of a visiting French warship (Pritchard 1866:300). Fifita was tried on board the Cornelie and was deported to New Caledonia.

Wesleyan missionaries had first settled in the east, associating themselves with such paramounts as Tui Nayau in Lau and after some opposition with Cakobau who adopted Christianity as a matter of necessity. The expansion of the Wesleyan Church from duly Christianised Bau outside Cakobau’s traditional areas of authority was regarded with suspicion and hostility as covertly spreading the authority of the Vunivalu, whose religion it had become and whose traditional authority was not recognised in those independent areas. Here the spread of Christianity often led to local warfare, especially in the west. On the one side were those polities which refused to abandon their own spirits and political independence and which therefore would not accept Christianity or Cakobau. On the other side were those who saw some material or spiritual benefit in accepting the new religion or who were too weak militarily to refuse it and thereby face the might of Cakobau and his allies. In the West especially, it was seen as Cakobau’s religion and any early attempts by missionaries at proselytising outside Cakobau’s traditional areas of authority were foolhardy. The Reverend Thomas Baker went into the pagan interior of western Viti Levu in 1867 and was killed and eaten ‘boots and all’, according to a song, in the village of Nagadavelavatu in Navosa. One popular but unlikely account suggests that his death was due to an indiscretion of Baker in insulting a chief by removing his (Baker’s) comb from the chief’s head. A more prosaic account is that the people accepted a tabua or whale tooth, originating from enemies of Cakobau and Christianity in the east, which accompanied a request that Baker...
be killed. As Christianity gradually spread westwards, it led to warfare within and between polities. In the western areas of the Nadi and Nawaka polities, some polities fought in the first instance to maintain their political independence, especially from Cakobau whom they saw as an eastern mountebank. Secondly they resisted Christianity as undermining their spirit world which they saw as essential to their wellbeing and from which they feared dreadful revenge if the spirits were spurned through missionary activities. It could be argued that such fighting also reflected old rivalries.

Christianity propounded a form of spiritual paramountcy running contrary to the principles of the spiritual element of the ideological concept of vanua 1. In so far as they understood them, the missionaries, especially the Wesleyans, denigrated beliefs and sites associated with the Fijian spirit world. They did this verbally, or by having groves desecrated, monoliths broken or buried, or churches constructed on the mounds of the bure kalau (beto or bito in the west) or spirit houses where the spirits were consulted (Parke 2000). They challenged the spiritual basis of chiefly leadership and the spiritual powers or mana which validated and supported the chiefs. In so doing, they challenged the very validity of those spirits which, first, provided an ideological basis for the unity of a polity; secondly, ensured the continuing prosperity of the polity and of its natural food sources based on agriculture, hunting and fishing; and, thirdly, provided a control over unacceptable social behaviour and dissent within a polity as well as a spiritual backing to defence against outside attack. They associated the spirit world with what they regarded as devils or demons (the missionary words for Fijian spirits were tevoro or timoni) and the horrors of cannibalism, wife-strangling and polygamy. In trying to impose Christianity in place of the Fijian spirit world, and to stamp out practices such as those referred to, the missionaries were striking at important elements at the very basis of traditional politico-spiritual Fijian society.

Missionaries aimed to associate with chiefs, realising that if a paramount chief converted to Christianity, his people would be likely to follow. Such tactics sometimes resulted in fusion and fission, especially in complex federated polities such as Nawaka. In some cases the chiefs of some of the polities involved might accept Christianity while other chiefs might refuse to do so. In other cases, as in Yasawa, some accepted Wesleyanism and others accepted Catholicism. Such developments resulting from the influence of Christianity in its various forms sometimes took advantage of old rivalries, and exacerbated them.

It is evident that, in pre-Colonial times, the Wesleyan Mission, the Roman Catholic Mission and the Lotu Tonga in different ways and to different degrees, played increasingly significant roles in influencing the spiritual beliefs and the socio-political dynamics of Fijian polities, albeit with varying degrees of effectiveness especially in the West.

(e) The impact of Cakobau and the Cakobau Government on the west

Cakobau and the eastern-based Cakobau Governments, particularly the 1871 Government, were factors having differing degrees of impact on the dynamics of, and interaction between, polities in the west. Cakobau needed to justify the title of Tui Viti or paramount chief of Fiji, by extending his authority outside his traditional realms. Taking advantage of his position as head of the Government and with the excuse that he was spreading Christianity, Cakobau attempted to extend his personal authority from those areas over which he had traditional or recognised authority and to impose it over other areas of Fiji. The initiative to do so was not only his, because Cakobau was often pushed into it by his European Ministers and by the needs of the planters. In Rakiraki and the West, some adopted Christianity because they saw material advantage in doing so, or because they feared the military wrath of the Cakobau Government. Others who considered that they were strong enough to maintain their traditional independence from Cakobau refused to accept Christianity, because they saw such a step as tantamount to accepting the religion and
the governance of Cakobau. They would have feared the reaction of their ancestral and other spirits if they were to reject their own spirits and accept a new spirit with whom they had no traditional associations. Polities in the west especially in Nadi and Nawaka would sometimes combine to oppose these external factors.

The powers of Cakobau often but not invariably proved to be ineffective in these western areas, and the dubious authority of the 1867 government had already suffered a real test in 1868 when Cakobau suffered a major set-back. After the murder of the Reverend Thomas Baker at Nagagadelavatu, Namosi, the Acting British Consul, J.B. Thurston, demanded that Cakobau as head of the 1867 government should arrest the murderers. Cakobau was very hesitant to commit himself or his troops to military action so far from his traditional areas of authority, but Thurston repeated his demands. Eventually, Cakobau was persuaded by the British warship, HMS Brisk to avenge the murder. He sent in two columns of troops, one of which he led himself. One column was, however, ambushed and thirteen influential chiefs were killed by the independent hill folk who had no intention of allowing easterners to interfere in their affairs. The other column was forced to retire, having lost sixty-one dead and fifteen wounded. Generally Cakobau doubted whether his authority could be enforced in distant areas such as Nadi, Ba, and Sigatoka or even in the upper Rewa River where his navy could not go. The situation came to a head in July 1868, when eighty-five well-armed marines from the H.M.S Challenger went up the Rewa River to help sort out a problem between local landowners and settlers, but having suffered casualties were driven back by gunfire from the Fijians. Such military setbacks emphasised how precarious and ephemeral was the authority of Cakobau in the hills and in the west.

In Levuka, after the 1867 Government proved to be ineffective, the new constitution introduced in 1871 involved Ba, Nadroga, Nadi, the Yasawa group, and Rakiraki/Tavua as well as eastern Fiji. Many of the leading chiefs including Ma’afu had tendered their allegiance to the new government members. Ma’afu may have hoped that the government would fail and that he would be asked to take over the administration of all Fiji. This apparent consensus boded well for the new government in 1871, and Cakobau was proclaimed King of Fiji. Thereby he achieved his ambition, driven by a desire to emulate his Tongan neighbour, King Tupou I, to be recognised as paramount over all Fiji. These machinations might be claimed by some cynics to have culminated in the issue of government postage stamps bearing the symbol of C.R. However, in reality, such recognition was nominal and still had no firm basis in the west at any rate, with little traditional validity there, inadequate military power or legal backing, and no enthusiastic recognition beyond a limited circle of supporters, Fijian or European. Even with government troops at his disposal, Cakobau still faced opposition not only from Fijians but also from those Europeans in the west who were more concerned with their own security than with the maintenance of what they regarded as a far-away form of government without legitimacy or adequate power to enforce law and order in their area.

Cakobau and the new government was almost immediately in trouble when the people of the interior of Ba murdered James Macintosh and John Spiers on the Ba River. The victims were hardly blameless; the diarist Markham (1869–74) recorded that the murder was in revenge against ‘those white men who went about with revolvers popping off at Fijians’. The Cakobau government did not attempt to undertake a punitive expedition. Local European planters, acting on their own initiative, did, however, form a force of volunteers including some Fijians provided by the chief of Ba and some imported labourers. They advanced into the hills, attacked the wrong village, skirmished with the wrong people, and retired without achieving the revenge which they had set out to wreak. In this as in the following case, the Cakobau Government forces were slow to take action because Cakobau did not consider that he was in a position of sufficient strength to undertake a punitive expedition into the hostile mountainous interior.
In 1873, the Burns family and some imported island labourers were murdered on their property at Vunisamaloa about 20 km inland from the mouth of the Ba River. This followed the shooting by Burns’ men of two mountain women who had come down to the Ba River to gather *kaikoso/tuace* (fresh mussels), as was their wont. A government force was sent from Levuka under European officers, but on reaching Ba found that an avenging local European force had already gathered there. Having no faith in the government, these westerners refused to allow the force to proceed. To avoid a bloody confrontation, the government force returned eastward to Rakiraki. Here they learnt of the murder of a Lasakau man from Bau who had been recruiting labour in the interior of Ra. The people of Korowaiwai had apparently killed him because he was a man from Christian Bau and as such was anathema to these independent people. Cakobau’s government approved the immediate assault and destruction of Korowaiwai and the capture of its inhabitants as ‘rebels-in-arms against the king’s throne and person’ (Markham 1869–1874), and required the prisoners to be sent to Levuka, presumably to be made available as labour for plantations and so act as revenue earners for the government. However, what followed was a massacre of some 300 inhabitants, mainly by auxiliaries who attacked alongside the government troops.

After the Korowaiwai massacre, the government troops went back to Ba and faced the hostile planters still anxious to avenge the murders by themselves and insisting that the government forces should leave the matter in their capable hands. H.M.S. *Dido* arrived, and Captain Chapman was able to mediate between the planters and the government. The government troops proceeded to attack the offending village of Karawa which they captured, although the inhabitants fled. A message was received that the people of Nubutautau, Magodro, had met with the people of Sabeto and Vaturu, Nawaka, and had bound themselves to resist any encroachment by the government. The troops divided into two, no longer as a punitive force but as one aiming to bring the mountain people under the authority of government. One part attacked from Ba and the other from Sabeto in Vuda district. They went to Sabeto, as it was known to be in league with the enemy, and here twenty-three men of the district were arrested and the old chief, Mataitoga, was executed by shooting, in the presence of the awestruck villagers. This time the Government succeeded in imposing its authority. There followed a long, bloody and bitter campaign in the course of which about 1000 prisoners were taken and several executions took place in public. Many of the prisoners had had nothing to do with the murder, but Cakobau may have wanted by avenging the Burns murders to convince Europeans to support the Government of which he was head by demonstrating that it could assert its authority over wrongdoers. Perhaps more to the point however, Cakobau may have wanted, after avenging the murders, to continue into the Colo country in the central mountains of Viti Levu and forcefully demonstrate his own power of authority over the independent hill folk there.

The campaign continued until the government forces reached the offending village of Nubutautau. Against orders, some undisciplined troops burned it in a manner the diarist said ‘marred the success of our final action in the Ba expedition of our labours of seven months’ (Markham 1869–1874). Many prisoners were shipped off to Levuka, the Sabeto people ending up on the island of Koro. The methodical devastation of the villages and gardens and the removal of considerable numbers of people as prisoners may, however, have resulted in the longer term in a bitter peace and the hardening of the attitude of many westerners and hill folk against Cakobau, his government and perhaps Christianity.

A significant feature of this period just before Cession in 1874 was the degree to which some small independent polities joined together or opposed each other, as in the cases of some polities in Nadi and Nawaka. They joined to provide mutual assistance against, or support for, the inroads of Christianity, Cakobau and the Cakobau Government. Some accepted Christianity and the Cakobau Government, and others were forced into accepting eastern hegemony or saw it
to their advantage to do so. On the other hand, other independent western polities opposed this acceptance by their neighbours because they objected to heeding the authority of an outsider, an easterner, especially if he was the head of a Fiji-wide Government to the establishment of which they claimed not to have given their assent. This feeling of independence from Government and its manifestations, some bloody, continued until after Cession in 1874 and thus beyond the parameters of this present work.
This text taken from Dogei’s Descendants: Spirits, Place and People in Pre-Cession Fiji, Edited by Matthew Spriggs and Deryck Scarr, published 2014 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.