3. “A fast ignorant vain young man”

On 3 May 1846 Matthew Wilson, a Wesleyan missionary stationed at Ha`apai, baptised the month-old son of “Henali and Elenoa Ma’afu”. Since only the baby’s Christian name, Josiah, is recorded in the baptisms register, we do not know which of the three children of Ma’afu and Elenoa he was. The baby, named after Ma’afu’s late father, was only three years younger than his uncle, another Josaia, who had been baptised at Nuku‘alofo on 2 July 1843 by John Thomas. This child, referred to in the register as “son of Josaia and Mele”, was the youngest of Ma’afu’s siblings. The mention of his mother Moala under her Christian name gives no hint of how she would be castigated by the missionary during the years to come. The conduct and moral character of both Moala and her eldest son were condemned to the extent where the young Ma’afu was more than willing to avail himself of an opportunity to leave Tonga for an indefinite period.

Moala, who had earned Thomas’ unstinted praise as wife, mother and class leader following her conversion, was now a widow. The missionary was not long in changing his tune: in January 1846, describing some “heathenish” ceremonies associated with the funeral of Aleamotu’a, he accused Moala of behaving more like a heathen than a Christian. Within a few days, Moala was suspended “for the present” from her position as class leader. Then, the following September, we learn that Moala, still under suspension, had “gone from bad to worse” by “yielding to the wicked conduct of a young single man” and permitting “two married men to defile and dishonour themselves with her – one of whom is son-in-law to the present king and the other to the old king’s brother”. Only a week later, Moala was supposed to have been “going after a young man named Nanua, who professed a regard for [her], but her Son opposes it”. The sorry tale culminated in February 1847, when Thomas married “poor fallen Mary” to the single man who had been enjoying her favours. While Moala’s conduct was highly offensive to Thomas’ concept of Christian morality, it was not, in terms of more traditional Tongan mores, likely to ruffle many feathers. The missionary’s unyielding intolerance was soon to be exercised in equal measure towards Moala’s eldest son.

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1 Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Register of Baptisms, Tongatapu Circuit 1840–1972.
2 The children were Siale’aatongo, Makakaufaki and Hoboatefua-a-tonga. Tongan genealogies, translated for E.W. Gifford. Only Siale’aatongo reached adulthood.
3 Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga ... Tongatapu Circuit 1840–1972.
4 John Thomas, Journal, 6 Jan 1846.
5 ibid., 19 Jan 1846.
6 ibid., 30 Sep 1846.
7 ibid., 5 Oct 1846.
8 ibid., 24 Feb 1847. Curiously, there is no record of Moala’s marriage in the Wesleyan marriage register.
On 1 June 1847, Thomas borrowed a horse from a neighbour and rode to the
villages of Masilamea and Nukunuku to preach. He experienced problems on
his return:

[I] found the horse rather eager to get back … he stumbled over some
roots which run across the road – and came down upon his knees …
On reaching the bay which was dry and hard – the tide being low – he
set off on the gallop … passing very near a bush which may have taken
my hat off, I leaned a little on the left side to avoid it and while leaning
rather more upon the left stirrup than usual … the leather broke – and
I was unable to regain my balance – and fell to the ground – and the
horse galloped away towards home without me … I set off home on
foot – I saw the horse for more than a mile – still galloping and making
for home. … Ma`afu it seems took the horse home – saying that it had
been found alone galloping. But I … learned, that one of Ma`afu’s men
… had caught the horse and instead of riding back with him to me, he
most selfishly rode home himself with him. – I saw Ma`afu in the Malai
near the burying ground as soon as I arrived – and although he knew I
had borrowed the horse and might have hurt myself, he did not so much
as open his mouth to me, but suffered me to pass him, walking with a
stick I had picked up on the way. As little concerned are some here, for
an old Missionary, as though he was a dog – or some intruder amongst
them – such is the gratitude of some, who have for the last sixteen years
been the object of our solicitation and toil.

But it does not matter. The Lord careth for me, and he has preserved
both man and beast.\(^9\)

We may imagine this “old Missionary” trudging homewards past the burial
ground, his hat intact but his dignity rent asunder, while the watching Ma`afu,
his face a mask of stolid indifference, nursed a secret retribution in his heart.

This incident, less than a month before Ma`afu’s final departure from Tonga,
culminated several months of carping criticism of him by Thomas. Shortly
before Christmas 1846, Ma`afu had been drinking kava one Sunday afternoon
with a group of friends, instead of attending service. Thomas was indignant: “I
do not know where the wickedness of these young men with their companions
will end! Oh that they were wise – that they would consider their latter end”.\(^10\)
Then, on New Year’s Day, “a new evil” which began “in this Christian village:
Foot races men running etc”. Having been advised by the king not to attend
foot races elsewhere, Ma`afu had apparently organised his own at home. “He is

\(^9\) ibid., 1 Jun 1847.
\(^10\) ibid., 21 Dec 1846.
a fast ignorant vain young man”, Thomas deplored, “yet God can save him”.11 Thomas became even more explicit in expressing his intolerance only days later, when describing his pain on learning that even some class leaders had attended the foot races. “This they profess to have done, not knowing there was any harm in it. I thought it very strange indeed that they should have had such views – but it shows me … that our people are in a very feeble state”.12

Such an attitude was nothing new for Thomas. Fifteen years earlier, again at Nuku’alofa, he had expressed his “astonishment that our people have been allowed to be present at sports … they looked upon their country men, club fighting, wrestling, and punching each other with their fists … this I consider very bad conduct”.13 His views were unchanged in 1847. For Ma`afu, apparently still living in Nuku’alofa, cheek by jowl with Thomas we might almost say, it seemed that whenever he looked over his shoulder, the admonitory puritanical finger of John Thomas was wagging firmly in his face. This, in a society increasingly disciplined since its unification under the rule of Tāufa’āhau, meant that Ma`afu was restrained by an ever-tightening rein. Gone was the indulgence of his father’s time; if he wanted to gratify what some have called his reckless ambition and others his love of discord and intrigue, he would have to seek more suitable horizons beyond the shores of Tonga.

Many suggested reasons for Ma`afu’s departure from Tonga have appeared in published works. He was supposedly exiled to Fiji by Tāufa’āhau, who saw his cousin as a potential rival for the kingship, one around whom dissenting chiefs, with their followers, might rally.14 He was alleged to have incurred the king’s displeasure through breach of trust and open rebellion,15 and it was even stated that if he had remained in Tonga he would have been put to death “as there was not room in Tonga for two such important persons as himself and the King”.16 Tāufa’āhau’s supposed removal order was sometimes allied with a mission to govern or otherwise control the unruly Tongans, many of them exiles, who lived in Fiji and who were represented as a potential threat to the king’s authority.17 It

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11 ibid., 1 Jan 1847.
12 ibid., 11 Jan 1847.
13 ibid., 26 July 1832.
16 Adolph Brewster, King of the Cannibal Isles, London 1937, 266.
was even claimed that Ma`afu came from Tonga in charge of a hoard of brigands, for the sole purpose of imposing the Wesleyan doctrine on the Fijians by force of arms. Such a view, nothing more than the petulant response of an irresponsible Roman Catholic bishop to the triumph of Protestantism in Fiji, requires no serious consideration. The other contentions are worthy of attention, however, if only because of their recurrence in print over more than a century.

Tāufa`āhau had spent a fortnight with the Tongan community in Fiji when in October 1842 his fleet of canoes was blown off course and fetched up on the shores of Lakeba. During his stay, Tāufa`āhau consulted the unofficial leaders of the Lauan Tongans, Sefanaia Lualala and his cousins, the brothers Lasike and Tupou Toutai. Lualala was also a first cousin, through his Fijian mother Vuturogo, of the Tui Nayau, Taliai Tupou. The Tongans on Lakeba had long caused disruption on the island, taking “unwarrantable liberties with the Fijians’ property and even with their persons”. Tāufa`āhau, who had conveyed several Christian teachers to Samoa, was urged by missionary James Calvert to devote his pastoral energies to Fiji, whose needs Calvert considered much greater than Samoa’s. Calvert urged the king to persuade Lasike, whose influence in both Lakeba and Bau was considerable, to involve himself in the Lord’s work. At the missionary’s urging, Tāufa`āhau and Lasike engaged in a lengthy and outwardly cordial kava session. Several weeks later Lasike, acting at Tupou’s suggestion, called a vono, or council, in a fruitless attempt to bring the Tongans under proper control. That task was one Ma`afu was later to accomplish.

Five years later, Tāufa`āhau was well aware of the continuing volatile nature of the Tongan community on Lakeba and elsewhere in Fiji and of the potential threat that community posed for the fragile peace established in Tonga. The accommodation he achieved with Lasike and Tupou Toutai is especially significant in that their father, Tupou Niua of Vava`u, had been murdered by Tupouto`a, Tāufa`āhau’s own father. While the potential for continued hostility was great, both sides were aware of the value of peace. Tāufa`āhau, if he were to achieve his ambition of uniting Tonga under his own rule, could not afford to antagonise the Lauan Tongans, and more especially their leaders, who had good reasons for distrustng him, or even for showing open hostility. Lasike and his brother were renowned fighters, whose alliance with the ruling family of Lakeba was of great value to Tui Nayau in keeping the matanitu of Bau and Cakaudrove at a distance. Their presence on Lakeba, and that of their followers,

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meant that Bau, to whose rulers the Tongans were usually loyal, would have no reason to go to war against the Lakeban state. But Tāufaʻāhau’s star, in 1842, was clearly on the ascendant in Tonga, while Lasike and Tupou Toutai were in turn aware of their own need for his good will. So the accommodation was reached, and it proved to be lasting. Following Tāufaʻāhau’s accession as Tuʻi Kānokupolu and ruler of a united Tonga in 1845, he appeared not to consider that the Tongans in Fiji posed an active threat to his rule.

Lakeba has been depicted as a “rallying place for disaffected chiefs, restless warriors and adventurers from Tonga,” a description that could convey the impression that the displaced Tongans gathered on Lakeba were all refugees from Tupou’s regime in Tonga. Despite active hostility to Tāufaʻāhau among some chiefs of Vava’u, there is no evidence that, in 1847, any of the “disaffection” on Lakeba manifested itself in open hostility to Tupou. There is similarly no suggestion that Maʻafu, in the year he arrived in Fiji, sought to enlist the support of his fellow countrymen in order to foment dissension or rebellion at home. Suggestions that Maʻafu then yearned for power in Tonga ignore the realities of the country’s power structure. Aleamotua’s naming of Tāufaʻāhau as his successor was a formality: Tāufaʻāhau was hau and had possessed absolute power for some 18 years. Moreover, he enjoyed the unequivocal support of Tonga’s Wesleyan missionaries, most of the Christian chiefs and even some of their heathen counterparts. Although the new king faced intermittent challenges to his power until 1852, his position was never under serious threat. Maʻafu would have been rash indeed to challenge him, even had he wished to do so. He appears to have rebuffed an overture from the Tuʻi Tonga, the one person who might have been able to pose a serious threat to the king. While some might have seen Maʻafu, who was a generation younger than Tupou, as a future Tuʻi Kānokupolu, the constraints upon him following his father’s death were severe. Questions of Realpolitik aside, the legal restraints on chiefs in Tonga following Tāufaʻāhau’s accession as Tuʻi Kānokupolu were considerable. The first Tongan Code of Laws, adopted on Tongatapu under Tāufaʻāhau’s rule, placed distinct limitations on the power of the chiefs. Among the Code’s provisions was the requirement to remain loyal to the government which, at this early stage of Tonga’s constitutional development, effectively meant the king. The notion that, during the years immediately following his father’s death, Maʻafu harboured ambitions in Tonga and sought assistance from among the Tongans living in Fiji cannot be sustained. If he sought to escape the restraints of Tāufaʻāhau’s régime, he could only sail away.

21 Derrick, History..., 127. See also Basil Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister, Edinburgh and London 1894, 361.
22 After his accession as Tuʻi Kānokupolu, Tāufaʻāhau came to be known as Tupou I. In this work, he is referred to as Tupou in any context after 1845.
Finally, other reasons for Ma`afu’s coming to Fiji may be considered in passing. The Wesleyan missionaries there are said to have applied to Tāufa`āhau for help in controlling the Tongans in Lau, and in response the king sent over his young cousin.\(^{23}\) Ma`afu, meanwhile, fretting for adventure, supposedly asked the king if he could proceed to Lakeba “on a canoe-building voyage” which would last for several years and allow him to indulge in a little adventure on the side.\(^{24}\) In view of Ma`afu’s strained relations, to say the least, with Thomas and the other missionaries in Tonga, it is hardly likely that the king would have asked him, of all people, to help the Wesleyans in Fiji. A canoe-building expedition was in accordance with the tradition of young Tongans of high rank voyaging to Fiji, with their followers, for sojourns of varying lengths. There is evidence, which will be considered later, that the building and repair of canoes indeed played a part in Ma`afu’s participation in the voyage, although the notion that he sought permission for some adventure on the side may safely be eschewed. Leaving canoes aside, all other hypotheses concerning his motives have two things in common: they are based on no contemporary evidence and they beg the question as to why Ma`afu really did come to Fiji.

The islands of Lau, dotted across the sea between Fiji and Tonga and forming part of Fiji, present a face different from that of Fiji’s larger landmasses. When walking southwards along the road through Lomaloma village, on the island of Vanuabalavu in northern Lau, the visitor unwittingly crosses into the village of Sawana. Unwittingly, because there is no sign, fence or any other physical evidence of the boundary, as there once was. Yet Sawana is another place, a village whose history is written in the faces of its people. They are mostly of Tongan descent, with many still speaking Tongan, although few now regard it as their mother tongue. Their ancestors in most cases came to Vanuabalavu during the time when Ma`afu lived there as Tui Lau. Similarly, on Lakeba, the chiefly island of Lau, the faces of the people are different, but in another way. They are of a hue lighter than those of most other Fijians; here, in contrast to Vanuabalavu, Fijian and Tongan have become one. Miscegenation has resulted in a people of different appearance, whose language, a dialect of Fijian, contains many Tongan words in everyday use. The Tongan influence on Lakeba, Vanuabalavu and most other islands of Lau has been profound and is of long standing. Ma`afu’s advent in these islands in 1847 must be seen as part of a mosaic whose first pieces were fitted into place centuries before.

First contacts between the two groups began in prehistoric times, during the first settlement of western Polynesia.\(^{25}\) Following European penetration of the

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Pacific, Tonga was, until the nineteenth century, better known to Europeans than was Fiji, with European visitors to Tonga sometimes informed that Fiji was a mountainous land inhabited by cannibals. On his second visit to Tonga in 1777, James Cook recorded that the many parrot feathers he saw there “all come from Fidgee, as also some of their finest striped and chequered [bark] cloth and a few other articles”. Red parrots “abounded in Taveuni, where they were caught by nets, and purchased by the Tongans, who traded with them in exchange for the fine mats of the Samoans”. There also came, “along with the many male spouses … other goods associated with males including bowls and neck rests made of wood, and slit gongs”. Trading opportunities had been a principal motivation for Tongans to visit Fiji for centuries before large numbers of them, responding to unrest at home, began making the voyage during the closing years of the eighteenth century. According to an oral tradition on Lakeba, many Tongans came to settle there during the early nineteenth century, under the auspices of Lauhitu, the Tongan wife of the then Tui Nayau, Ratu Rasolo, father of Talaii Tupou. Among the many other links between the two groups, the most significant, for Ma`afu at least, were dynastic in nature.

In the traditional polity of Tonga, the highest-ranking title was that of the Tu`i Tonga. Once his secular functions had been absorbed by the hau, at first the Tu`i Ha`atakalaua and, later, the Tu`i Kānokupolu, the Tu`i Tonga became “the quintessence and symbolic embodiment of the nation”. Despite his august rank, his sisters were ranked even higher, which meant that a method had to be devised for arranging marriages for them so that they and their children did not threaten the privileged position of the Tu`i Tonga. Tongan tradition holds that in the early seventeenth century, Sinaitekala, the older sister of Fatafehi, Tu`i Tonga at the time, was accorded the special title of Tu`i Tonga Fefine. Her spouse was a Fijian, known in Tonga as Tapu`osi, a chief from the village of Waciwaci on Lakeba. It has been estimated that this union occurred “about Tasman’s time”, that is during the first half of the seventeenth century. At about the same time, Fatafehi took as his spouse Kaloafutonga, sister of Ngata, founder of the Tu`i

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30. A.C. Reid, “Notes on some Fijian hereditary titles”, TPFS, Vol. 10, 1969, 47. Talaii Tupou was the son of Tuidravu, another wife of Rasolo.
32. E.W. Gifford, Tongan Society, Honolulu 1929, 34.
Ma’aftu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

Kānokupolu line. More significantly, Kaloafūtonga was a daughter of the Tuʻi Haʻatakalaua. The descendants of both these unions altered the nature of the Tongan hierarchy and forged stronger ties between Tonga and Fiji.

The son of Sinaitakala and Tapuʻosi, Fonomanu, was the first in Tonga to carry the title of Tuʻi Lakepa, a name derived from his father's island of birth. He was the founder of the Fale Fisi, or house of Fiji, whose members were considered as a separate category of chiefs, an innovation in the Tongan polity. Fonomanu's cousin Fonokimoana was called the Tamaha, or “sacred child”. As the daughter of the Tuʻi Tonga Fefine, she enjoyed the highest rank of any person in Tonga, a position fraught with dynastic implications. Thenceforward, it became the practice of the Tuʻi Tonga Fefine, always the oldest full sister of the Tuʻi Tonga, to seek their spouses from among the senior ranks of the Fale Fisi. In each generation, children of such unions, because of their quasi-foreign Fijian origins, were considered to be outside the system, even though they outranked the Tuʻi Tonga. They can be regarded as holding too high a rank for any office, or to be in a special sacred category. As one scholar has rightly observed, “this neutralisation of the descendants of the Tuʻi Tonga Fefine was clearly a political device”, 33 designed to ensure the survival of the Tuʻi Tonga's paramount position.

Chart 1: Links between Lakeba and the offices of Tuʻi Tonga Fefine and Tuʻi Kānokupolu.

Source: Author's depiction

A further dynastic affiliation came into being when the third Tuʻi Kānokupolu, Mataeletuʻapiko, gave his daughter Toafilimoeʻunga to a Lakeban chief named Paleisasa, son of the Tui Nayau, Delaivugalei. Pupuaʻuliliʻuli, daughter

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of Toafilimoe`unga and Paleisasa, was a wife of Ma`afu`otu`itonga, sixth Tu`i Känokupolu, who succeeded about 1730. Their son Mumui was father of Aleamotu`a and grandfather of Ma`afu.34

![Genealogical Chart]

**Chart 2: Ma`afu’s descent from the Tui Nayau family of Lakeba.**

*Source: Author’s depiction*

In the wake of Tapu`osi’s emigration to Tonga, other Lakebans followed the chief’s example. Prominent among them was one Pupu Tui Soso, chief of Nukunuku village in Lakeba. Arriving in Tonga with Paleisasa, Pupu later adopted and brought up one of Paleisasa’s sons, who was later known as Tu`i Vakano. Pupu and his entourage settled on land from where the mother of his adopted son originally came; the titleholder of this estate is still called Tu`i Vakano. There has been a long tradition that the Tu`i Vakano has the “responsibility to provide a guard, dressed and armed in Fijian fashion, at installations of the Tu`i Känokupolu.”35 Ever since Täufa`ahau was invested in this office in 1845, the reigning monarch has formally held the title of Tu`i Känokupolu. When, in 1918, Queen Säloti was installed in the traditional office,

She was preceded by a man who ran ahead, brandishing a spear, crouching and looking around. During the kava ceremony, he was free of all restrictions. He smoked, lounged and walked close before and behind the Queen’s person and when the pig’s liver was placed before

34 Bott, 145, 152. Popua`uli`uli was also known as Kavakipopua.
Ma’afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

her he impaled it on his spear … This man … a herald … comes from one of the traditional foreign clans. It is said that a man named Soakai, also Fijian, had similar rights in the Tu`i Tonga’s kava circle.36

Such profane behaviour from anyone else in the presence of the Tu`i Kānokupolu would have ensured the perpetrator’s immediate death in pre-Christian Tonga. It was tolerated at the ceremony because the “herald” was considered as a foreigner, a person who was not bound to respect the hallowed ritual and the lofty status of all the other participants. Evidence that in today’s Tonga the foreign character of the Fale Fisi and other noble houses of Fijian origin has become somewhat diluted came in 1967 at the installation of King Tāufa’āhau Tupou IV as Tu`i Kānokupolu, when the then Tui Soso from Nukunuku was invited down to perform the same ceremonial function. Tonga’s links with Lakeba are not forgotten.37

The islands of Lau, while part of Fiji, form a transitional zone between that country’s heartland and the neighbouring archipelagos of Tonga. The absorption over several centuries of thousands of Tongans, with their cultural and linguistic baggage, was enhanced by the islands’ geography. From north to south they cover a distance of over 450 kilometres, with the distance between each island usually less than 50 kilometres. Most islands rise to heights of more than 100 metres. Navigation between them has always been facilitated by this intervisibility, while for navigators sailing from a distance, the Lauan islands present a large target. One authority has proposed that a meaning of the word lau in a local dialect is “hitting the target”.38 Such a connotation, if correct, could well owe its derivation to canoe voyaging.

The map of Lau shows the archipelago’s three sub groups: in the north, the Exploring Isles, of which Vanuaabalau, the future home of Ma’afu, is the chief; in the west the Yasayasa Moala, comprising Moala itself, Totoya, Matuku and Vanua Vatu; while in the centre and south lie the islands of southern Lau, or Lau-i-Cake, centred on Lakeba and stretching to Ono-i-Lau in the far south. It is in Lau-i-Cake, many of whose islands are closer to Tonga than they are to Viti Levu, that the strongest sailing tradition has existed in recorded times. These islands were early and for long exposed to visitors, marauders and settlers from Tonga. One of their chief attractions was a heavy hardwood known in Fijian as vesi, which does not occur naturally in Tonga. Always the preferred wood for canoe construction in southern Lau, vesi is characterised by strength, natural durability, low shrinkage and good seasoning qualities. Because of its heaviness, vesi requires almost a year to dry out after cutting before its buoyancy is sufficient.

37 Reid, 7, n. 26.
for the construction of canoe hulls. This requirement was one reason why Tongans who came to Lau to construct large ocean-going canoes often needed to stay for several years. Most of the canoe builders went initially to Vulaga, in southern Lau, where a lineage of Tongan carpenters known as Tiafau had settled. They remained specialists in their craft, relying on their host community for food, a habit their fellow countrymen were to emulate elsewhere in Fiji. While vesi grew well on Vulaga, it was even more abundant on Kabara, a little to the west. A strong canoe-building tradition existed on these and other islands of Lau well before the eighteenth century, when Tongans began voyaging to Fiji in much greater numbers, bringing a new technology with them. Their carpenters were able to utilise the adze and the chisel to exploit vesi on a much larger scale. The camakau or sailing canoe of Lau was developed in Tonga into the hamatafua, or voyaging canoe, directly as a consequence of increased contact with Lau. The design of the hamatafua was probably developed by Tongan carpenters working in Lau, where the availability of vesi and other timbers, as well as their own skill in working with timber, led to this adaptation of Fijian design superior to anything known in Tonga.

Missionary Thomas Williams, a student of Fijian ethnology, noted the “clumsy and hardly manageable” nature of the tongiaki, the Tongan double canoe. When he lived in Fiji, this craft had been superseded by the larger double-hulled kalia, itself based on the Fijian drua. He compared the tongiaki to its Fijian counterpart in the same way as a “coal barge” might be compared to a “clipper yacht”. “Not the slightest change has been made in the model thus adopted”, Williams stated, “now … used for more than a century by the best seamen in these regions; but the Tonguese have the praise of executing the several parts with superior care and finish”. By the nineteenth century, when they were under construction in Lau, the kalia had become the Tongans’ principal means of voyaging to Fiji. The platform between the kalia’s two hulls featured a small “house” in its centre, for storage of cargo and shelter for some passengers during inclement weather. Such vessels, the largest of which could carry up to 150 people, carried uncounted numbers of Tongans between their islands and Fiji.

39 See Gillett for a detailed discussion of canoe construction methods using vesi and other timbers.
41 Williams, Journal of Thomas Williams…, 90 (28 June 1842).
43 Clunie, 33–39.
44 Alfred C. Haddon and James Hornell, Canoes of Oceania, Vol. 3, Honolulu 1938, 262–263.
45 Williams and Calvert, 64; David Cargill to GS, WMMS, 18 Jun 1839, quoted in David Cargill, The Diaries and Correspondence of David Cargill 1823–1843, ed. by Albert J. Schultz, Canberra 1977, 61.
46 For detailed descriptions of kalia see Thomas West, Ten Years in South-Central Polynesia, London 1865, 48–50 and Haddon and Hornell, 272 et seq.
Craft such as the *kalia* were of great economic importance to Lau. In the 1840s it was written of them: “[They] may be almost considered the staple commodity of the islands. The Friendly Islanders are in the habit of coming down with their families for the purpose of buying or building them”.\(^47\) The shipwrecked sailor John Twyning, writing of the same period, said: “The King of Lakeba derives considerable advantage from the islands’ timber, in permitting the inhabitants of the Friendly and other islands to build their canoes in his dominions. He provides the persons building them with provisions during the time they are constructing, and receives in return, muskets, hatchets, whales’ teeth, kava roots and such other articles as are either useful or desirable to him”.\(^48\) Because the craftsmen, other workers and their families required support from their host communities, an economic organisation involving other islands, besides those on which the Tongans lived, was needed. The profits to be made from canoe construction, exemplified by the trading arrangements described, were tempered by the need, not only to feed and house the “visitors”, but also to keep them under at least a modicum of control. As the demands of warfare increased, first in Tonga from the late 1830s and in Fiji owing to the struggles between the rival *matanitu* of Bau, Rewa and Cakaudrove until 1855, so too did the construction of *drua* increase. The political implications of these developments were great, as were the concomitant economic changes. In mid nineteenth century Fiji, the Tongans formed an integral part of the islands’ evolving polity and of their increasingly complex economy.

Tongan colonisation of eastern Fiji began in earnest during the final decades of the eighteenth century, when the complex balance of power in Tonga was beginning to disintegrate. Fiji was considered as more than a refuge from civil war and political turbulence at home. Its chief attraction was its maritime technology, with the consequence that many of the temporary settlements there became permanent, including especially those on Lakeba, whose ruling house was of part-Tongan descent. The former site of the island’s chiefly village, Tubou, was first occupied by a Tongan camp, while the name Tubou is itself of Tongan origin. The people of Tubou moved to the village’s present site, on the southern shore of the island, only in the late 1860s, during the reign of Taliai Tupou as Tui Nayau. Almost a kilometre up the Nakula stream, which divides Tubou from Levuka village, lies the site of the former village of Nakorovusa, abandoned for present-day Tubou.\(^49\)

At the time of Ma’afu’s arrival, the Lakeban state included all the islands of central and southern Lau. Vanuabalavu and smaller nearby islands owed allegiance to

\(^{49}\) Hocart, 10. Only a few house mounds remain visible at the site of the former village.
Cakaudrove, the matanitu that also included Taveuni and the eastern third of Vanua Levu. Through most of Lau the Tongans had, to varying degrees, become assimilated into their host communities. This process, continuing at the time of European contact, often involved marriage into Fijian families, giving many of the Tongans and their descendants access to land. The Tongans’ involvement in canoe building and in trade ensured their incorporation into the economic base of Lau well before Ma`afu ventured into their midst.

During the two decades before Ma`afu came to live in Fiji, some Tongan chiefs on Lakeba had participated in raids on Vanuabalavu and elsewhere in Cakaudrove, while Tanoa, the Vunivalu of Bau, who was forced into exile in 1833, was reinstated four years later with Tongan help. Prominent among the Tongans who aided Tanoa were Lasike and Tupou Toutai. They had reached Fiji in 1833 when, with a large number of followers, they sailed from Vava`u to Somosomo in Taveuni in order to build several canoes to be used in aid of Tanoa’s efforts to regain control of Bau. Tanoa is supposed to have given his Tongan supporters permission to settle anywhere in Fiji. He had neither the right nor the power to grant such permission, which in any case Lasike, Tupou Toutai and his followers scarcely required. Lasike, who remained a faithful ally of Bau, went to Lakeba to oversee the building of a very large canoe for use by Bau against Somosomo. He and his brother typify the depth of Tongan involvement in Fijian political affairs for more than a decade before Ma`afu’s arrival in the islands.

Apparently always faithful to the accord he had achieved with Tāufā`āhau over the kava bowl, Lasike accompanied over 1,000 Tongans who arrived in Lakeba in June 1845, when another large canoe was under construction. This one was intended for Tāufā`āhau, who succeeded as Tu`i Kānokupolu only six months later. The canoe, built at Kabara, finally reached Lakeba in December 1845, an indication that the strategic alliance between Tāufā`āhau and the Tongan power base in Lau, fostered in 1842, was working well. What remained unclear were the future relations between Bau, Lakeba and Tonga, the last now unified under Tāufā`āhau. Between all three of these entities alliance, implied threats and ill-concealed hostility had existed for several decades in an ever-changing kaleidoscope.

Because of their rank and leadership roles among the Tongans in Fiji, Lasike and his brother are better documented than other Tongans then living there. They might nevertheless be said to represent the many Tongan chiefs who sought

50 The Vunivalu, whose title means “root of war”, should be distinguished from Roko Tui Bau, the sacred or paramount chief of Bau. The Vunivalu was effectively the secular ruler of Bau.
51 John Eagleston, Logbook of HMS Emerald, 18 Sep 1834. See also Wilkes, 55.
54 Lyth, Journal, 4 Jun 1845; Lyth, Day Book, 8 Dec 1845.
either refuge or adventure in Fiji, chiefs who, with their followers, were to play a crucial role, especially on Lakeba, in the spread of Christianity. William Cross and David Cargill, the first European missionaries to work in Fiji, were heavily dependent on the Tongan community on Lakeba, from whose ranks their first Lakeban converts came and whose members built Lakeba’s first Christian church. Among the earliest Fijian converts was Vuetasau, son of the former Tui Nayau, Malani and nephew of the incumbent ruler, Taliai Tupou. Vuetasau, part Tongan by descent, adopted the Christian name of William on his baptism in 1846. He oversaw the building of a chapel at Tubou and the establishment of the first school in Lakeba, begun in his house in 1850. For a man who, before his conversion, boasted 16 wives, his commitment to the *lotu* was certain to earn missionary approval as an example to his fellow Fijians. Despite their early reliance on the Tongans, however, the missionaries soon despaired of the community. In 1842, Calvert observed that while the Lakeba Tongans were “lounging about in Fiji, some … of their families are in Tonga in want, or dependent upon others”.

Fiji in the 1840s consisted of seven *matanitu*, or confederations, possessing varying degrees of independence and all inherently unstable because of the changing demands of alliance and war, as well as uncertain succession. Not counted among the seven was Lau, centred on Lakeba, whose prominence among the small, scattered islands Williams ascribed to its Tongan connection. Whatever the truth of that assertion, Tui Nayau’s dominions in 1847 extended from the island of Cicia to Ono-i-Lau. In view of its allegiance to Bau, Lau is not usually considered as an “independent” *matanitu* in the manner of Bau itself or of Cakaudrove, to which parts of Lau also owed some measure of allegiance. The complex and shifting relationship between Lau and those two *matanitu* was further disrupted through the involvement of the Lakeba-based Tongans, firstly in the restoration of Tanoa to power in Bau and later by their raids on Vanuabalavu and some nearby islands then under the suzerainty of Cakaudrove. Nevertheless, the power of Bau remained real enough in Lakeba, at least in the 1840s. Williams recorded in 1843 that “a [Lakeban] tribute fleet left for Bau, taking one immense canoe, fifteen rolls of bark cloth, whales’ teeth and (for

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56 Lyth, Day Book, 26 Jan 1846.
57 Calvert to GS, WMMS, 17 Dec 1846, WMMS Australasia Correspondence, Box 5, Fiji 1835–1843; The Report for the Work of God in the Lakeba Circuit for the Half Year ending June 1846, WMMS Fiji and Friendly Islands District Meeting Minutes 1827–1852; Lyth, Journal, 28 Feb 1850.
58 Lyth, Tongan and Fijian Reminiscences, 890.
60 Williams, Miscellaneous Notes chiefly concerning Feejee and Feejeeans, unpagedinated.
3. "A fast ignorant vain young man"

Tanoa’s domestic establishment) Radi Tagici, the king’s favourite daughter”.

In addition, Ratu Mara Kapaiwai, who was usually Bau’s emissary to Lakeba, possessed vasu rights on the island. Even without the complicating factors of the Tongans and the new faith that followed them, Tui Nayau had to tread warily indeed.

Lakeba’s changing relations with both Bau and Cakaudrove are a reminder that the balance of power between Fiji’s matanitu had always been fluid. Traditional loyalties seldom counted for much if they conflicted with the need for survival. The Tongans, whose presence in Fiji in the middle of the nineteenth century was to determine the outcome of the struggle for supremacy between Bau and Rewa, had become a force in Fiji comparable to the most powerful matanitu. When in April 1840, a force of Tongans landed at Bau, they were offered tribute in the form of slaughtered and live pigs, vegetables and yams. Such tribute, fully in accordance with the Fijian tradition of acknowledging the realities of power, illustrated the degree of Tongan involvement in the islands. What no one could predict in 1840, with the unity of Tonga and the supremacy of Tāufa`āhau still to be achieved, were the implications of this undeniable Tongan power. The reception given to the Tongans at Bau was typical of the respect shown to loyal allies, and none was more loyal than Lasike and Tupou Toutai. Their unexpected meeting with Tāufa`āhau and Lualala on Lakeba in 1842 was of fundamental importance in determining the future direction of Tongan authority in Fiji. In making Bau almost their second home, the Tongans had clearly allied themselves to power. Were they intent only on serving their allies’ interests or were the implications of the alliance more far-reaching?

The tribute offered by Bau was more than a reward for Tongan military assistance. It was also a tacit acknowledgement of Tongan power and of the implicit challenge that power posed to Bau’s precarious ascendancy in Fiji. The family of Tui Nayau continued to acknowledge allegiance to Bau, even though the relationship between them could not have existed independently of the Tongans. When Tagici suffered ill treatment and humiliation at the hands of her Bauan hosts, she returned to Lakeba, where her arrival prompted Cakobau, Tanoa’s son and ultimate successor, to complain to the visiting Tāufa`āhau “that his Lakeba vassals had not kept their engagement concerning Tagici”. He promised that “if they send her back [from Lakeba] with the tribute, then he would give his free consent to her returning home”. Forced briefly to return to Bau, Tagici was soon restored to Lakeba, after intervention by Tāufa`āhau. The Lakebans had sought to resolve the impasse by delaying their customary tribute to a waning Bau. It is significant that the matter was resolved only with Tongan help.

61 Williams, Journal of Thomas Williams..., 145–146 (1 Feb 1843).
63 Williams and Calvert, 310–314.
In preserving his power in Lau, Tui Nayau could not afford to ignore Cakaudrove, especially as Bau’s supremacy was no longer assured. In 1839, Tui Nayau sent Lasike to Somosomo, the chiefly town of Cakaudrove, to ascertain what intentions Yavala, Tui Cakau held towards Lakeba.\footnote{Calvert, Journal, 17 Aug 1839; Lyth, Journal, 23 Aug 1839.} Tui Nayau appeared to feel threatened by Cakaudrove, to which Lakeba had long paid tribute. Two years later, it was thought necessary on Lakeba to prepare earthworks as a defence against an expected attack from Cakaudrove, an attack that never eventuated.\footnote{Lyth, Journal, 24 Jun 1841.} Then, in 1846, two alarms occurred during the same month. Tui Nayau again ordered Tubou fortified when, on 8 January, a canoe arrived at Lakeba from Bau with the news that Bau intended to make war on the island.\footnote{ibid., 8 Jan 1846.} On 31 January, another canoe arrived, this time from Vanuabalavu. Its occupants informed Tui Nayau that Tuikilakila, a son of Tui Cakau, was on the point of “visiting” Lakeba “in search of property” which, according to oral tradition in Lakeba, was a war canoe.\footnote{T.R. St Johnston, \textit{South Sea Reminiscences}, London 1922, 116.} Tui Nayau sent an emissary to Vanuabalavu to soro, “so that the chief may not come … the land is poor at present”.\footnote{ibid.}

Whatever threats, real and imaginary, Lakeba felt from Bau and Cakaudrove, the omnipresent Tongans acquired additional menace after 1845, when the nominal unity of their homeland was achieved. With the king more powerful than ever, the pressure on Tui Nayau and other Lauan chiefs to accept the \textit{lotu} became greater. Among the Fijian \textit{matanitu}, Bau still posed the greatest threat towards the Lakeban state. Allied to Bau and to the threat it represented were the Tongans, who remained allies so long as the power and prestige of Bau’s rulers offered sufficient incentive. In Lau, the reality of Tongan power meant that Lakeba, for so long faced with the dilemma of how to placate one potential enemy without offending another, no longer had to make a choice. The Tongans were at once Lakeba’s salvation and its nemesis.

Allied to the growing Tongan presence in Lau was Christianity, which had gained its first precarious toehold in Fiji through the missionary Isireli Takai, who had originally gone to Tahiti “for instruction respecting Christianity” at the request of Malani, then Tui Nayau.\footnote{Williams, \textit{Journal of Thomas Williams}…, 110–111 (13 Nov 1842).} Despite the interest Malani vouchsafed for the \textit{lotu}, he told one of the ships’ captains who brought Takai and his Tahitian friends to Fiji in 1832 that he felt unable to convert.\footnote{John Davies to Foreign Secs, LMS, Dec 1832, LMS SSL, Box 8, Folder 6.} The autonomy of the Lakeban state was too precarious for Malani to contemplate upsetting the delicate balance by adopting an alien faith. The removal of Takai to Oneata, an island subject to Lakeba, possibly resulted from Malani’s essentially political need to distance
him from the bearers of the lotu. After Malani’s death in 1833, his younger brother Taliai Tupou, who succeeded as Tui Nayau, was occupied in ensuring that his authority was not undermined by Fiji’s endemic instability. The Tongans on Lakeba, some of them at least nominal Christians, kept the flickering flame of the lotu alive in Fiji until the English Wesleyans became established. This new dimension to the Tongan presence was to play a significant part in the steps Ma’afu would take in extending his future power in Lau.

The new Tui Nayau had never been a favourite with missionaries, being described by Thomas Jaggar as “a great persecutor … [who] murdered an aunt and strangled his own mother”.71 Like his predecessor, Taliai Tupou articulated essentially political reasons for his unwillingness to convert. Professing to David Cargill his belief in Jehovah as the only true God and intimating that he would lotu at some future time, Taliai Tupou nevertheless expressed a strong “fear lest the inhabitants of those islands which are not subject to him should make war upon him, or lest some of those Chiefs who submit to his authority should be displeased at his renunciation of the religion of Feejee, and dethrone him”.72 Although there was a growing Christian congregation on Lakeba, most of them were Tongan.73 Tui Nayau’s prevarication, arising from his awareness of the political implications of conversion, came to the fore when the United States Exploring Expedition was visiting Lakeba: he informed Lieutenant-Commander Ringgold that he would convert after Tanoa’s death.74 Six years later, Tui Nayau’s daughter and her husband Lualala, chief of Waciwaci village, publicly urged him, unsuccessfully, to embrace Christianity.75 Able as he was to articulate his dilemma, Taliai Tupou was as far as ever from resolving it.

Among the Tongans living on Lakeba were several who were to become unwitting, not to say unwilling, allies of Tongan political power: the teachers and the so-called Native Assistant Missionaries. Six of the more prominent among them, including Joeli Bulu, Jone Havea and Tāufa’āhau’s brother-in-law Suliaisi Naulivou, had reached Lakeba from Vava’u in June 1838.76 The presence of these men, chosen in Tonga by missionary Dr Richard Lyth, doubtless helped to inspire the erection of a new chapel at Bucainabua, near Tubou, built by Tongans with some Fijian assistance and opened in October 1838.77 It was men such as these teachers and assistant missionaries who earned the praise

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71 Thomas Jaggar, Fiji Journal, 23 Dec 1838, PMB 1185.
72 Cargill, Memoirs…, 111–112.
73 ibid., 125–126.
74 Wilkes, 174.
of Walter Lawry, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions, when he visited Lakeba in 1847, the year of Ma`afu’s arrival. He saw the Tongan religious leaders, with their quasi-European ways, as harbingers of Christian civilisation in a savage land. But Lawry was only a visitor; resident missionaries such as Calvert and Cross were well aware of the distinction to be drawn between resident Tongan teachers and their fellow countrymen who descended on Lakeba and other islands of Lau for periods of varying length, usually doing little or no work and requiring support from their host communities. Calvert articulated the menace posed by the Tongan community on Lakeba:

Many of the Tonguese, if they are what they call themselves – Christians – are idle, covetous, impudent roaming Christians. Not many months ago 15 large canoes, with perhaps 1000 Tonguese on board, left Feejee for Tonga. Some of them had been in Feejee two years, or more … During their stay, they were principally dependent upon the Feejeeans for food, none of which they purchased – but have been given, begged, and in some cases stolen. They came to Feejee in search of canoes, sails, earthenware, sandalwood etc. and I suppose they did not take less than 400 wooden bowls with them to Tonga.

From the immense property which they secured in Feejee – and for the awful quantity of food they ate – they brought very little property. Their living idle and very poor in these lands for a long time had a bad effect on Feejee. … The injury they receive and do by these visits would be greatly lessened if they had comfortable homes, and some profitable employment in their own land…

The dilemma posed by the Tongan presence in Lau remained a preoccupation of the missionaries. Lyth, who reached Fiji from Tonga in 1839, recorded in 1846 his pain at Tui Nayau’s “vacillating character” and “lack of moral resolution”. Several months later, the missionary’s zeal remained unrequited: “the King … some months ago appeared to be on the point of turning, but has relapsed … into a settled state of heathenism”. Even as the missionary recorded his frustrations, the Tongans were helping Tui Nayau along the road to a final decision. “Most of the Tonguese settlers here have been away since December, having gone to assist Thakobau and Tuikilakila against Natewa”. Lyth, like many other missionaries, could not appreciate that Christianity prospered or not according to the imperatives of Fijian culture and the exigencies of political

78 Walter Lawry, Friendly and Feejee Islands: A missionary visit to various stations in the South Seas in the Year 1847, London 1850, 95.
79 Calvert to GS, WMMS, 14 Nov 1842, WMMS LFF.
80 Lyth, Journal, 12 Jan 1846.
82 ibid.
reality. Cargill at least recognised the political implications of any decision by Tui Nayau to “turn”. The ruler did not exist in a moral vacuum, as Lyth apparently believed. Rather, he participated in a dialectic that would, in the fullness of time, convince him to *lotu*, for the preservation of his power rather than for the salvation of his soul.

The accommodation reached between Tāufaʻāhau and the Tongan leaders on Lakeba in 1842 was seriously called into question when Lasike, who had assumed his family title of Finau, died in December 1844. Calvert described the Tongans then as being in “an awful state”, a reference to their spiritual condition, but he was also well aware of the possible consequences of Lasike’s passing. When news of the death reached Tāufaʻāhau in Tonga, he wrote to Cakobau concerning relations between their two countries. His letter, brought to Fiji by his brother Lausiʻi, passed through Calvert’s hands in December 1845. Since Lausiʻi had broken the seal, the missionary was able to read the king’s words. So concerned was Calvert about the letter’s implications, he alerted his colleague and friend, missionary John Hunt, who was stationed at Viwa. Calvert believed that Tāufaʻāhau had long wished to challenge Bau and had refrained from doing so only because of Lasike’s support for Tanoa and Cakobau. He held this belief despite Lasike’s advice to him during 1844 that a challenge of sorts had actually been made. Hunt was also informed that Lasike, or Finau as Calvert referred to him, “often spoke much against George to Cakobau. Now that Finau is dead, George considers his way open to Bau”.

Calvert recalled Tāufaʻāhau’s words, directed to both Tanoa and Cakobau:

I write to you two, to thank you for your kindness to Tonguese who have frequently voyaged about Feejee. You have screened them in your kingdom. To whom, in the event of danger, should they look but to you two, while they are in your kingdom? Do not say, why do you send to other parts of Feejee, and not to us in … Lau … That is caused by the way of us Tonguese. Some are evil seeds. Your minds are dark, and know not these things. Cakobau, believe not their lies. They deceive you – lest we should sail to you, and you obtain property thereby. He is a deceiver – but that deceiver has escaped to the grave. Write to me, and let me know your mind. Love the missionaries. Forgive any wrong words in my letter – Believe me it is true.

As Calvert observed to his friend, the references to lies and deceit were directed against Finau. The missionary was apprehensive lest Finau’s surviving brother, Tupou Toutai, should attempt to influence Cakobau against Tāufaʻāhau. In

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83 Calvert to Brethren, 6 Dec 1844, Personal Papers.
84 Calvert to Hunt, 9 Dec 1845, Personal Papers.
85 ibid.
that event, “a dreadful eruption” would likely ensue between Tāufaʻāhau and the Tongans on Lakeba. Only the good sense of both Tupou Toutai and Lausiʻi prevented fighting between their respective followers, Calvert believed.

From Tāufaʻāhau’s letter, as recalled by Calvert, and from the missionary’s comments, it is not possible to determine what Tāufaʻāhau’s intentions were towards both Bau and the Lakeban state in the mid 1840s. It is clear that the king was vitally concerned to maintain his influence with the ruling chiefs of Bau and with the Tongans on Lakeba. He had written to Finau before receiving news of his death and now appeared most anxious to reassure Cakobau that he, Tāufaʻāhau, was the true voice of Tonga. The “lies” and “deceit” spread by Finau should, Tāufaʻāhau believed, be buried with him. It is surely significant that his letter was written during the final months of Aleamotuʻa’s life, a time when Tāufaʻāhau must have known that his succession as Tuʻi Kānokupolu and the union of all Tonga under his own rule could not be far distant. By coincidence, he was invested as Tuʻi Kānokupolu only a few days before Calvert’s letter to Hunt was written. Given Tāufaʻāhau’s need to consolidate his rule and to deal with the remaining chiefs who still opposed him at home, it is unlikely that he contemplated hostilities against any part of Fiji during the first years of his kingship. Nevertheless, his determination to enlarge his influence in both Bau and Lakeba could be seen as evidence of an intention to be more closely involved with Fiji in the future. For the present, however, any anxiety which Cakobau felt concerning Tāufaʻāhau’s intentions towards Bau would have been relieved by the friendly and respectful tone which the king adopted in his letter. But Cakobau needed to retain the support of Tupou Toutai, no friend of Tāufaʻāhau, and his followers, which he would likely lose if he embraced the Tongan king too warmly. His position was nothing if not delicate.

Further complications for Cakobau arose from Ratu Mara, who was indefatigable in his observance of the practice whereby chiefs obtained wives from districts where Bau possessed, or desired, supremacy. According to William Pritchard, the first British Consul in Fiji, “the object of Bau was to possess as many vasu to different districts as possible. A vasu has the right to appropriate anything belonging to the brothers of his mother, and can also claim the services of his uncle’s tribes in war”. Thomas Williams made mention of the vasu taukei, “a term applied to any vasu whose mother is a lady of the land in which he is born … a vasu taukei can claim anything belonging to a native of his mother’s land, excepting the wives, home and land of a chief. Vasus cannot be considered apart from the civil polity of Fiji … supplying the high pressure power of Fijian despotism”. Bau’s use of the vasu system to extend its influence was legitimate in terms of the polity of Fiji. Ratu Mara was a son of Vuibureta, a half-brother of

87 Williams and Calvert, 27.
3. “A fast ignorant vain young man”

Tanoa, and thus a classificatory brother to Cakobau. Mara’s mother, Adi Veisaca, daughter of a former Tui Nayau, ensured for him \textit{vasu} rights on Lakeba. The connection ran deeper still, since Vuibureta’s mother Ufia was also from Lakeba. Mara’s \textit{vasu} rights covered not only Lakeba, but also the Lauan islands subject to it. Mara was, in effect, \textit{vasu} to Lau, a position he was never loath to exploit.

Mara, always a stormy petrel and feared throughout Lau, was sometimes seen as a barometer of Bauan intentions and placated or resisted accordingly. To his chagrin, he was never accorded the respect shown to both Tanoa and Cakobau, probably because was always ruthless in his attempts to augment his personal power. Having long been thwarted by the Tongan community on Lakeba and in particular by their loyalty to Cakobau, he arrived on the island in late 1845 after several years of voyaging between Fiji and Tonga. His visits were always associated with Bau’s demands for tribute, demands which Tui Nayau, in response to Mara’s \textit{vasu} rights and to the Bauan power which those rights both represented and enhanced, could never deny. The best Lakeba could do was to keep up the supply of canoes, \textit{tabua}, \textit{masi} and sinnet and to fortify Tubou when attack threatened, as it did again at the end of 1845.\(^{88}\)

Reference has already been made to the lack of evidence for the earlier view that Tupou sent Ma`afu to Fiji in order to remove a potential rival for the kingship.\(^{89}\) The king nevertheless knew about and approved of Ma`afu’s voyage to Fiji since, in the established traditions of young Tongans of noble birth spending long periods in Fiji, Tongan chiefs of senior rank could order younger relatives or subordinates to make the voyage. Through his descent from Paleisasa, Ma`afu was related by blood to Tui Nayau, a kinship acknowledged whenever he visited Lakeba or any of its subject islands. The practice had long existed whereby young Tongan chiefs descended from Paleisasa spent time living with Tui Nayau’s family, acting as “courtiers and envoys”.\(^{90}\) This practice, so another oral tradition in Lakeba would have it, accounted for Ma`afu’s advent in 1847. Aleamotu`a had also visited Lakeba, very likely in keeping with his family links with the island, while his brother Lasike is known to have been on Lakeba in January 1839.\(^{91}\) When the two Tahitians Hape and Tafeta were detained at Nuku`alofa in 1826, Aleamotu`a declared that he had been to Lakeba and was a “friend” of Tui Nayau. It was in the capacity of a friend that “he took possession of the present intended for the Fijian chief”.\(^{92}\) The “present” was Christianity. LMS missionary John Williams referred to the “leadership role” accorded to

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88 Lyth, Day Book, 31 Dec 1845.
89 Modern scholarly opinion has cast doubt on this erroneous interpretation. See, for example, Campbell, Island Kingdom..., 72; Deryck Scarr, “Cakobau and Ma`afu: Contenders for Pre-eminence in Fiji” in J.W. Davidson and D.A. Scarr, eds, Pacific Island Portraits, Canberra 1970, 107.
90 Reid, 48, n. 76.
91 Thomas Jaggar, Fijian Journals and Letters, 1838–1846, PMB 1185, Jan 1839.
92 John Davies to Foreign Secs, LMS, 7 Sep 1827, LMS SSL, Box 6, Folder 10; Davies to Rev. J. Clayton, 24 Dec 1823, LMS SSL, Box 8, Folder 6.
Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

Tongatapu by the people of Lakeba and also to their acknowledgement of Aleamotu`a “as a kind of superior over them”. In paying yet another visit to Lakeba, Ma`afu was following a well-established family tradition, whereby young chiefs of the families of the Tu`i Kānokupolu in Tonga and the Tui Nayau in Lakeba “lived with the head of the other as a courtier, and supervised the ceremonial making of the chief’s yaqona, and acted as his envoy to convey commands to subject chiefs”. It appears that a clearly defined role awaited Ma`afu in Lau.

Ma`afu’s departure from Tonga in June 1847 was connected with the presence in the islands of Ratu Mara, who had been forced to flee Fiji about 18 months earlier. The reasons for his flight were outlined by his grandson, Gustav Mara Hennings, in 1910. Having indiscreetly admired a “fair princess”, already married, at Bau, Mara was duly banished. Pursued by a death sentence, he headed first for Lakeba, where he made use of his vasu rights to requisition a double canoe. He then set off for Tonga, accompanied by four young Lakeban chiefs and two from the island of Moce. When in Tonga, he supposedly became the friend and ally of Tupou, even helping him to escape a murder plot by the still heathen inhabitants of Houma.

Hennings’ account eulogises his grandfather and stresses his crucial role in preserving both the peace of Tonga and the person of the king. While still in Tonga in early 1847, Mara appeared to enjoy the tacit approval of John Thomas, who had long been one with Tupou in promoting the unity of Tonga as a Christian kingdom. In March, at a service at Sia on Tongatapu, five adults, including a Samoan chief, were baptised. “Feejeeans were present with their chief Marra”, Thomas recorded. By mid 1847, Mara was expected to return home in order to make his peace with Bau. In April, Calvert on Lakeba informed his “brethren”, Thomas Williams at Somosomo and Hunt at Viwa, concerning Mara’s return: “Mara is in Tonga. He is to be brought by George Tupou’s sons, etc, who are to be joined by the Lakeba people to sorovakina him to Bau”. The intention was that Mara should humble himself at Bau, acknowledge his past errors and beg forgiveness. Before his departure from Tonga, Mara visited the island of Tungua, in Ha`apai, the residence of the Tamaha, the eldest daughter of the Tu`i Tonga Fefine. Because of an ancient association, or tuvua, between Tungua and Moala, where Mara possessed vasu rights, the Tamaha presented Mara with “a great war canoe” in order to revive the relationship between the two islands. His return to Fiji was imminent.

93 John Williams, Journal of 1832 Voyage to Samoa, July 1832, LMS South Seas Journals 101, Box 7.
95 Gustav Mara Hennings, “Ratu Mara”, TFS, 1911, unpaginated.
96 Thomas, Journal, 28 Mar 1847.
97 Calvert to Brethren, 10 Apr 1847, Personal Papers.
According to Hennings, Tupou, wishing further to honour his departing guest, “ordered some of the highest chiefs in the land … to accompany Mara to Fiji”. Those chiefs included the king’s son Tevita `Unga, his brother Lausi`i, a chief called Moses Taufa and Ma`afu. Hennings’ account further states that although Ma`afu “may have visited Fiji before”, the circumstances of his coming in 1847, which led to the growth of his power and to his rivalry with Cakobau, were not well known. According to an oral tradition in Tonga, Ma`afu’s canoe, part of the folau escorting Mara, bore the Tongan name Hiki mo e falike, meaning, “to go away, taking with you everything you own, including the floor mats”. The canoe was later to be presented to Tui Cakau, a move fraught with implications for Ma`afu’s future power base in Vanuabalavu. In the immediate context of Ma`afu’s departure from Tonga, the name implied a clean break with the past. Ma`afu was heading for a new life.

In the light of the evidence, inconclusive though it is, that Ma`afu intended leaving Tonga for good, it is tempting to succumb to the romantic aura induced by the traditional name of Ma`afu’s canoe. Some caution is advised, however, since one of Ma`afu’s companions on the voyage suggested many years later that Ma`afu did plan to return. His matapule Tingea, when interviewed at Lomaloma by magistrate Charles Swayne shortly after Ma`afu’s death, stated that Ma`afu had come to Fiji to build some canoes and then to bring the folau back to Tonga. “Ma`afu agreed with Tai his mother [that she] should remain at home until his return and then sail for Samoa”, Tingea declared. When the canoes had been refasted and the folau was about to sail for Tonga, Ma`afu was invited to visit Matuku where a solevu was made for him. Tingea’s statements conflict with Ma`afu’s own account, to be considered later, that following his arrival in Lakeba, he remained there until he presented his canoe to Tui Cakau and accompanied that chief to Vanuabalavu.

Cautionary though Tingea’s account is, there is strong contemporary evidence that a canoe named Hiki mo e falike existed and was coveted by Tui Cakau. Thomas Williams, stationed at Somosomo in 1846, later recorded that one of the Tui Laucala’s daughters, a wife of Tui Cakau, had given birth to a daughter who was named Falike. Tui Cakau was much pleased with the child and made a great fuss of her. “At the time of her birth, the King [Tui Cakau] was fully set on securing the famous Tonga canoe, the Hiki mo e falike. As it appeared to be the supreme object of his desire, so that by wishing the little girl to be called

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98 On 23 Jan 1848, John Thomas baptised Moses Taufa’s infant son in Nuku’alofa. He recorded that the baby’s father “accompanied Ma`afu to Feejeees”, Journal, 23 Jan 1848.
100 Statement of Tingea, Notes [by C.R. Swayne] … on early Fijian history and Ma`afu, G.K. Roth, Papers. The name “Tai” likely refers to Ma`afu’s older half-sister, rather than to his mother.
Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

after the canoe he showed unusual regard for her”.\textsuperscript{101} Ma`afu himself stated in 1864 that the canoe Tuikilakila “begged” from him was named the \textit{Falike}.\textsuperscript{102} Finally, in a Court of Arbitration hearing one year later, Ma`afu again referred to the canoe he gave Tuikilakila as the \textit{Falike}.\textsuperscript{103} While the canoe in question was not named expressly for Ma`afu’s voyage to Fiji, he certainly presented it to Tuikilakila in about 1849.\textsuperscript{104} Tingea’s account casts doubt only on what Ma`afu’s intentions were when he left Tonga. It is likely that Ma`afu had no definite plans and was content to take whatever opportunities offered themselves in Lau, as he did when he accompanied Tuikilakila to Vanua Balavu on board the \textit{Hiki mo e falike}. His subsequent career indicates that, if by chance he did leave his floor mats at home in 1847, he had good cause to send for them within a short time of his arrival in Fiji.

The exact time of Ma`afu’s arrival in Fiji has never been satisfactorily established, with estimates between 1840 and 1853 appearing in various published works. Available evidence can determine the date to within three weeks. Reference has already been made to Ma`afu’s presence at Nuku’alofa on 1 June 1847, the day John Thomas was thrown from his horse. On 28 June, preparations for the departure appear to have been well in hand. Thomas recorded that “two of the king’s brothers and nearly all his sons, with many others, are going to Feejes”.\textsuperscript{105} Mara was to be accompanied by what modern diplomacy would call a high-level delegation, in order to provide him with moral support in his delicate mission to Bau. The delegation would also remind Bau of the reality of Tongan power, which Fiji’s most prestigious \textit{matanitu} could never afford to ignore. The mission was the first evidence since late 1845, when Tupou wrote his apparently friendly letter to Cakobau, of the king’s close interest in Fijian affairs. Although the report of the Wesleyan missionaries’ district meeting, which concluded at Nuku’alofa on 14 July, made no mention of the departure,\textsuperscript{106} the voyagers had probably already reached Fiji.

By 20 July, some three weeks after Thomas noted the imminent departure of the \textit{folau}, the party had been in Fiji for several days, if not for a week or more. Richard Lyth, then stationed at Somosomo, recorded: “Tidings have arrived of Ratu Mara’s arrival in Feejee from Tonga, accompanied by King George’s two sons – in order to offer a soro to Cakobau for Ratu Mara’s restoration of favour

\textsuperscript{101} Thomas Williams, Miscellaneous Notes chiefly concerning Feejee and Feejeeans, No. 2, “Tui Kilakila’s Love for Adi Falike”.
\textsuperscript{102} Statement of Ma`afu regarding the Tongan claim to Vanua Balavu and adjoining islands, BCFP.
\textsuperscript{103} Report of a Court of Arbitration, 1 and 2 Feb 1865, Register No. 381, Register of Deeds 1858–1873, BCFP.
\textsuperscript{104} The tradition of Tuikilakila’s gift has remained strong on Lau. See Veitarogi Vanua mai Vanualavalu, Yaco mai Mualevu, 10 May 1865, J.S. Thomson, Lau Evidence Book, NLC Suva. My thanks to Sitiveni Yaqona for his translation from the Fijian.
\textsuperscript{105} Thomas, Journal, 28 June 1847.
\textsuperscript{106} Minutes of the Friendly Islands District Meeting July 14th 1847 Nuku’alofa, WMMS District Minutes, Fiji and the Friendly Islands.
at Bau”. On its way to Lakeba, the folau called at Moala, not unexpectedly in view of Mara’s connections there. Calvert, then in charge of the Wesleyan mission at Lakeba, recorded:

here Mara is with six canoes given to him in Tonga and his own tabilai [a type of canoe prow]. Ma’afu, Ugu and Vugukoto – Laujii – all here – to accompany Mara to Bau – and to build canoes here. In a month or two, they talk of going. On these Tonga and Feejeean affairs I might write several sheets – but refrain … The Tonguese who accompany Mara have not received a very heartly welcome here – no house built for them – until Mara arrived from Moala, and then had to build it.108

Ma’afu, restrained by the demands of both church and state in Tonga, would have been ready enough to leave. But Fiji possessed attractions apart from the absence of centralised authority and an omnipresent and ever-hostile missionary. Calvert was right in ascribing to the Tongan party a second reason for visiting Lakeba: the desire to build or repair canoes. In his statement made after Ma’afu’s death, Tingea said that when Ma’afu came to Fiji, he brought with him several canoes to be refastened by Lauan experts.109 According to Tingea, payment for such specialised services included military service for various Lauan chiefs. In 1852, “Henili Maafu, Chief from Nuku`a`lofa” appeared at the head of a “List of Tonguese Building or Repairing Canoes in Feejee” drawn up by Richard Lyth. The list indicated that he had been at work in 1847.110 The construction and repair of canoes, vital in Lau’s evolving economy, was in part responsible for the employment of Tongan mercenaries, themselves crucial to the political fortunes of Fiji’s matanitu throughout much of the nineteenth century.

Ma’afu himself, never one to enlarge on his past, referred almost 30 years later to the importance of canoe building and repair in his coming to Fiji. In September 1875, when he was Roko Tui Lau in the new British administration, Ma’afu dined at Government House in Levuka. A fellow guest was Baron Anatole von Hügel, a visiting naturalist and anthropologist from England. Von Hügel showed Ma’afu a civitabua, “a breastplate composed of plates split from the sperm whale teeth”, which the baron had obtained during an expedition in the mountains of Viti Levu the previous June.111 Because of their rarity, he suspected, correctly, that civitabua were “not of Fijian origin”.112 The earliest civitabua known to Europeans were collected in Tonga by Captain Cook’s officers in the 1770s. They

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108 Calvert to Thomas Williams, 23 Jul 1847, Personal Papers.
109 Statement of Tingea…
110 Lyth, Circuit Returns 1850–1853, 80a.
111 Clunie, 162.
Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

were thought to have served as armour in response to the need for protection against Fijian weapons.\textsuperscript{113} Ma`afu manifested great interest in the *civitabua* shown him, telling the visitor that such items were heirlooms even in his youth, serving as badges of honour for Tongan chiefs. The baron wrote that they were “used in the same way as Tabua are … used … in Fiji. Ma`afu’s first visit to Fiji was caused by a similar ornament and he eventually bought a large canoe with it. Mine may possibly be the same but he does not feel sure about it”.\textsuperscript{114} The two men’s host at the dinner, Governor Sir Arthur Gordon, made a similar reference, brief but intriguing, to the *civitabua*: “a tabua first brought Ma`afu when a lad to Fiji”.\textsuperscript{115} The “first visit” of which Ma`afu spoke was possibly the lengthy period he spent in Fiji in 1841, but the reference to the large canoe suggests that some kind of exchange was made, possibly with Tui Cakau. Whatever the story behind the *civitabua* really was, it is certain that the need to repair canoes was one among several reasons why Ma`afu came to Fiji in 1847.\textsuperscript{116}

Whatever thoughts Tupou might have had concerning Tongan influence in Fiji, he was also mindful of his country’s relations with European powers, especially Great Britain. In March 1848, the Governor of New Zealand, Sir George Grey, wrote to the Colonial Office on the subject of Fiji and Tonga:

A consideration of the several statements at various times made to me regarding the present state of the islands in the Pacific, has led me to conclude that a very general desire prevails upon the part of the Inhabitants of the Friendly Islands, and of the Feejee Islands, both European and native, to be brought under Great Britain, in the same manner that the New Zealand Islands have been”.\textsuperscript{117}

Grey had requested Captain Maxwell of HMS *Dido* to visit Tonga in order to ascertain the wishes of its inhabitants. After reading the captain’s report, Grey was able to inform the Colonial Office that Maxwell was of the opinion that the … King of these [Tonga] Islands and many of the principal chiefs desire British protection, and that the establishment of such a protectorate would be popular and acceptable to all the Christian part of the population.\textsuperscript{118}

Grey possessed no authority to negotiate with the Tongans on the subject of British protection. He did, however, urge Lord Grey, Secretary of State for the

\textsuperscript{113} Clunie, 161–162.

\textsuperscript{114} Von Hügel, 144–145 (7 Sep 1875).


\textsuperscript{116} For a fuller discussion of the reasons why Ma`afu came to Fiji in 1847, see John Spurway, “*Hiki mo e falike*: why Ma`afu brought his floor mats to Fiji in 1847”, *JPH*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2002, 5–23.

\textsuperscript{117} Sir George Grey to Lord Grey, 28 Aug 1847, CO 209/59.

\textsuperscript{118} ibid.
Colonies, to reply to the letter written four years earlier by Aleamotu’a seeking protection from Great Britain. The Governor outlined the reasons why he believed a sympathetic response to this request would favour British interests in the longer term and enclosed for the information of Lord Grey a copy of a letter he received from Tupou. Written on 28 August 1847, barely two months after the king’s sons, his brother and Ma’afu had set sail for Fiji, it is of great significance in any consideration of the king’s attitude towards Fiji at that time:

I, George, write this in love to you the Governor of New Zealand, the Reverend Mr Lawry having made known to me your kind regard for me. Therefore I am wishful to make known to you, that we wrote to Queen Victoria of England, to beg her to pity us, a weak people, who are exposed to danger, and we have been expecting to receive a letter in answer to ours, but now it is a long time since we wrote, and no letter has been received, neither has any of Queen Victoria’s ships of war called upon us; hence we are not certain whether or not our letter was received.

But now I beg to forward to you a copy of that letter, that you may see it, and do with it what you think may be right – for our minds continue as they were – we wish to be friends with England. It is true that we as a people are few in number and very feeble, not worthy of the notice of a great people such as England, but we do not wish to fall into the hands of any other nation.

It is this which has led me to write again at this time…

The king’s enclosure of a copy of Aleamotu’a’s letter of 1844 implies a full endorsement of his predecessor’s wish that Great Britain assume some responsibility for Tonga. In these circumstances, it is unlikely that Tupou would have wished to involve himself in any military adventures, or undue political activity, in Fiji. His own position on Tongatapu, as Captain Maxwell had reported to Sir George Grey, was not entirely secure, owing to continued opposition from some heathen chiefs and their followers. He might have envisaged a British protectorate over both Tonga and Fiji, in which the political evolution of both groups could continue, while British protection would preclude interference from any other power, especially France. In this regard he would certainly have been influenced by the English missionaries, particularly Thomas and Lawry, who were anxious to see a peaceful Tonga united under the rule of ‘King George’ and the doctrines of Charles Wesley. In his published account of his Tongan visit in July 1847, Lawry referred to the king’s offer to Sir George Grey:

The King renews the proposal ... [previously] made, that he and his people become not merely the allies, but the subjects, of the British crown. This is done because they fear the French, whose base conduct towards the people of Tahiti is fully known here. I am glad the king has taken this step.¹²⁰

When Tupou sent members of his family, including Ma`afu, to pay a call on Cakobau, his intentions are unlikely to have been anything but benign.

In the event, the British declined to assume the protection of both Tonga and Fiji, owing to the expense involved.¹²¹ Sir George Grey was however urged to maintain the friendliest possible relations with Tonga’s king. Late in 1847, he assured Tupou of his and Queen Victoria’s friendship and invited the king to visit New Zealand.¹²² When the Dido was in Tonga in January 1848, Captain Maxwell gave Tupou a present sent by Grey.¹²³ Yet, despite these manifestations of friendship, the king remained apprehensive, expressing his concern to Governor Grey that while some French vessels had visited Tonga, the Dido was the only English vessel seen there for a long time.¹²⁴ Once Tupou realised that the shield of British protection would not be put into place, he might well have felt justified in exercising a freer hand in Fiji, especially after the last significant opposition to his rule in Tonga was overcome in 1852. By then Ma`afu had been living in Fiji for five years and had become a power there in his own right.

Whatever Ma`afu’s intentions were in 1847, it is clear that his visit was made with the approval of his king. Finding himself among his own kin in Lau, Ma`afu was following a path that members of his family and countless other Tongans had travelled before him. He was part of a Tongan delegation on a friendly and informal visit to Bau, whose purpose cannot be shown to be anything more than a timely reminder of Tongan interest in Bau and in Fijian affairs generally. It is impossible to say what more profound ideas Tupou then possessed, if indeed his visit did represent any longer-term plans on his behalf. Speculation on the point would only be misleading. What is certain is that Ma`afu, having, metaphorically at least, brought all his floor mats with him, was to establish a power base in Lau that would shake the fast-evolving polity of Fiji to its foundations.

¹²⁰ Lawry, 24. See also Fremantle to Osborne, 12 Dec 1855, Adm.1/562; Erskine to Admiralty, 10 Oct 1849, Adm.1/5606 and Enc. 2 [Erskine’s account of his visit to Tonga]. The recommendations of Lawry and Sir George Grey would bear some fruit in 1852, when a hydrographic expedition under the command of Henry Mangles Denham was appointed to undertake a nautical survey of Fiji. John Beecham to Richard Lyth, 14 May 1852, MOM 104.
¹²¹ CO to Sir George Grey, 9 Oct 1848, CO 209/59.
¹²² Sir George Grey to George Tubou, 22 Dec 1847, CO209/59. See also Thomas, Journal, 22 Nov 1855.
¹²³ Thomas, Journal, 7 Jan 1848.
¹²⁴ ibid., 27 Jan 1848.