4. “…the reformation is exploded”

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Lakeban state belonged to the second rank of the *matanitu* of Fiji. Although its paramount chief, Tui Nayau, was not subject to the direct authority of any other Fijian chief, he commanded neither the population resources nor the reserves of manpower that were at the disposal of Bau, Cakaudrove and Rewa, the major powers of Fiji. Lau, long in an unsettled state because of the resident Tongans, underwent further disruption during the 1840s following the introduction of Christianity. While the *lotu* was making slow if unsteady progress among the Lauan population, both Fijian and Tongan, Tui Nayau himself, for essentially political reasons, still declined to *lotu*. As missionary Richard Lyth was to note several years later, Tui Nayau felt himself “to be but a small king, and [looked] this way and that for help”.1 The several forces for change existing in Lau in 1847 occasioned a sense of uncertainty, not to say unease, in the islands. The same forces were to create opportunities for Ma’afu in a milieu with which he had long been familiar.

The “king”, Taliai Tupou, Ma’afu’s kinsman and host, had earlier claimed the interest of visiting ships’ captains. Charles Wilkes, commander of the United States Exploring Expedition that visited Fiji in 1840, was not impressed by Tui Nayau. “He is a corpulent nasty looking fellow”, Wilkes noted, “and has the unmitigated habits of a savage … He exercises despotic power over all the surrounding islands … [and] has the character of being a cruel tyrant”.2 Wilkes’ second in command, Lieutenant-Commander Ringgold, described their chiefly host as possessing “a dull-looking countenance” and “mean and niggardly in his disposition”.3 Taliai Tupou clearly failed the test of bourgeois respectability. His visitors could not understand that the cruelty and despotism which they discerned in his rule were characteristic of Fijian political power. The ascendancy of Tui Nayau depended on his ability to meet the other *matanitu*, if not on equal terms, at least in a context where the autonomy of the Lakeban state would not be placed in jeopardy.

Captain John Erskine, commander of HMS *Havannah*, which visited Lakeba in August 1849, was gracious enough to concede some favourable points of character to Tui Nayau. While recalling Wilkes’ uncompromising views, Erskine noted that John Malvern, one of the resident Wesleyan missionaries, “gave [Taliai Tupou], although a heathen, a very good reputation for humanity and general conduct”. Erskine incidentally revealed something of Tui Nayau’s political acumen when he remarked to him “that I hoped to hear of his becoming

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1 Richard Lyth, Day Book No. 7, 6 Mar 1851.
3 ibid., 173.
Ma’afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

a Christian before he died, at which he smiled, but made no reply”.\(^4\) The chief’s acceptance of the *lotu* was only two months away but, whatever his state of mind in August, he was not revealing it to his visitor.

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**Chart 3: Family of Tui Nayau.**

Source: Author’s depiction.

After Ma’afu’s death in 1881, it became an article of faith among the Tongan residents of both Vanuabalavu and Lakeba that, soon after his arrival in Fiji, Ma’afu assumed the role of “right-hand man” to Tui Nayau.\(^5\) An oral tradition refers to Ma’afu as the *liga kaukauwa*, or strong arm of Tui Nayau who, because

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he was “too old … gave authority to Ma’afu to lead the vanua”. One tradition stated that when Ma’afu reached Fiji, “Taliai was advanced in years and greatly afflicted with elephantiasis, and it was not long before Ma’afu became practically his regent”. These claims arose from the legends that grew up around Ma’afu’s memory in Lau. Nevertheless Ma’afu was able, not only to exercise a free hand in his own activities, but also to assume an increasingly active if informal role in the administration of Tui Nayau’s domains. Unfortunately, for the period of almost two years between Ma’afu’s arrival in Lakeba and his departure in May 1849 for a residence of 18 months in Cakaudrove, there exists no documented reference to him. We cannot know whether he assumed any kind of leadership role on Lakeba during this time.

Taliai Tupou’s designated heir was his nephew Vuetasau. Although he was to be lost at sea in 1856, before he could succeed as Tui Nayau, Vuetasau became a close associate of Ma’afu during the early 1850s, when the Tongan’s presence came to be felt in Lau. For several years following his conversion in 1846, Vuetasau found favour with the missionaries, for whom he offered great hope for the future. His present influence among the Lakeban people was limited by the refusal of his uncle to lotu, the instability caused by the resident Tongans and the labyrinthine politics of a Fiji that knew neither unity nor peace. By the time of Ma’afu’s arrival, political power in the islands’ most powerful matanitu, Bau, had shifted from the aged Tanoa to his son Cakobau. For upwards of 30 years, until after the Cession of Fiji to Great Britain, Cakobau never left the eye of the political storm in Fiji. Already being seen by some as the future ruler of a united Fiji, Cakobau was a man whose ambitions, such as they were, were always to be overtaken by events. Lyth, stationed at Viwa in 1847, recorded that Cakobau “is now regularly called both by his own people and the whites Tuiviti, i.e. King of Feejee”. While giving tacit support to the Wesleyan mission, Cakobau remained steadfast in his refusal to lotu, although susceptible to missionary influence in some matters of policy. In September 1847, Walter Lawry, always concerned to promote both Wesleyan and British interests in Fiji, noted of Cakobau:

Upon the whole, he is rather favourable to our mission here, but does not lotu … War is his delight, and feasting on bodies of the slain. He is sitting by my side as I write, and is urging me to persuade Governor Grey [of New Zealand] to visit him in a war steamer, in order that they may be allied friends. He reposes confidence in England, but not in

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Ma'afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

France; for the barefaced outrage of protecting Tahiti is known to him, and heartily denounced. He and his chiefs say that they shall one day lotu, and that the gospel will one day triumph in Fiti.¹⁰

Lawry’s words reveal the strong influence he and his colleagues sought to bring on Cakobau concerning Fiji’s dealings with the European powers in the Pacific. The account also reveals Cakobau’s capacity for telling his missionary friends what he knew they wanted to hear. As far as internal politics were concerned, Cakobau was less willing to heed his new friends. Aware that his political fortunes would suffer if he were to lotu, he continued to make war. “The king says, that the lotu is near, but that he has a few more towns to burn before he and his warriors lotu”, noted Lawry’s colleague Joseph Waterhouse, a later resident of Bau.¹¹ Cakobau believed that only when his ascendancy was secure could he afford the luxury of conversion.

On Lakeba, the missionaries continued to evince great interest in the spiritual welfare of the resident Tongans, whose souls were always thought to be in jeopardy. They displayed less awareness of the political implications of the Tongan presence in Lau. In February 1846, following the departure of a folau under the leadership of Lausi’i, Tāufa‘āhau’s brother, few Tongans remained on Lakeba.¹² Lyth described them as “running headlong to destruction”,¹³ a despairing note echoed by Walter Lawry on his visit in September of the following year. “A colony of godless Tongans is a drag upon our wheels at this place”, he lamented.¹⁴ In October 1847 the death occurred of Julius Naulivou, a Native Assistant Missionary, brother-in-law of Tupou and an adopted son of Malani, the previous Tui Nayau.¹⁵ Whether or not prompted by Naulivou’s death, Tupou appeared with a large folau at Bau in November, on his way home from a visit to Samoa.¹⁶ He was unwittingly exposing himself to an assassination plot, “concocted in Fiji, by a few disconcerted Tonguese chiefs then residing there, whose wicked project was ... abetted by others in Vava’u”. After his return to Tonga, the king responded to this threat by replacing the governor and several judges in Vava’u.¹⁷ No report of the alleged plot seems to have reached James Calvert and John Malvern, the two Wesleyan missionaries stationed on Lakeba. During the ensuing year, they continued to complain of the audacious

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¹⁰ Walter Lawry, Friendly and Feejee Islands: A missionary visit to various stations in the South Seas in the Year 1847, London 1850, 104.
¹¹ Joseph Waterhouse, The King and People of Fiji, Pasifika Press, Auckland 1997 [1866], 104. See also Vewa Circuit Report 1847, Methodist Mission: Correspondence and Papers relating to Ba Military Campaigns 1873, PMB 1093.
¹² Lyth, Day Book, 23 Feb 1846.
¹³ ibid., 25 Apr 1846.
¹⁵ David Hazlewood, Diary 1820–1855, transcribed by Daphne Penalver, 23 Dec 1847.
¹⁶ Lyth to Williams, 29 Nov 1847.
4. “...the reformation is exploded”

count and dissolute character of the Tongans, which they partly ascribed to the Tongans’ passionate fondness for voyaging. Of greater significance was the death in May of Tupou Toutai, following that of his brother four years earlier. His passing meant that there was no longer any Tongan resident in Lau who was sufficiently prominent to act as a filter between Cakobau and Tupou. Lausi’i continued to visit Bau during these years when the king’s anxiety to secure some form of protection for Tonga meant that he was unlikely to have designs on the islands of Lau.

Following the deaths of his two cousins, Lualala was the most senior in rank and influence among the Tongans on Lakeba. A son of Finau ‘Ulukalala-i-Ma’ofanga of Vava’u and his Fijian wife Vuturogo, a daughter of Niumataiwalu, a former Tui Nayau, Lualala was also a great-uncle of ‘Elenoa Gataalupe. Through his mother, he was vasu to Taliai Tupou and had spent much of his early life in Lau. His half-brother, Finau ‘Ulukalala Tuapasi, was ruler of Vava’u in 1831, the year Tāufa āhau, then Tu’i Ha’apai, converted to Christianity. Following a failed rebellion against Tuapasi, Lualala was exiled to Fiji. In May 1837, David Cargill noted the arrival in Lakeba of “Lua – the chief who persecutes the Christians and who was the occasion of the late war in Tonga ... He has great authority in this part of Fiji”. Later, he achieved rehabilitation: in 1842, although still not baptised, Lualala earned praise for his efforts to convince the people of two Lakeban villages to abandon heathenism. Lualala, Calvert noted, “is very influential and active. He was formerly a terror to all”. More than a decade later, the ageing Lualala and the new chum Maʻafu would be appointed joint governors of the Tongans in Lau.

From about 1857 until his death in 1881, Maʻafu made his home on Vanuabalavu, then part of Cakaudrove, a matanitu that also included Taveuni, its smaller neighbours Laucala, Qamea and Rabe, much of eastern Vanua Levu and numerous other islands such as Cicia, Mago, Tuvuca and Naitauba. Today, the last four islands, as well as Vanuabalavu and the small islands within its reef, lie within Lau. Maʻafu is known to have set foot on Vanuabalavu in 1849, in company with Tuikilakila, who had succeeded his father Yavala as Tui Cakau in 1845. The island had undergone intermittent civil war during the 1840s, when the introduction of Christianity exacerbated existing social divisions among the approximately 3,000 inhabitants, who were divided between two vanua, or

18 Malvern to GS, WMMS, 11 Sep 1848, WMMS LFF; Report of the Lakeba Circuit for 1848, Fiji District Meeting Minutes 1827–1852.
19 John Williams, The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832, ed. by Richard Moyle, Canberra 1984, 211. (30 Nov 1832). For the genealogy of Lualala’s Tongan family, see Elizabeth Bott, Tongan Society at the time of Captain Cook’s visits: Discussions with Her Majesty Queen Salote Tupou, Wellington 1982, 151.
20 Thomas, Journal, 9 Sep 1831. See also Thomas to GS, WMMS, 31 Oct 1832, WMN, No. 206, Feb 1833, 226–227.
Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

districts, Yaro (now called Mualevu) in the north and Lomaloma in the south. Both vanua were subject to Tuikilakila “who had threatened to kill and eat any of his subjects who should lotu”. When Tuikilakila visited Lomaloma, he denied having made any such threat and received a peaceful tribute from the Vanuabalavu Christians.23 There was no trouble until the village of Daku-i-Yaro decided to rebel and offer its allegiance to Lomaloma. War between the two districts quickly followed, with Christians from both sides taking refuge on the island of Munia in the Vanuabalavu lagoon.24 Although an uneasy reconciliation was achieved in October 1844, the subsequent return of teachers to Lomaloma and the despatch of Tongan missionaries to Yaro served only to augment the instability of the troubled island.25

With renewed hostilities between Yaro and Lomaloma resulting in the deaths of five teachers, most Christians remaining at Lomaloma also removed to Munia to escape the conflict.26 When news of the deaths reached Lakeba, some Tongan leaders there, including Lualala, sought to raise a folau to visit Vanuabalavu and move all remaining Christians to Munia if danger still threatened. The missionaries urged Lualala to limit the operation to a small number of people on five canoes and not to venture beyond Munia. Should the matter not be settled amicably, they were advised to await the return of Tupou Toutai from Bau.27 The advice was not heeded, with 12 canoes sailing on 29 December under Lualala’s leadership and visiting Nayau, Mago and Cicia, as well as both districts of Vanuabalavu. Everywhere, people were exhorted not to engage in revenge killings.28 Just two days after the fleet’s departure, a delegation of Christians reached Lakeba from Lomaloma, having been sent by the chiefs there in an effort to forestall a visit from the Lakeban Tongans. The Lomaloma chiefs had agreed to lotu, “believing that to be the only act that would prevent their being punished”.29 When Lualala’s expedition returned, he reported that many people had lotued on the islands the Tongans visited, including the chiefs of Mago and Nayau. He also presented Tui Nayau with a large tabua, an “offering of peace” from the Lomaloma people “on account of the murder of the teachers”. The whole voyage had apparently been “tolerably peaceful”.30

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24 Williams and Calvert, Fiji and the Fijians..., 1884 edn, 300–301; Thomas Williams to his father, 23 May 1841.
25 The Report of the Work of God in the Lakeba Circuit for … the year ending June 1845, WMMS District Meeting Minutes, Feejee and Friendly Islands, 1827–1855. For a detailed account of these events, see Williams and Calvert, Fiji and the Fijians..., 296–303.
27 James Calvert, The Lakeba Note 5 June 1845 – 7 Dec 1847, 20 Nov 1847, Personal Papers, WMMS.
28 Williams and Calvert, Fiji and the Fijians..., 303–305.
29 Calvert to GS, WMMS, 25 Aug 1848, WMMS Australasia Correspondence, Fiji, 2.
While there is no evidence that Ma’afu participated in Lualala’s expedition, it is difficult to see him remaining at Lakeba. Of the acknowledged Tongan leaders known to have been living there in 1847, the only one who did not join Lualala was Tupou Toutai, absent from the island at the time. If Ma’afu did accompany his fellows, he witnessed at close quarters the discord the new faith could engender in a society already divided, a situation familiar to him since his childhood on Tongatapu. He was also exposed to the Realpolitik of eastern Fiji, where even the implicit threat of Tongan intervention was enough to cause the Lomaloma chiefs to lotu. The deaths of Tupou Toutai and Naulivou meant that the older Tongan leadership in Lakeba was passing away. With Lualala himself advancing in years, his restless countrymen would, before long, look to a new leader. Ma’afu, a charismatic chief of high rank, needed no leave from the other Tongans to fill the shoes of the departed leaders. He would take full advantage of opportunities that were, even during his early years in Lakeba, being revealed to him.
Over 30 years later, at hearings in Lomaloma of the Lands Claims Commission established to enquire into Fijian land tenure, Ma’afu was to relate a detailed version of the events which led to his assumption of sovereign rights in Vanuabalavu and, ultimately, to the creation for him of the title of Tui Lau. After he reached Lakeba in 1847, documented sources are silent about him for several years. While Lyth had earlier recorded his gratitude “to the great Author of all events” for Tuikilakila’s moderation towards the Vanuabalavu Christians, Thomas Williams placed little trust in that chief. He believed that Tuikilakila’s refusal to lotu would inevitably lead his people to ruin. “His recent liberality to the Tonguese is in part attributable to a secretly encouraged hope of obtaining help from George”. Williams knew that Tuikilakila’s power depended on his military strength, which could only suffer if he and his people accepted the new faith. “He thinks if his people become Christian they will not be so ready to fight”, a view much in accord with Cakobau’s. His frame of mind appeared unchanged when he visited Lakeba about May 1849 when, to his surprise and apparent pleasure, he either made or renewed his acquaintance with Ma’afu. The two chiefs departed together to visit Vanuabalavu. In granting Ma’afu levying rights to the island and several others in Cakaudrove during the voyage, Tuikilakila laid the foundation for Ma’afu’s sovereignty over Vanuabalavu, a matter of some controversy in the future. Ma’afu’s customary rights to the island were not to be finally established until February 1865 when British Consul Henry Jones, after a judicial enquiry, found him to be its lawful owner. In 1849 and 1850, Ma’afu spent about 18 months living under the protection of Tuikilakila, during a time when that chief was engaged in active persecution of Christians in those areas of Cakaudrove where the new faith had become established.

Thomas Williams, always sceptical about the prospects of Christianity in Cakaudrove, believed that he understood Tuikilakila well. “Nothing can be more complete than his assurance that he can prevent his people becoming Christians, and yet retain missionaries or, what with him passes for the same thing, knives and axes … Tuikilakila will not give the Missionaries permission to preach, because ‘his people shall not lotu until he does, and [he] intimates that he never shall’”. Lyth, confining himself to a discussion of Tuikilakila’s spiritual poverty, recorded that chief’s determination “to hold fast to his proved hatred of God … he should be left to discover his sin and folly by the loss of his present advantages. The lotu is about the only prop he has left – but he despises it and trusts in broken reeds”. Ma’afu, a baptised but non-practising Christian, was apparently content to join Tui Cakau in an anti-Christian rampage while the two

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31 Richard Lyth to Thomas Williams, 16 Mar 1846, Letters to Thomas Williams.
32 Thomas Williams, Somosomo Quarterly Letter, Vol. 1, No. 9, 25 Sep 1847, WMMS.
33 Evidence given at the hearing relating to the question of sovereignty will be considered in detail in Ch. 7.
34 Williams, Somosomo Quarterly Letter.
35 Richard Lyth to Thomas Williams, 19 Jun 1849, Letters to Thomas Williams.
were voyaging in Cakaudrove waters. James Watsford, a Wesleyan missionary at Lakeba, noted the departure of the two chiefs in Maʻafu’s canoe and lamented that all the Vanuabalavu chiefs who had accepted the lotu during Lualala’s visit in 1847 had now renounced it. Maʻafu and Tuikilakila had “sadly insulted our cause at Lomaloma”, Watsford noted. Further, on being prevented from setting up house in the Christian chapel at Somosomo, the Tongans, apparently including Maʻafu, turned the local Christians out of their bure instead. They seemed “to have sold themselves to work iniquity”, Watsford declared. Maʻafu was to remain in alliance with Tui Cakau, and living in Cakaudrove among conditions of disarray, for some 18 months.

During Maʻafu’s obscure stay in Cakaudrove, events occurred in both Fiji and Tonga that would greatly influence his future. The first official presence of the wider world in Fiji had come in February 1846 when John Brown Williams assumed the duties of U.S. Commercial Agent. He established a home on Nukulau island in Laucala Bay, east of the present-day city of Suva. The accidental destruction by fire of his house and its contents, including business and consular records, on 4 July 1849 was to have consequences extending over more than two decades. Williams valued his loss at US$3,006–12 ½, advising the U.S. State Department that local chiefs should be punished and compensation obtained. This claim, progressively enlarged, became a thorn in the side of Cakobau and was to be exploited by Maʻafu in his attempts to gain ascendency over his Fijian rival. In the meantime, Captain Erskine, visiting Haʻapai during the final few days before his ship’s departure for Fiji, met Tupou at Lifuka and gave him a letter from the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, declining the king’s request that Britain assume protection of, or sovereignty over, the islands of Tonga. If Maʻafu ever heard of the British rebuff, he is not likely to have been greatly concerned. The refusal of Great Britain to become involved in Tonga or Fiji meant that it was to be nine years before an official British presence was established there, with the appointment in September 1858 of William Pritchard as the first British Consul. Those nine years saw the rise of Tongan influence in eastern Fiji to a position where the fortunes of Cakobau, and the independence of several Fijian matanitu, effectively lay in Maʻafu’s hands.

During the months following Maʻafu’s departure from Lakeba, Ratu Mara remained a threat. Tui Nayau’s dilemma was that, should Mara land in force, he could not be directly opposed without the risk of armed confrontation with Bau. In early October Tui Nayau asked the missionaries to write to Tupou on his behalf, “to request help from Tonga against the meditated attack from

36 James Watsford to Thomas Williams, 19 Jun 1849, Letters to Thomas Williams. See also Walter Lawry, A second missionary visit to the Friendly and Feejee Islands, London 1851, 200–201.
37 John B. Williams to U.S. State Department, 25 July 1847, USC 1.
38 Captain John Erskine to FO, 10 Oct 1849, Enclosure 2: “The Friendly Islands”, FO 58/69. See also Ch. 3.
Bau and for the establishment of this land to Tui Nayau and his Tonguese ally, but not so as to exclude the continuance of friendly intercourse with Bau and Somosomo”. Such a balancing act, even if feasible, would need little to upset it; that little and more came only a fortnight later. On 19 October, when Tui Nayau heard that Mara was definitely on his way to Lakeba, he suddenly accepted the lotu. Worshipping publicly in Lakeba’s Wesleyan chapel, he was followed in his profession by many leading chiefs and other people, including “the head Priest” and ambassadors to Bau. One day later, Tui Nayau assembled his people at a meeting “to put the affairs of the land in order”. Both resident missionaries, Lyth and Malvern, were invited by the “king” to speak. For the two Englishmen, their triumph excluded urgent political considerations. Lyth continued to believe that Tui Nayau’s conversion was the consequence of much serious thought and missionary prayers, while Malvern, more politically astute than his colleague, was sure that the news of Mara’s imminent arrival, reaching Tui Nayau the day before his conversion, had been the catalyst for change. One day after the meeting, on Saturday 20 October, Mara and his force of 300 men appeared off the beach at Tubou.

The Tongan leaders on Lakeba, Lausi’i and Tu’ipelehake, were quick to ally with Tui Nayau following his conversion. Not so Mara, who had long been resentful of Tongan power at Lakeba, which he saw as infringing his legitimate vasu rights. His resentment turned to fury when Vuetasau refused to hand over one of his daughters, now a Christian, to become one of Mara’s wives, as he had once promised to do. The desire to add to his harem had been an important reason for his frequent urging of Cakobau to make war on Lakeba. Mara apparently convinced Cakobau “that Christianity alone had made Lakeba indigent and rebellious; and then he asked permission to be empowered to lay waste to the windward islands of Eastern Fiji. [Cakobau] gave his consent to the scheme, but refused to furnish the means”. If any further incentive to descend on Lakeba were needed, Mara had been involved in a major dispute with Lualala, an old adversary, at Vanuabalavu in 1847. He had ordered the people of Mualevu to close their town against the Tongans and later attempted to enlist Tevita ‘Unga in a plot to kill some of the Tongan chiefs. Mara’s grievances were many when he arrived in force off Lakeba.

39 Lyth, Day Book No. 6, 5 Oct 1849. An 1863 reference to Tui Nayau’s having “at last” accepted baptism is puzzling, WMMS Lakeba Circuit Report 1863, MOM 8.
40 ibid., 1 Nov 1849.
41 Lyth to Calvert, 29 Oct 1849, WMM, CXX, June 1850, no pagination.
42 For contrasting missionary opinion, see Lyth to GS, WMMS, 31 Jan 1850 (extract), WMN, No. 144, Dec 1850, 199–201; Lyth to Brethren at Viwa, Bua and Nadi, 29 Oct 1849 (copy), in his Journal, 29 Oct 1849; John Malvern to GS, WMMS, 23 Mar 1850, WMMS LFF, 1849–1852.
43 Williams and Calvert, Fiji and the Fijians…, 330.
44 Waterhouse, 127.
Mara’s designs were thwarted in singular fashion. He arrived aboard his *drua*, the *Uluilakeba*, still ignorant of Tui Nayau’s conversion, while `Unga, who had feigned acquiescence in Mara’s plot, managed to reach Lakeba ahead of the hostile fleet. Before Mara could land, a delegation of leading Tongans paddled out to brief him on recent events. Mara declared he was ready for either peace or war. With a mass of Fijians and Tongans occupying the beach, ready to oppose any attempted landing, only Mara and his henchman Koroitoa were allowed ashore. Met by Lausi’i, they were conveyed to the Bauan settlement of Levuka, close to Tubou, while armed warriors continued to patrol the beach. `Unga ordered Mara’s warriors back to their canoes, where they remained all night, tired and hungry. Before leaving for Moala four days later “ashamed and chagrined”, Mara made peace with Tui Nayau and received a gift of 300 yams from Lyth and Malvern to feed his hungry warriors.45

Missionary delight with the events on Lakeba was predictable, with David Hazlewood stressing their spiritual aspect: “Mara had gone to do great things, taking 300 warriors to fight, but was overcome without a blow, except that of an invisible hand”.46 Lyth preferred to comment on the political implications of Mara’s rout: “Lakeba is loyal to Tui Nayau and Tui Nayau and Lakeba are loyal to Bau”. As if to underline his friend’s point, Tui Nayau made plans to send a *soro* to Cakobau, assuring him of his continued allegiance.47 The Tongans on Lakeba meanwhile “commenced building a fence around their town” for fear that Mara might return.48 Despite these fears, the defeat of Mara, ostensibly an agent of Bau but in reality the renegade he had always been, neatly defined Lakeba’s place in the Fijian polity. Gone was the unquestioned supremacy of Bau among the islands of Lau; Tui Nayau, who had lotued to make sure of Tongan support, had now received it in abundance. He had become at least a nominal Christian, while his Tongan guests, now more firmly his allies, remained on Lakeba. For them, alliance with the Lakeban state meant that their subservience to Bau was greatly diminished. The security of Lakeba now rested on a Tongan foundation.

Changes in the political landscape did not mean that the threat from Bau was removed. Likewise Cakaudrove, where Tui Cakau’s depredations against Christians continued, could not be overlooked. With work on the precautionary defensive fortification at Tubou continuing,49 Tui Nayau was in no doubt concerning the delicate political circumstances of his realm. His letter to Tupou,
Ma’afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

conceived when the arrival of Mara was imminent and written after the fractious chief had been forced into retreat, says much about the prospects of the Lakeban state at the time:

I am Tui Nayau … now the Lord is with my soul and I am converted … I want to inform you that there is trouble here in Fiji. The Lord has saved us from the hands of the murderers … the heathens desire to … enslave us … Lakeba is an independent place and does not link with Cakaudrove or Bau. I, Tupou Malohi and Ulukalala-i-Feletoa told Tui Cakau to let Lakeba link to Bau because that is our chiefly … island. Now our Christianity is of no use because they want me dead, so that the Tongans will suffer. Now Tupou please love me and my blood relatives and the Church of the Lord to protect us from the Antichrist.

If you love us, send some people by canoe to … help us, if not our land will be destroyed. I heard that Tui Viti wants all Tongans to return to Tonga so that the land will be vacant for them to use. My wish is for more Tongans to come to Lakeba, and I think the Tongans have worked better on this land. Now we are saved because we are in the light…

My wish is for the land to be shared equally to you and me to ensure the end of sadness … Mara was in the canoe on the sea for the whole night … the Lord help him to change his mind not to start the war.

The people of Bau were in another canoe ready for battle to help Mara but instead Mara returned and told them the good news of Christianity. I told the Tongans not to return to Tonga to await the battle that never happened because of our Christian faith.

If you want more Tongans to come to Lakeba, yes you can send them as soon as possible…

Ever since his conversion in 1833, Tupou had been a champion of the lotu, determined that a reunified Tonga should be a Christian kingdom. Tui Nayau now took pains to present himself as a persecuted Christian ruler struggling to ensure the survival of his state in the face of heathen onslaught. The picture he paints of Lakeba’s fortunes, finely drawn as it is in an effort to arouse Tupou’s sympathy and support, also demonstrates the extent to which Christianity had become an integral part of the political process in central and eastern Fiji. The fortunes of the Lakeban state had come to depend on whether Tui Nayau and other leading chiefs had accepted the lotu or not. Taliai Tupou’s letter had wider implications still: whatever reservations he might have felt about asking

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50 The letter in the original Tongan is found in Richard Lyth, Day Book, 5 Nov 1849. I am indebted to Mr Viliame Veikune of Sawana, Vanuabalavu, Fiji for an English translation.
for Tongan help were swept aside by his desire to maintain his independence from Bau and Cakaudrove. Lakeba and southern Lau were laid firmly at the feet of Tonga.

As with any letter written by a missionary, there remains the question of how far Tui Nayau’s words reflect his own mind and how far he was influenced by the man who held the quill. When the two men sat down to compose their message to Tupou, Richard Lyth’s pen possessed a greater potency than did Tui Nayau’s club. Yet Lyth, after having for so long expressed grief, anger and frustration about the Tongans living in Fiji, cannot have possessed an unmitigated desire to invite more of them to come down. In any case, whatever the play of ideas and will between him and Tui Nayau, it was the letter itself which counted in the end. Only two months earlier, Tupou had finally learned that British protection for his country would not be forthcoming. Now, when he received an open invitation to intervene in Lau, his response, whatever it might be, need not be affected by any consideration of possible British reaction. In terms of his relations with Fiji, Tupou was, to a greater extent than ever before, his own master. The essential question, in late 1849, was whether he also wished to become master of Lau.

During the weeks following the letter’s despatch, the situation apparently remained calm on Lakeba. Mara had removed to Moala, while Tui Nayau was preparing a soro to be sent to Bau, a plan he had formulated before Mara’s invasion. Lyth expressed his satisfaction at the kindness Tui Nayau had shown to Mara and the respect shown to Bau. The missionary was sanguine: “The king and the land generally are kindly disposed toward Mara, and he has only to become of a better mind to find all that he need wish at his command”.51 Bau, meanwhile, despite Tui Nayau’s continuing discomfiture, was apparently unperturbed. Cakobau recognised the political basis for Tui Nayau’s conversion and evinced amusement rather than disquiet at the rejection of Mara. When the latter sent a tabua to Cakobau requesting help, the Vunivalu did not trouble to call a meeting of his chiefs.52 Instead he requested Calvert to convey a goodwill message to Lakeba, “expressing his approval of the many conversions there”.53

Lyth, hoping for “a new era” in the mode of living of the Tongans resident in Fiji, outlined his views to Thomas Williams:

Not long ago, I wrote to … King George making a representation of the state of affairs and requesting him to take the subject into his

52 Cakobau’s title meant “root of war”. He should not be confused with the Roko Tui Bau, a kind of sacred king who was bound to uphold religion and associated customary practices and who never personally engaged in war.
consideration. I understand that Lakeba has met with a favourable reception and that ... Joeli Mafleo is coming ... to investigate the subject. I suggested the propriety of appointing a Governor, to govern the Tongan people, and several other measures which if carried out, would establish their coming to Feejee for canoes, on a principle, that would be right and equitable – and end the abomination of Feejee being made a refuge for all that is base and abominable from the Sister Group.\(^{54}\)

Four years later, Tupou was to acquiesce in the suggested appointment of a governor of the Tongans in Fiji, when Lualala and Ma`afu were jointly confirmed in that position. In the meantime, events in Lakeba lent credence to the missionary’s optimism. In December, the message of congratulations from Cakobau reached Tui Nayau, along with the Vunivalu’s expressed desire for continued peace between Bau and Lakeba. The reassuring words were accompanied by the gift of three American axes and ten roots of yaqona. “This [is] an event the more gratifying as it was unexpected”, Lyth declared.\(^{55}\) In the face of yet another flowering of the \textit{lotu}, and of the reality of Tongan power in Lau, Cakobau could only make the best of the situation. He was probably unperturbed by Tui Nayau’s conversion: when missionaries James Calvert and William Moore, visiting Bau three months later, asked Cakobau if he was ready to accept the \textit{lotu} himself, “he listened attentively, but said he is engaged in war and cannot lotu yet, but will soon”.\(^{56}\) Cakobau was probably more concerned with the political implications of the events in Lakeba, where the uneasy peace prevailing at the end of 1849 was effectively a power vacuum in the making. Tui Nayau’s rule, freed as it was of an immediate threat from Bau, still depended on outside support. The chief had looked to Tonga for that support and could not yet know the extent to which his request would bear fruit.

Missionary optimism concerning Lakeban affairs was not sustained. Lyth quickly resumed his familiar theme: on 24 January, he lamented, “The Tonguese are very bad and under no restraint. What will become of them?”\(^{57}\) Less than three weeks later, after praising the progress of the Fijian Christians on Lakeba, he derided the Tongans again: “the members of Society from Tonga act as a dead weight and the mode of living amongst them has a direct tendency to corrupt their minds”.\(^{58}\) None of this was new. Following the conversion of Tui Nayau and his success both in thwarting Mara and accommodating Bau, the Tongans in his dominions remained a volatile and wayward element, without restraint, direction or effective leadership.

\(^{54}\) Richard Lyth to Thomas Williams, 22 Nov 1849.\(^{55}\) Richard Lyth, Day Book, 5 Dec 1849.\(^{56}\) William Moore, Journal, 1 Feb 1850, MOM 567, ML. He had said the same thing to Joseph Waterhouse almost four years earlier. See n. 11 above.\(^{57}\) Richard Lyth, Journal, 24 Jan 1850.\(^{58}\) ibid., 11 Feb 1850.
4. “...the reformation is exploded”

Ma’afu might have provided such leadership had he been living on the island. In May, with HMS Havannah in Australian waters, Erskine despatched Lieutenant Walter Pollard, in command of HM Schooner Bramble, to Fiji. After visiting Rewa, the Bramble, sailing to Ovalau, encountered five Somosomo canoes in the Moturiki passage, “waiting for permission to proceed to Bau, whether they are bound with tribute”. A number of Somosomo chiefs on board were described as “very great personages”. On 29 June, the Bramble anchored off Bau so that Pollard could call on Cakobau, after which the captain witnessed the ceremonial arrival of the Somosomo chiefs. They had to approach Bau “in a most reverential manner” and were not allowed to scull their canoes, leaving that function to be performed by Tongans carried on board for the purpose. Following their landing, they were required to remain in isolation in the strangers’ house for three days, before their tribute could be formally presented to Tanoa. There were about 600 Somosomo people, “and in a canoe belonging to a Tongan chief named Mafu, which had lately been built for him at Somo-Somo, a hundred or a hundred and twenty Tongans”. 59 Ma’afu had clearly established a position for himself at Somosomo, having had a drau built for him and being included with his mentor and other Cakaudrove chiefs in their tributary visit to Bau. Pollard’s conversation with Ma’afu at Bau, concerning the 1842 sandalwood expedition to the New Hebrides, is the first significant mention of him since his arrival in Fiji three years earlier. 60 Ma’afu’s position in Cakaudrove owed much to his rank in Tonga and to the rights bestowed on him by Tui Cakau. By this time, after more than a year with his powerful friend, his thoughts might well have turned to the voyage “home” to Lakeba.

Despite the representations from Tui Nayau, Tupou seemed bent on withdrawal from Fiji. Walter Lawry, on the second of his pastoral visits to the Fiji and Tonga missions, noted at Hihifo on Tongatapu in June 1850 that “there was a great stir about so many [Tongans] going away to Feejee, where they generally act as the English in Paris – cast off restraint and live as they list”. 61 A familiar lament, but when Lawry’s party left Tonga for Fiji in July, it included, at the king’s request, Joeli Mafileo, the Tongan local preacher who lived at Lakeba. Mafileo, who had served more than once as an intermediary between Tupou and his subjects in Fiji, carried with him tabua and other presents from the king to various Fijian chiefs. He also conveyed Tupou’s message “that all the Tonga people are to come away from Feejee, where they have been misbehaving, or the King will cast them off”. Those who chose to remain would, “in future, be subject only to the chiefs of Feejee”. 62 Lawry endorsed this policy as a means of removing from Fiji those whose presence hindered the progress of Christianity. Curiously, a few days after

60 Erskine, 145, fn.
61 Lawry, A second missionary visit..., 128.
his arrival in Lakeba, he was to express a more favourable view: “The Tonga people residing here used to be, in many instances, mere scape-grace people; but the case is very different now. They are generally an orderly and respectable class, fearing God and walking uprightly”.\textsuperscript{63} Lawry, it must be said, lacked the intimate knowledge of the Lakeba Tongans possessed by his colleagues who had worked on the island for years. Nevertheless, whatever their spiritual state, those same Tongans were faced with a choice of returning home or dispensing with their king’s protection. The crew of the \textit{Bramble}, visiting Lakeba in July following their short stay at Bau, found the Tongans were much in evidence. “The Tonga people have a fortified town to themselves and it seems altogether like Tongataboo than Feejee. The latter seems to have instilled the customs and ways of the strangers who really seem to people the island considering I saw only four Feejee men”.\textsuperscript{64} This was part of the community which the king instructed to come home or be cast off. Two questions arise from Tupou’s ultimatum: whether his authority among such an entrenched community was as great as he apparently believed and whether it was not in any case too late to dilute the community of “strangers” who had become part of the social and political landscape in their adopted home.

Tupou’s apparent desire to sever relations with Lau was never to be reconciled with the needs of the Tongans there, who were not persuaded to return home in sufficient numbers. A meeting of Tongan local preachers on Lakeba in October 1850 devoted itself to matters pastoral and political: two of their number were appointed to oversee the pastoral needs of the inland and seaside settlements, while the meeting also discussed the necessity “of there being a chief appointed from Tonga to govern the Tongan residents and visitors”, a move “unanimously regarded as highly desirable”.\textsuperscript{65} Joeli Mafileo, the perennial go-between, was asked to convey this message to the king. Lyth had called for the appointment of a governor, but here was the same request emanating from within the Tongan community itself. Despite the king’s edict in July, it seemed that the Lakeba Tongans were, in the literal sense at least, beyond recall.

By October, the hostilities of the previous nine years on Vanuabalavu were over.\textsuperscript{66} Nevertheless, the fortunes and prospects of the Christians on the island had not improved: in September, a Fijian teacher from Ono-i-Lau was murdered on Vanuabalavu. His Tongan companion, who survived, asked the murderers, “Why do you take one only? Will you not take my life also?” ‘No,’ they replied, ‘you are from Tonga, but he is of Feejee, and what right had he to profess Christianity?’\textsuperscript{67} This incident throws into high relief the political implications

\textsuperscript{63} ibid., 134.
\textsuperscript{64} Henry Gabriel Swainson, Journal 1850–1851, written aboard HM Schooner \textit{Bramble}.
\textsuperscript{65} Richard Lyth, Circuit Returns 1850–1853.
\textsuperscript{66} John Malvern to GS, WMMS, 16 Nov 1850, NLA Mp 2107.
\textsuperscript{67} Lawry, \textit{A second missionary visit…}, 200–201.
of the lotu in Cakaudrove. The new faith, like the Tongans who professed it, was perceived to be alien. The murderers’ attitude might be taken as representing that of Tuikilakila who, like Cakobau, was well aware of the potential threat that the lotu posed to his authority. Unlike Cakobau, he would not tolerate a missionary presence in his dominions and continued actively to persecute those of his subjects who converted. Lyth noted tersely in early October: “Tui Lomaloma has lotued – the war is ended”. 68

Although Ma`afu was still living in Cakaudrove, probably in close contact with Tui Cakau, we know nothing of his attitude toward the state of affairs on Vanuabalavu. The restoration of peace must have been connected with the arrival at Lakeba in November of the canoe Tafale, from Somosomo by way of Lomaloma. Its passengers brought word that “Tuipaleleha, Banuvi, Maafu, with their respective canoes are at Vanuabalavu on their way from Somosomo to this place”. 69 Earlier in the month, a folau brought over 100 people from Tonga, including some described by Joeli Mafileo as “insubordinate and mischievous [and] of all people the most unfit to come into the presence of heathens”. Mafileo thought their arrival “the more injudicious as [the king] has sent a letter to Tui Viti desiring him to lotu”. 70 It must have been evident even then that Tupou’s policy of withdrawal would not, or more probably could not, be put into practice. The king nevertheless appeared to be taking steps to discipline those Tongans returned from Lau who were considered to have transgressed during their time away. Tevita `Unga informed Lyth that his father would not acknowledge his own sister Lavinia on her return from Fiji “until she made some atonement for her crimes in Fiji. After working a month as a punishment she was admitted into his presence, and a house assigned for her accommodation”. 71 Other returning Tongans were judged and punished “without regard to rank”. 72 These actions, while commendable in missionary eyes, were probably of little consequence to the Tongan community in Lau. The Tongans had long since assumed a permanent place in Lauan society; any reforms to their way of life would have to be effected in Lau itself.

On the morning of 3 December 1850, Enele Ma`afu climbed out of the Tabilai, the canoe built for him at Somosomo, and stepped ashore at Lakeba. 73 His arrival, in company with his fellow chiefs and an entourage of local preachers and others, ended a self-imposed exile in Cakaudrove lasting some 18 months. Lakeba had changed during his absence: Christianity had, if not triumphed, certainly

68 Richard Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 5 Oct 1850.
69 ibid., 25 Nov 1850.
70 ibid., 9 and 14 Nov 1850.
71 ibid., 11 Nov 1850.
73 Richard Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 4 Dec 1850.
Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

gained the upper hand, while the newly-converted Tui Nayau, in his letter to Tupou the previous year, had fallen little short of offering Lakeba to Tonga on a plate. But the king had declined to intervene in the manner requested, leaving the Lakeban state in a kind of political limbo. Despite the reprieve gained when Mara’s incursion was rebuffed, Lakeba remained insecure. Much would depend on the direction taken by the island’s Tongan community, now firmly entrenched and able to ignore requests from Tupou to return home. Such were the conditions that greeted the returning exile.

Ma`afu’s arrival with the other Tongan chiefs marks a subtle but significant change in his life. Henceforth, his movements would, in large part, be recorded by the missionaries, a distinction the young chief had not enjoyed during his earlier stay on Lakeba between 1847 and 1849. In a community lacking effective leadership, the returning chief, still only about 24, quickly made his presence felt. On 23 December, a “Papist youth” menaced Lyth with a club in the Wesleyan chapel, striking him a severe blow on the hand. Four days later Ma`afu, who heard of the attack while he was visiting Oneata, “came over to see how things were going on”. This incipient leadership role, if such it was, occurred when events elsewhere in Fiji were bringing into focus the social and political dilemmas of the time and the role which the Tongans living in Fiji could play in the attempted resolution of those dilemmas.

Almost a year after his return to Lakeba, Ma`afu was to witness a new challenge to the progress of Christianity in Fiji. In November 1850, there was an outbreak of violence in the Christian village of Dama, near the former Wesleyan mission at Tiliva in Bua. Lyth saw the violence as a “war against Christianity ... encouraged by Bau”. Less than a month later, the Christian chief of Dama was murdered while on his way to peace negotiations at the nearby village of Nawaca. According to William Moore, Cakobau “had given the Nawaca people permission to kill all the Christian natives [at Dama], only to spare those who would become heathen again ... Many will die rather than give up their religion”. When Calvert, at his mission on Viwa, learned that Cakobau had intrigued to “destroy” Christianity throughout south-west Vanua Levu, he took a large *tabua* to Bau as an offering to Cakobau. Tui Viti, as the missionaries now usually referred to him, was “entreated” to stop the fighting. Even though Cakobau had stipulated that no harm be done either to missionaries or to Tongans, he was reminded that visiting ships of war were liable to seek revenge.

74 ibid., 28 Dec 1850.
78 Moore, Journal, 15 and 31 Dec 1850.
79 The “title”, largely invented by the missionaries, reflected the prestige enjoyed by Bau, rather than its actual power.
for destruction of Christian property. While at Bau, Calvert heard that a large heathen force had assembled near Dama, ready to complete the destruction of that town and also take Nawaca and Tiliva. Taking advantage of the presence at Bau of Tu’i Ha’a’apai, brother of Tūpou, Calvert asked the chief to take his accompanying force of 300 warriors to Bua in support of the Christian cause. Tu’i Ha’a’apai agreed, only to find that Cakobau would not permit the three large Tongan canoes to depart. After several days’ delay, the Vunivalu permitted one canoe to proceed, with Calvert on board. While a full-scale war in the Dama district was avoided, several Tongans were killed or wounded in an engagement with a force from Nawaca.\(^\text{80}\)

The hostilities in Bua were in similar vein to those on Vanuabalavu, where Maʻafu had not hesitated to intervene. Here, though, he had to tread more warily, owing to Cakobau’s involvement. While Cakobau instigated and encouraged the violence against the Christians, he continued to refuse to heed the entreaties both of Calvert and the Tongan chiefs resident at Bau. “It was only, when worn out by importunity, and perhaps alarmed for the consequences should any injury befall the Mission, that he at length unwillingly permitted a canoe to go, to render some protection to [the] Missions”.\(^\text{81}\) Although desultory clashes between Christian and heathen continued in the area for more than two years, heathen activity had received a check.\(^\text{82}\) The significance of these clashes lies in what they reveal of Cakobau’s attitude to Christianity at the time and in the use made by Calvert of Tu’i Ha’a’apai’s large force of Tongans in seeking to defend the Christian cause. Despite Maʻafu’s absence, the precedent for Tongan involvement in Bua had been established.

While Maʻafu, a nominal Christian, was bent on exploiting the lotu to his advantage, Cakobau remained “greatly annoyed” with the new faith. With the missionaries having refused to encourage the people to assist Cakobau in his various wars, the Vunivalu felt that his authority was diminished among those of his subjects who had converted. Joseph Waterhouse indeed believed that the lotu people had become “a party in the nation over which the prince exercised but slight authority”. Moreover, members of this party were not merely apostates from the faith of their fathers, but were “secretly disaffected towards his government”. For this reason, “the extirpation of the Christians” was planned: “Dama was but a beginning”.\(^\text{83}\) When besought by Calvert to end the fighting in Vanua Levu and to protect the Christians there, Cakobau rebuked the missionary:

\(^\text{80}\) Calvert to Lyth, 16 Jan 1851, quoted in Lyth to GS, WMMS, 11 Mar 1851. See also Moore, Journal, 3 and 25 Jan, 4 Feb 1851.
\(^\text{81}\) Lyth to GS, WMMS, 11 Mar 1851. See also Calvert, Journal, 24 Dec 1850 – 5 Jan 1851, passim.
\(^\text{82}\) Moore, Journal, 24 Jul and 11 Nov 1851.
\(^\text{83}\) Waterhouse, 127–128.
Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

`I shall not protect them; and I rejoice that you have now a fight of your own. When I ask you lotu people to help me in the war, you say, “No; it is not lawful for Christians to fight!” … Now, you have a fight of your own, and I am glad of it! Besides, I hate your Christianity’.

The rebuke was largely justified, since the events of Dama had brought home to the missionaries the folly of turning the other cheek and of expecting help from a chief who had long been urged to abandon fighting. Cakobau’s rage neatly exposed the limitations of Calvert’s idealism. It also expressed the Vunivalu’s frustration with a doctrine which he knew, even then, was likely eventually to triumph. Asked by Calvert whether he intended to stop the progress of Christianity, Cakobau replied, “No, I cannot do that. I know … that we shall all become Christian. But, in the meantime, I delight in you Christians being compelled to engage in war as well as we”. We are entitled to ask whether, in view of Dama and of Waterhouse’s allegation that nothing less than the “extirpation” of the Christians of Fiji was planned, Cakobau was as resigned to the inevitable as the missionary suggests. Whether or not the Vunivalu accepted the inevitable triumph of Christianity, his attitude stands in stark contrast to that of Ma`afu. The Tongan, equally aware of the political implications of the lotu, was determined to adopt its cause as a means of smoothing his path to power.

It was painfully evident to Cakobau that Ma`afu and the Tongans would no more go away than would Christianity. Despite their comings and goings being avidly noted by the missionaries at Lakeba, and despite the periodic appeals by Tupou for his subjects to return home, they were also in Fiji to stay. While their numbers constantly fluctuated, their conduct continued to attract missionary comment, sometimes favourable, usually the reverse. At home in Tonga, Tupou had not yet suppressed the last resistance to his rule. It might well have suited him that so many of his subjects remained in Fiji, despite his appeals to them to return and his disciplinary actions against those subjects known to have misbehaved themselves in Lau. Cakobau was as much aware of these complexities as he was of the implications of the large Tongan force present at Bau at the time of Dama, a force over which he was, for once, able to exercise a modicum of control.

The missionaries, like Cakobau, had to reach an accommodation with the Tongans, in their case so that the prospects of the lotu would not be diminished. Nine months after Dama, Lyth berated “the present bad system, of wholesale flocking to Fiji of this volatile people” and despaired of “the evils that have so frequently been complained of by the Missionaries”. Tu`i Ha`apai, acting on Tupou’s instructions, had commenced the work of “clearing out” as many

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84 Williams and Calvert, 1870 edn, 469.
85 ibid., 470.
86 Waterhouse, 129.
Tongans from Fiji as possible. Eleven large *drua* left Lakeba in early May, conveying several hundred men home to Tonga. “Lakeba has not been so clear of Tonga people since the arrival of Missionaries in the group in 1835, and probably for years before that”.

Despite the missionary’s apparent optimism, the numbers of Tongans in Lakeba would recover. With Dama having demonstrated that Tongans were always likely to be involved in any conflict in eastern Fiji, Cakobau had to maintain his authority amongst a people who respected it only when it suited them. While he could dilute the threat posed by Christianity by adopting the faith himself, as he would do in 1854, it would never be possible to accommodate the Tongans so easily.

Tongan unrest on Lakeba continued after Ma`afu’s return from Cakaudrove. In January, some Tongan youths, in an act of “cruel and wicked oppression”, took possession of a canoe that had failed to make the correct approach to the beach at Tubou and seized a quantity of yams and pigs on board. The spoil was shared with some unnamed Tongan “chiefs” and a Tongan preacher. This “despicable” act, instigated by Semesi Fiiita, a brother of Lausi’i, occurred when the Tongans were at prayer. The next day, Lyth bemoaned the “trying people [who] will not dig and to steal, oppress and plunder they are not ashamed”. Two weeks later, whether or not as an act of atonement, Ma`afu, Tu’ipelehake, Lausi’i and Banuvi “with their people were occupied in setting four new posts in the Bethel chapel”. The Tongans continued to act as they pleased and to heed the missionaries when they pleased. Ma`afu, for the first time in Lakeba, is counted among his fellow chiefs. We can surmise that Lyth allowed himself a wry smile when, on 7 February, he recorded advice received from Calvert on Viwa that “It is probable that Tui Viti is about (or thinks he is about) trying to persecute Christianity … (he) is very anxious to get all the Tongans at Lakeba out of the way”.

The Tongans’ victory at Dama, effectively a diplomatic triumph over Cakobau, would likely have pleased Ma`afu. Tui Nayau, however, was “anything but comfortable on hearing of the real and threatened doings of persecution”.

On 7 March, he and Vuetasau asked Lyth to write on their behalf to Tupou. Tevita `Unga, still on Lakeba, had visited Lyth the previous evening, “being desirous of hearing respecting passing events, as well as stating his own views”. This was the time when Tui Nayau was looking “this way and that for help”. He was evidently not the only Fijian “king” so placed: Cakobau was supposedly “trembling” when of one of Tu`i Ha`apai’s canoes returned from Bau with news.
of the visit to Fijian waters of an American warship sent to investigate various grievances. Lyth could not hide his pleasure at the Vunivalu’s discomfiture: “so the tables are turned – instead of holding a rod over the Christians of Feejee, God is holding a rod over him”.  

While tables might have been turned, the presence, brief as it was, of American military power served only to add another ingredient to the bubbling cauldron.

In April 1851, it appeared that Ma`afu might be persuaded to ponder his spiritual condition. Cakobau had advanced his own cause, at least in the missionaries’ eyes, by a series of concessions. He agreed to receive a missionary at Bau, to allow public worship there on the Sabbath and to declare “freedom of conscience in matters of religion”. While it is certain that the Vunivalu’s actions were not prompted by a desire to attain the means of grace, Lyth was encouraged to turn his attention to Ma`afu. “I embraced an opportunity of speaking seriously to Ma`afu about his soul yesterday”, the missionary was not slow to record. Since no response to his exhortations was noted, Ma`afu’s concerns appear to have remained essentially temporal. He had recently returned from a visit to Moala, where all was reported quiet following the murder there two months earlier, on Mara’s orders, of the occupants of a Tongan canoe. Mara continued “to cherish a bad spirit towards Lakeba and will be glad if he can gain the co-operation of Tui Viti to fight the place”. Since the failure of his military action against Lakeba, Mara had continued to nibble at the edges of the Tongan community there whenever opportunity arose. His apparent hopes for some kind of alliance with Cakobau against the Tongans came to nothing, since the Vunivalu besought Calvert to “warn Mara fully about his actions”. On his return from Moala, Ma`afu reassured Lyth that the people there had no wish to fight Lakeba and had only acted as they did because of their fear of Mara, who had since left the island for Bau. Several months earlier, Ma`afu had returned from Oneata to investigate the attack on Lyth. Now, in the worst threat of violence against the Lakeba Tongans for several years, Ma`afu had either been sent, or gone of his own accord, to take matters in hand. The voyage to Moala was an indication that his growing authority on Lakeba was accepted, not only by his fellow Tongans, but also by the ruling chiefs and the Wesleyan missionaries.

Ma`afu would not lack opportunities to exercise that authority. In March Lyth, who believed that the threats to Christianity in Lau and elsewhere in Fiji had not diminished, received a letter from Mataiase Vave, a Tongan local preacher

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93 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 14 Mar 1851.
94 Waterhouse, 131.
95 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 5 Apr 1851.
96 Calvert, Journal, 6 Feb 1851.
97 Lyth to GS, WMMS, 11 Mar 1851.
98 Calvert, Journal, 7 Feb 1851.
working at Lomaloma. Vave reported that raiders from Somosomo had recently visited the island of Mago, near Vanuabalavu, where they had burnt the chapel and plundered a Christian teacher’s house. Another raid was carried out at Susui, while at Munia the people were preparing to expel the Lomaloma Christians living among them, in order to avoid a similar fate. The Christians at Mago had been harassed in similar fashion at least twice before. Following these latest raids, the Mago Christians removed to Lomaloma, while some lotu people in Mualevu ventured as far as Oneata in search of sanctuary. Lyth saw further evidence of a conspiracy:

it appears the work of persecution is going on, there is an opinion afloat that an understanding exists between Tui Viti, Tuililaila and Mara, to prosecute this new undertaking. Tui Viti taking Ra, Tuililaila Vanuabalavu, and Mara Moala and Lakeba.

While Lyth’s sources of information are unknown, such a conspiracy seems unlikely, since the three supposed conspirators were themselves at odds, with little in common beyond their intense dislike of the changes wrought by Christianity. Cakobau’s disquiet concerning the Tongans might have diminished in May, when the 11 druа carrying hundreds of Tongans left Lakeba for home. Among the departing notables were Tevita `Unga, Semesi Fifita, Tu`i Ha`apai and Lausi`i, leaving Lualala and Ma`afu as the only Tongan community leaders on the island. It would be their task to direct any Tongan involvement in the troubles in Cakaudrove.

Unlike similar occasions in the past, no Tongan canoes sailed from Lakeba to Vanuabalavu to investigate the depredations on Mago and Susui. There was a proposal to undertake a voyage but, two days after Vave’s letter arrived, the Tongan chiefs agreed to postpone a visit “and to send off one canoe at first to see how things are going on at Mago and Vanuabalavu and to act … as the case seemed to call for afterwards”. News of the various removals rendered any further action unnecessary, even before the mass departure of early May. In any case, Tuikilakila would soon assure Calvert that the purpose of the raids had been to remind the Christians in his domains of their customary duties and that “he would not interfere further”. Ma`afu visited Oneata, possibly

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99 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 13 Mar 1851. Mataiase Vave was born in Niuafo`ou, Tonga about 1817 and converted there. He began work as a local preacher in Fiji before the first English missionaries arrived in October 1835. See Richard Lyth, Scrap Book, 12 Jan 1854.
100 Lyth, Day Book, 9 Jan 1850; Day Book and Journal, 23 Nov 1850.
101 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 9 Jan 1850; Day Book and Journal, 23 Nov 1850.
103 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 7 and 9 May 1851; Lyth to Thomas Williams, 7 May 1851, Letters to the Rev. Thomas Williams; Lyth to GS, WMMS, 11 Sep 1851, WMMS Australasia Correspondence.
104 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 25 Apr 1851.
105 Calvert, Journal, 6 Jun 1851. See also Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 3 Jul 1851.
Ma’afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

in connection with the arrival there of the Mualevu Christians, and after his return on 30 May he sought and received permission to meet in class. Lyth was impressed, writing of Ma’afu: “he has been the subject of serious impressions for some months: the Lord convert him fully”.106 The apparent change continued: less than a fortnight later, Ma’afu and Elenoa dined with the Lyths, with the missionary remarking of his guest: “he is now a steady man and in a hopeful way”.107 Whatever Ma’afu’s true spiritual state, his temporal affairs were never neglected. Three days after his social success, he sailed to Kabara to proceed with the construction of a new canoe.108

Having been reassured by Calvert that things were peaceful in Cakaudrove, Lyth in turn advised his Society that “all is quiet in the Windward Isles … It is reported … that Tuilikilaka’s sons are fighting amongst themselves”.109 Yet the picture he paints was deceptive: Lau might well have been peaceful, but like most parts of Fiji, it was affected by the long-running conflict, already a decade old, between Bau and Rewa. While fighting, intermittent but persistent, was concentrated on the Rewa delta, forces from Tailevu, Lomaiviti, Bua, Macuata and Cakaudrove were sometimes involved. The intricate causes and progress of the war do not concern us here; suffice to say that Bau had enjoyed the upper hand until the death in September 1851 of Rewa’s paramount chief Cokanauto, Roko Tui Dreketi, vasu to Bau. When his brother Qaraniqio, who succeeded him, ejected Bauan forces from Rewa, the war entered a new phase. While these events did not affect the Lauan Tongans for several more years, they should be borne in mind in view of the extensive and decisive involvement of Tongan forces in the final stage of the war in 1855.110

Ma’afu and his fellow Tongans on Lakeba remained undisturbed by the renewal of hostilities in Rewa. Lualala was finally baptised in June,111 several years after accepting the lotu, while Tui Nayau, although now professing Christianity, still refused both to marry his principal wife and to relinquish the others.112 Walter Lawry, visiting Lakeba in July 1850, had described Tui Nayau’s religion as “only a word, and not a power, so far”.113 During most of 1851, Ma’afu appears not to have engaged in political activities, since the sole mention of him over several months occurred in October when Lyth sent him “to investigate the disgraceful

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106 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 25 Apr 1851.
107 ibid., 9 Jun 1851.
108 ibid., 12 Jun 1851.
109 Lyth to GS, WMMS, 11 Sep 1851.
110 For a short account of the immediate aftermath of Cokanauto’s death, see Waterhouse, 133–134.
111 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 13 Jun 1851. Oddly, a Sefanaia Lualala, probably the same man, had been baptised at Hihifo, Tonga, on 10 Feb 1841. Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Baptismal Registers, Tongatapu Circuit 1840–1872, PMB 992.
112 Lyth to John Watsford, 2 Oct 1851, Letters from Mary Ann Lyth, James Calvert and Richard Burdsall Lyth.
113 Lawry, A second missionary visit...
4. “...the reformation is exploded”

The conduct of Mary Jane, wife of old chief Sefanaia [Lualala] of Waciwaci”. This is the first known occasion when Maʻafu was employed in Lau on pastoral duties, a sure sign of the missionaries’ continuing favour. While he continued to enjoy Lyth’s approval, the missionary expressed increasing unease about the prospect of Tongans returning to Lakeba in numbers. News from emissaries of Tupou in November that more small canoes were needed prompted a lament from the missionary that “Lakeba is likely to be crowded with Tongans”. A few days later, he consulted Vuetasau about “the expected flocking of Tonguese to this land” and how to “guard their people from the oppression of foreigners”. It was to Maʻafu that Lyth turned on 15 December: “I embraced an opportunity of setting before Maʻafu his responsibility to put evil away from his people, or to separate them from him”. Here was an unequivocal acknowledgement of Maʻafu as the leader of the Lakeba Tongans, who are described as “his people”. Lyth was more confident about Maʻafu’s leadership qualities than he was about those of Vuetasau in the Fijian community. He had for several months been expressing reservations about Vuetasau, whose conduct sometimes fell short of the missionary’s exacting standards. Vuetasau, although not a Tongan, was seen as a partner with Maʻafu in the leadership of all the inhabitants of Lakeba. He had acted wisely in early December when, on a visit to Cicia, he met Mara, who begged to be conveyed back to Lakeba, where he longed to exercise his vatu rights. Vuetasau prevaricated, telling Mara that Tui Nayau’s permission should be sought first, a wise move in view of Mara’s earlier depredations in “the land where he was made rich”.

During the year following Maʻafu’s return from Cakaudrove, neither he nor the Lakeban state was able to exert any significant influence in Vanuabalavu or its nearby islands. That situation was to change during 1852. Late in January, Mataiase Vave arrived in Lakeba with news that Raivalita, a son of Tuikilakila, had visited Lomaloma and disrupted a Christian service, forcing the local chief, Sefanaia Ravunisa, a Christian, to expel the Tongan teachers from the village. Raivalita had acted “to keep his father’s territories from the encroachments of Bau and Lakeba chiefs”. Four days after Vave’s arrival, Maʻafu, Vuetasau and other prominent Fijians and Tongans from Lakeba left for Lomaloma with instructions from Tui Nayau “to pursue a moderate course of conduct towards Somosomo and only to remove such of the Christians as lotu truly”. The expedition, under Vuetasau’s command, spent only one night at Lomaloma, returning to Lakeba

114 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 9 Oct 1851.
115 ibid., 25 Nov 1851.
116 ibid., 2 Dec 1851.
117 ibid., 16 Dec 1851.
118 ibid., 25 Nov 1851; Lyth to Thomas Williams, 10 March 1851, Letters to the Rev. Thomas Williams.
119 Lyth, Day Book and Journal, 12 Dec 1851.
120 Lyth, Journal, 27 Jan 1852.
121 ibid., 2 Feb 1852.
with Vave and other teachers and leaders.\textsuperscript{122} It seems that on this brief visit, under the direction of Vuetasau, Ma`afu did not collect any tribute or otherwise exercise the levying rights granted him three years earlier by Tuikilakila.

On Lakeba, Tui Nayau expressed his dismay at the expected arrival of a large party of Tongans for more canoe building by declaring “that his Tongan friends love his vesi more than him”.\textsuperscript{123} Ma`afu meanwhile appeared to have undergone a spiritual reformation: in describing “an astonishing and pleasing change wrought in Ma`afu”, Lyth recorded the words of a man who had accompanied him on the recent voyage to Lomaloma. Ma`afu “was continually reproving his people when they did wrong – and was reading his bible all day long”. Once back in Lakeba, Ma`afu addressed a large assembly of Tongans at Lualala’s house, reminding them that since Tui Nayau and his people were now Christian, it behoved the Tongans “to serve God and put away their sins”. Ma`afu requested Lualala to move from his home in Waciwaci to the seaside near Tubou, so that they might co-operate in keeping the Tongans in order. Ma`afu, Lyth declared, “has become steady, attentive to the means of grace, diligent in using the word, and for some time now a candidate for church membership”. The missionary offered no explanation for such a transformation, beyond that of God “bringing it about in his own way without any special effort on our part”.\textsuperscript{124}

Ma`afu’s reforms, both personal and communal, proved of short duration. Only ten days later, he evinced “an outbreak of temper”, almost clubbing a young Tongan for frequenting his house during his absence in Cakaudrove and drinking yaqona with Elenoa and other Tongan women. Elenoa herself confessed to her husband that she had “committed sin” with Semesi Banuvi. “O these abominable Tonguese”, wailed Lyth. In a later addendum Lyth noted laconically: “Since this outbreak Ma`afu has quite turned back to the world – Sefanaia has returned to Wathiwathi and the reformation is exploded”.\textsuperscript{125}

Whether or not Ma`afu was aware, Mara was still scheming to regain his vasu rights on Lakeba. Having earlier stated that Lakeba “would be all right” if Vuetasau and another chief named Koroi Rajini were killed, Mara was now expected to attempt to enlist the two chiefs to his cause. Mara believed that they “had all in their power in the Lakeba dominions. No doubt but he remembers their former plans together – whether against Lua or Tui Nayau”.\textsuperscript{126} When this scheme came to nothing, Mara in February allied himself with the principal Rewan chiefs arrayed against Cakobau, while at the same time continuing his raids among islands owing allegiance to Lakeba. Before he “fled” to Rewa, Mara

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{122} ibid., 11 Feb 1852. See also Lyth to Thomas Williams, 29 Jan 1852, Letters to the Rev. Thomas Williams.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Lyth, Journal, 19 Feb 1852.
  \item \textsuperscript{124} Lyth, Journal, 19 Feb 1852.
  \item \textsuperscript{125} ibid., 28 Feb 1852.
  \item \textsuperscript{126} Calvert, “Vewa Record”, 27 Feb 1852, Personal Papers.
\end{itemize}
“had been speaking evil of Lakeba and the lotu to the Vunivalu and others, saying that Lakeba was bad because of it”. Tui Nayau, as delicately placed as ever, declared that Lakeba was not his or Mara’s but the Vunivalu’s land. He reassured Cakobau that if Mara landed they would take care of him “and not kill him – for if he was killed Lakeba would be afraid”. Ma`afu, firmly placed now in his leadership role on Lakeba, would have to confront Mara sooner rather than later.

Another person likely to confound the Ma`afu’s ambitions and Tui Nayau’s peace of mind was Tuikilakila, Tui Cakau. The events of January on Vanuabalavu were another episode in Tui Cakau’s long campaign against the incursions of Christianity there. In March, two of his sons, Raivalita and Mara, had been forced to leave Vanuabalavu after, among other depredations, destroying the chapels at Lomaloma and on Munia. Lyth believed that these “outrageous proceedings” had “almost cured the people themselves of their opposition to Christianity”. Within a week, however, the missionary’s grim satisfaction changed to alarm when he heard that “a large army” from Cakaudrove had reached Lomaloma on its way to fight against both Cicia and Lakeba itself. Ma`afu was recalled from a visit to Kabara, while defensive fences were hastily built around Tubou and Levuka. Several canoes carrying “the most influential chiefs” sailed to Cicia to assist in its defence. The day before their arrival, the two Cakaudrove canoes arrived off Cicia but were not allowed to land. Their chief Vakaloto, another son of Tui Cakau, on asking the reason why their landing was opposed, was told it was because of the persecution of the lotu people in Cakaudrove. The next morning there was an exchange of fire as the Cakaudrove party made sail to depart, resulting in one of their number being wounded. But depart they did, before the canoes from Lakeba arrived, with news later that their chief Ravunisa had “begun again to keep the Sabbath”, while other Christians continued steadfast. The threat to Lakeba, if there had been one, came to nothing.

These events, a setback for Tui Cakau, nevertheless did little to allay the fears of those at Lakeba, including Ma`afu, concerning Cakaudrove’s ultimate intentions. While visiting Bau in June, Lyth heard that Tui Cakau – “his cannibal majesty” – was also there, and sought him out for a meeting. When Lyth called accompanied by his colleagues Thomas Williams and James Watsford, Tui Cakau literally danced with delight at seeing them, or so it appeared to the missionaries. Following their entreaties, he agreed to allow the expelled Tongan teachers to return to Vanuabalavu. He further declared that he harboured no animosity towards Lakeba “but on the other hand appeared to be peacefully disposed”.

128 ibid., 25 Mar 1852.
129 ibid., 31 Mar 1852.
130 ibid., 7 and 10 Apr, 20 May and 30 Jul 1852; Lyth to GS, WMMS, 20 Apr 1852, WMMS LFF.
Ma’afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

Although Lyth was reassured, events would reveal the extent to which he and his fellow missionaries had been deceived. On returning to Lakeba, he was dismayed to discover that Mara, his intentions unknown, had arrived on the island the day before. Tui Nayau, on hearing about Lyth’s interview with Tuikilakila, entertained “strong suspicions that Tuikilakila’s intentions toward Lakeba are not so pacific as he had stated them to be”. Lyth believed there was less to be feared from Tui Cakau than from his sons, since it was they, and not he, who had turned the Christians out of Lomaloma and later threatened Cicia. “The heathens have been rebuked not on account of political but religious principal [sic]”, he declared. But the two were inextricably linked; for the Cakaudrove chiefs, the most important consideration was the threat to their hegemony posed by the lotu.

Missionary exasperation persisted following the breakdown of Ma’afu’s reforms. In August an American trader named William Ives, who had been living on Lakeba for several months, absconded with two girls employed as servants by John Malvern. Ives sailed away with them in a whaleboat that three Europeans, in company with Ma’afu, had brought over from Oneata a few days earlier. Lyth deplored the “impudence” of the Tongans with Ma’afu at their head. Ma’afu admitted knowledge of the plot, but denied being privy to the girls’ abduction. “[It] was evident that he knew more than he admitted”, Lyth declared. Mara had apparently “entrapped” Ma’afu into participation, “though [Ma’afu] I fear is bad enough for it”. Two days after Ives’ departure, Mara and Ma’afu themselves left, bound for Cicia and Moala.

A mystery surrounds Ma’afu’s intentions during these weeks. In August Joseph Rees, a resident of Viti Levu and former printer for the missionaries, arrived on Lakeba with news that a war against the island would begin “after the next yam season. Rees said that Tuikilakila did not seem desirous of war – but had been urged to it by Ma’afu”. Then, two days later, Mara returned from Cicia with news that Ma’afu had joined Ives and was proceeding with the American to Ovalau. This curious sequence of events was only partly explained by the news that the three Europeans were escapees from prison in Samoa who had had a boat constructed for them at Futuna and sailed in it to Oneata, whose chief detained them. They were freed only when Ma’afu visited Oneata, requisitioned the boat and sailed in it, with the men, to Lakeba.

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133 ibid., 15 Jul 1852.
134 Lyth to his parents, 27 Jul 1852.
135 Lyth, Journal, 7 and 9 Aug 1852.
136 ibid., 11 Aug 1852.
137 ibid., 13 Aug 1852.
138 ibid., 15 Aug 1852.
It is impossible, on the available evidence, to deduce Ma`afu’s motives during this period of intense activity. While Rees’ secondhand account of Ma`afu’s apparently bellicose attitude serves only to deepen our perplexity, it is clear that Lyth’s distrust of Ma`afu was increasing. Having now observed Ma`afu at close quarters for more than two years, the missionary was not prompted solely by Ma`afu’s failure to assume the mantle of a responsible Christian leader of the Tongan community on Lakeba. During Ma`afu’s absence, all the villages on Lakeba repaired existing ditches and dug new ones, in expectation of an invasion from Somosomo. Ma`afu returned to Lakeba in September after five weeks away, during which time he had visited Ovalau, Bau and even Ra, on Viti Levu’s northern coast. He brought with him news of the continued success of Rewa in the war against Bau.

It was now more than five years since Ma`afu had come from Tonga to begin what was to be a permanent residence in Fiji. During that time, there is little evidence of close contact between him and the islands of his birth, a situation which resulted in part from the efforts of Tupou to consolidate his rule and to achieve in fact the unity which had existed in name since his succession as Tu’i Kānokupolu in 1845. When Ma`afu was reputedly intriguing with Mara and urging Tuikilakila to fight, Tupou achieved his final victory over the last “heathen” rebels at Pea on Tongatapu, emerging as “undisputed Sovereign of the Friendly Isles”.

The king’s victory was enhanced by a timely visit from HMS Calliope, a British warship whose commander, Sir Everard Home, successfully urged Tupou to accept the peaceful surrender of the Pea chiefs. Home had visited Tonga eight years before when, as commander of HMS North Star, he engaged the services of Ma`afu as pilot. Now, sailing to Fiji in September after the cessation of hostilities on Tongatapu, Home headed for Moala, where he heard Ma`afu had gone. Disappointed at missing him there, Home wrote him a long letter, outlining the recent events at Pea, rejoicing in the king’s final victory and addressing Ma`afu as “an old friend”. Home expressed the wish to foster the spread of Christianity in Fiji, following its success in Tonga, and to do what he could to protect the Fijian people from unscrupulous Europeans.

Lyth, perhaps after discussion with Home, wrote “it was expected that the King … would at once prepare to visit Feejee … to carry out a reform of his people resident in Feejee – to remove the refractory – and set a suitable person over the rest”.

The missionary probably heard from Home that such was the intention of Tupou, who had long been aware of the nature of the Tongan community in Lau. Now that peace and unity were established at home, he enjoyed an

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139 ibid., 24 Aug 1852.
140 ibid., 18 Sep 1852.
141 Thomas Adams to GS, WMMS, Aug 1852, WMN, New Series, No. 171, March 1853, 41–42.
142 Sir James Everard Home to Henry Ma`afu, 29 Sep 1852, quoted in Lyth, Journal, 29 Sep 1852.
143 Lyth, Voyage to Vauavatu, Moala, Matuku and Totoya 1852, 30 Sep 1852.
Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

unprecedented opportunity to put his second house in order. The implications of a final peace in Tonga cannot have been lost on Ma`afu although, as so often, his views on the subject were not recorded.

The period when the final unification of Tonga under Tupou was achieved also marks the end of the first phase of Ma`afu’s career in Fiji. Through the fog occasioned by the paucity of sources and the accretion of legend, it is possible to discern the foundations of his future power. In these early years, when Ma`afu’s ambition had not yet asserted itself, he was yet unable to challenge for supreme power in Fiji. There is no evidence that he then held any longer term plans in that direction. What can be said is that he both recognised opportunities when they occurred and did his best to make them occur. His acquaintance with Vanuabalavu, likely begun at the time of Lualala’s expedition there in 1847, bore fruit less than two years later with the grant of levying rights by Tui Cakau. Ma`afu’s subsequent “exile” in Cakaudrove remains the least-known period of his life in Fiji. While his rank alone would have ensured his place among the Somosomo chiefs bearing tribute to Bau in 1850, we know almost nothing of his life at Somosomo, the nature and extent of his alliance with Tui Cakau, or his attitude towards the persecution of Christians in Cakaudrove, carried on intermittently during his stay. Once he returned “home” to Lakeba, the record of his words and actions found in missionary sources is evidence of his growing prominence among the Tongan community there. He was acknowledged by Tui Nayau, the missionaries and, most importantly, by the Tongans themselves, as a leader. His recognition in this role by Lyth is especially significant in the light of that missionary’s growing distrust of him. Ma`afu’s frequent voyaging to southern Lau, the Yasayasa Moala, Bau, Cakaudrove and parts of Viti Levu indicates a widening network of contact and influence over all of eastern Fiji. The *valu ni lotu*, or war of Christianity, to be considered in the next chapter, was to be the first occasion when the power and influence, still limited as they were, which Ma`afu had acquired would come to be enhanced through war.