

## 5. “We are Kai Tonga”

The islands of Moala, Totoya and Matuku, collectively known as the Yasayasa Moala, lie between 100 and 130 kilometres south-east of Viti Levu and approximately the same distance south-west of Lakeba. While, during the nineteenth century, the three islands owed some allegiance to Bau, there existed also several family connections with Lakeba. The most prominent of the few practising Christians there was Donumailulu, or Donu who, after lotuing while living on Lakeba, brought the faith to Moala when he returned there in 1852.<sup>1</sup> Because of his conversion, Donu was soon forced to leave the island’s principal village, Navucunimasi, now known as Naroi. He took refuge in the village of Vunuku where, with the aid of a Tongan teacher, he introduced Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Donu’s home island and its two nearest neighbours were to be the scene of Ma`afu’s first military adventures, ostensibly undertaken in the cause of the *lotu*.

Richard Lyth, still working on Lakeba, paid a pastoral visit to the Yasayasa Moala in October 1852. Despite the precarious state of Christianity on Moala itself, Lyth departed in optimistic mood, largely because of his confidence in Donu, “a very steady consistent man”.<sup>3</sup> He observed that two young Moalan chiefs “who really ruled the land, remained determined haters of the truth”.<sup>4</sup> On Matuku, which he also visited, all villages had accepted the *lotu* except the principal one, Dawaleka, to which Tui Nayau was *vasu*.<sup>5</sup> The missionary’s qualified optimism was shattered in November when news reached Lakeba of an attack on Vunuku by the two chiefs opposed to the *lotu*. After the entire village, including the chapel, was burnt down, Donu sent to his Lakeba friends for help.<sup>6</sup> The timing and intensity of the island’s response to the appeal were largely determined by the events of the preceding few months.

In September HMS *Calliope*, Captain Sir Everard Home, reached Levuka after calling at Moala. “The Feejees were never in a worse state than at the present time”, Home recorded, a situation he ascribed largely to the continuing hostilities between Bau and Rewa.<sup>7</sup> He thought the end might be near now that Qaraniqio was gaining support at the expense of Cakobau. Qaraniqio, professedly anxious for the war to end, announced he would *lotu* when it did. Home hastened to assure the Vunivalu that if he too were to become a Christian, “all Feejee will follow your example”. Cakobau was susceptible to such advice, having been

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1 Richard Lyth, Journal, 31 Jul 1852.

2 A.C. Reid, *Tovata I and II*, Suva 1990, 35–37.

3 Lyth, Journal, 5 Oct 1852.

4 Lyth to GS, WMMS, 10 Jan 1854, WMMS LFF.

5 *ibid.* See also Journal, 1–7 Oct 1852.

6 *ibid.*, 26 Nov 1852; Lyth to GS, WMMS, 10 Jan 1854.

7 Sir J. Everard Home to Augustus Stafford, Secretary of the Adm, 20 Dec 1852, Adm.1/5617, PRO reel 3303.

Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji

“deeply impressed with the effects of Christianity” on Lakeba when he visited the island earlier in the year.<sup>8</sup> For the present, though, “all [remained] dull and fearful” at Bau.<sup>9</sup>

Home also called on James Calvert at Viwa, where he reported an atmosphere of “joy” in marked contrast to the gloom prevailing at Bau. It is likely that the views expressed in his letters to Cakobau and Qaraniqio reflected those of Calvert, who believed that peace and unity would follow a conversion at Bau. Calvert asked Home to intervene in a worsening dispute in Bua, where the commander arrived with the missionary on 19 October. The mission station at Bua Bay, supervised by Thomas Williams and William Moore, was being hard pressed by neighbouring heathen villages, while there had earlier been rumours of an impending attack by Ritova, Tui Macuata and *vasu* to Cakobau. Only three days after his arrival, Home presided over a meeting of the heathen and *lotu* chiefs of Bua, at which peace was agreed.<sup>10</sup> Ma`afu, on Lakeba, was reportedly ready to sail to Somosomo, at the behest of the missionaries and Lualala, with gifts for Tuikilakila.<sup>11</sup>

For the moment, though, Ma`afu remained immersed in matters of local concern, building a house for the new Wesleyan schoolmaster, William Collis. A chapel was likewise under construction in Tubou, partly in expectation of a visit from King Tupou. The need for it had arisen from Ma`afu’s gift to the missionaries of the old chapel for use as a school, “a proposal that has given general satisfaction”. When, on the same day, trader William Ives returned to Lakeba with one of the girls he had earlier abducted, Ma`afu again denied knowledge of the affair, naming a local preacher as implicated.<sup>12</sup> When word came from Moala of the murder of a local preacher named Maciu, Ma`afu’s presence on Lakeba meant that he could respond quickly, although in November he visited Ono, whence he returned in Joseph Rees’s company.<sup>13</sup> Tui Nayau initially sent a *tabua* to the Moalan chief “who was at the root of the persecution”, but the gift and its accompanying conciliatory message were slow in arriving. The urgent request for help from Donu resulted in the despatch on 7 December of a Lakeban complement that included Ma`afu as well as Waqaimalani and Sokutukivei, both senior chiefs of the Vuanirewa, who sailed in the *Tabilai*. Their spokesman was the Mata ki Bau, the Lakeban envoy to Bau, who carried a second large *tabua* for presentation to the Moalan chiefs. The choice of the Mata ki Bau for the delicate mission was prompted by the allegiance, limited as

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8 Report of the Work of God in the Vewa Circuit to June 1852, Methodist Mission: Correspondence and Papers relating to Ba Military Campaigns 1873, PMB 1093.

9 Home to Tui Viti, 13 Oct 1852, WMMS LFF. See also Home to Qaraniqio, 18 Oct 1852, quoted in Thomas Williams, *The Journal of Thomas Williams...*, ed. by G.C. Henderson, 2 vols, Sydney 1931, 577.

10 Williams, 576–578 (19–22 Oct 1852); James Calvert to GS, WMMS, 16 Feb 1853, WMMS LFF.

11 JM, 27 Nov 1852.

12 Lyth, Journal, 21 Oct, 5 Nov and 24 Nov 1852.

13 JM, 25 and 27 Nov 1852.

it was, of the Yasayasa Moala to Bau. Lyth asserted that these chiefs were under orders from Tui Nayau and Vuetasau to attempt a peaceful resolution of the conflict.<sup>14</sup>

When the Moalan chiefs refused to receive Tui Nayau's envoys, the latter returned to Lakeba, leaving the rival villages, heathen Navucunimasi and *lotu* Vunuku, building war fences. On 13 December, a *lotu* party left Vunuku to lay siege to Navucunimasi. The return of the Mata ki Bau to Lakeba the same day left Tui Nayau and Vuetasau little choice but to follow their failed diplomacy with military assistance. Vuetasau sailed with Loganimoce and others, but when he reached Moala five days later, all was over. While Vuetasau was still at sea, Ma`afu and his followers, including a Vava`u chief known in Fiji as Wainiqolo, had quickly joined the *lotu* party investing Navucunimasi. When, three days later, the combined force entered the village, the teachers and principal chiefs assembled in the temple for a *cuva*, or bowing of the knee, a symbolic submission, even if under duress, to the *lotu*. During proceedings, one of the "heathen" chiefs had the temerity to laugh, causing Ma`afu to charge at him with the end of his musket. During the ensuing mêlée, the *lotu* forces, both Tongan and Moalan, ransacked the village houses while the two principal chiefs, Baba and Koroitua, were taken prisoner, bound with sinnet and placed on board the *lotu* canoes, eventually to be conveyed to Lakeba. One of the Tongan preachers attempted to deny the destruction wrought by the *lotu* forces in his choice of a text for the sermon preached on 15 December among the foundations of the demolished temple: "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children".<sup>15</sup>

Vuetasau was confronted with the victory of the *lotu* forces when he arrived at Moala on 19 December. Ma`afu had stolen his thunder; Tui Nayau and Vuetasau's attempted diplomacy had been overturned by the Tongans, whose armed intervention on the side of the *lotu* quickly defeated the heathens of Navucunimasi. Tui Nayau and his nephew had sought to intervene in Moala because they regarded the troubles there as "a contest between the heathen and the Christians that involves Moala ... Totoya and Matuku". To Lyth's chagrin, the decision was made without consultation with the missionaries.<sup>16</sup> The formal submission of Moala to the *lotu*, occurring after Vuetasau's arrival, was followed a week later by the conversion of the leading non-Christian community on Totoya. On Matuku, only Tui Yaroi remained steadfast in opposition after the

14 *ibid.*, 6–7 Dec 1852.

15 This account is based on Lyth, Day Book, 11–17 Dec 1852. See also Lyth, Journal, 13–15 Dec 1852; Lyth to GS, WMMS, 10 Jan 1854, WMMS LFF; JM, 13 Dec 1852.

16 Lyth, Journal, 13 December 1852.

conversion of his entire village in January 1853. Ma`afu, seeking perhaps to demonstrate his commitment to the *lotu*, sent Lyth a huge *tanoa*, six feet in diameter, pillaged from the temple at Navucunimasi.<sup>17</sup>

One immediate consequence for Moala was the installation as Tui Moala of Baba, who was to rule the island as a kind of governor for Ma`afu. This was a significant change, since before the Tongan intervention, Moalans regularly sent first fruits tribute to Bau.<sup>18</sup> Much later, at the Lands Claims Commission hearings in 1880, Ma`afu would claim, with documentary evidence, that Cakobau had urged the Moala chiefs to rebel against their new master and place themselves under Bau. "Stay as you are", Ma`afu supposedly told the chiefs. "If anything comes of [Cakobau's request], it will be a fight between me and Bau".<sup>19</sup> Following their departure from Matuku, where Tui Yaroi had agreed to *lotu* in the future, the Lakebans returned home "in triumph" on 8 January 1853.<sup>20</sup> The changes they had wrought in the three islands, ostensibly in support of the *lotu*, were essentially political in nature. While Ma`afu gained most from them, no conclusions can be drawn concerning the nature or extent of his ambitions in 1852. There are significant clues, however, in the evidence he gave before the Lands Claims Commission hearings and in the oral traditions from these years recounted in the *Tukutuku Raraba*. Both accounts present the events of late 1852 from a perspective markedly different to that of Lyth. Ma`afu's sworn evidence at the Commission was:

I remember hearing of a church at Moala being burnt. The chief of Moala wrote ... to me and to the missionary to send a boat over to protect them ... the Lakeba people were afraid. I said, "Very well, I will go down and see about it". There was my vessel and a Lakeba vessel, and we set sail for Totoya. I anchored at Totoya and found there a Kabara vessel. I asked them to come with us. We went on and reached Moala. We anchored at one of the "lotu" towns, and a chief of one of the heathen towns came and asked, "Who are you?" We said, "We are Kai Tonga." He said "You are like the peeling a ripe banana and eating it, after which there is nothing left." The crew of the canoe heard this and followed the chief to capture him. I waved to them to desist. Then the vessel went away and we slept there. Next day was Saturday, and I ordered all hands to land and put up a fighting fence ... we sent out a scout who reported that the enemy was approaching. When the men heard this they stopped work

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17 *ibid.*, 30 Dec 1852.

18 John Erskine, *Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific ... in Her Majesty's Ship "Havannah"*, facsimile edn, Papakura NZ 1987, Appendix A: Narrative by John Jackson of his residence in the Feejees, 352. See also Marshall Sahlins, *Moala: Culture and Nature on a Pacific Island*, Ann Arbor 1962, 372.

19 Evidence of Ma`afu, LCC R972 Matuku.

20 Lyth to GS, WMMS, 10 Jan 1854.

and commenced the fight. We beat them, and they never came on again. The next day they soro'd. From that time Moala was under Tonga, and Matuku and Totoya also.<sup>21</sup>

Ma`afu's claim that, following his brief campaign, the Moala group was "under Tonga" is echoed in the *Tukutuku Raraba* of Sawana, which records that following the capture of Baba and Koroitua at Navucunimasi, Ma`afu had declared: "Moala will be under lewa vakatoga" [Tongan law or jurisdiction].<sup>22</sup> Writing more than a year after the events, Lyth was prepared to shed the best light possible on Ma`afu's actions: "Ma`afu ... had the principal command, and acted, if not in all respects with moderation and prudence, yet at least with decision".<sup>23</sup> Again, this time in a significantly wider context, Ma`afu's leadership role was acknowledged. Father Joseph-François Roulleaux, a Marist missionary in Fiji, could not but view the onward march of Wesleyanism in those islands with irony. Recalling the events at Pea and Houma on Tongatapu earlier in the year, he wrote of Ma`afu's actions in the *Yasayasa Moala*: "Il paraît que Ma`afu s'est comporté en digne parent du roi Georges" [It appears that Ma`afu conducted himself in a manner worthy of a relation of King George].<sup>24</sup>

In evidence before the Lands Claims Commission in 1880, Ma`afu found it expedient to present the actions of himself and his followers as protecting the *lotu* and placing the islands under the protection of a rule of law based on Christian principles. The reality was simpler: whether Donu's appeal had been made to the Vuanirewa chiefs, as Lyth suggests, or directly to him, as Ma`afu claimed, he was quick to use the opportunity to play the most fundamental of political games: the augmentation of power. So long as the new *status quo* persisted, Ma`afu remained the effective master of the *Yasayasa Moala*.

The absence of Bau from any involvement in the events on Moala owed something to the rapidity with which they occurred. More important was the distraction occasioned both by the reversals of fortune in the seemingly endless hostilities with Rewa and by the long-expected death of Tanoa on 8 December 1852. Home joined the chorus of missionaries in urging Cakobau not to allow the customary strangling of widows following Tanoa's death. However, for Cakobau to yield to such persuasion would have meant acknowledging the threat to his power posed by Christianity.<sup>25</sup> For Ma`afu, the fortunes of Cakobau were to become increasingly important since, after the Tongan's success in the

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21 Evidence of Ma`afu, 20 Nov 1880, LCC 960 Munia. See also "The German Land Claims" in Fiji, Notes on the Statements and Evidence contained in two volumes recording the proceedings of the Anglo-German Mixed Commission of 1884–1885.

22 TR, Tikina ko Lomaloma, Koro ko Sawana, Yavusa ko Toga, Native Lands Commission, Suva.

23 Lyth to GS, WMMS, 10 Jan 1854.

24 JM, 26 Dec 1852.

25 Joseph Waterhouse, *The King and People of Fiji*, [first edn 1866], Pasifika Press, Auckland 1997, 135–137.

Moala group, further expansion of his influence and power would bring him into confrontation with Bau. On Lakeba meanwhile, after Ma`afu's triumphant return, Lyth was well aware of how the rapid reversal of the *lotu*'s fortunes had occurred. When told that all but two Matuku villages had lotued and that the last heathen village on Totoya was ready to follow suit, he was certain that "the fear of the conquerors of Navucunimasi had lead to this general turning".<sup>26</sup> The military prowess of Ma`afu and his followers had asserted control of the islands in the name of Christianity. In the process, the Tongan chief had discovered that the cloak of the *lotu* fitted his powerful shoulders too well to be discarded.

A month after Ma`afu's return, he and Vuetasau were planning "to go with a large folau to Vanuabalavu to carry out another crusade ... to intimidate them into submission either to lotu or ... to abstain from persecution if they show fight[,] of course they will fight them".<sup>27</sup> The voyage would repeat the tried and tested *modus operandi* of the two chiefs, who were then in southern Lau seeking recruits. Tui Nayau, harbouring doubts, asked Lyth whether such a method of propagating the *lotu* were right. The missionary replied that it was not. Speaking in the presence of his advisers, Tui Nayau referred to the plan as "so different from the course pursued by the missionaries from England and Tonga – certainly a new thing sprung up in Lakeba".<sup>28</sup> Lyth lamented that Vuetasau and Ma`afu "are their own counsellors; they neither told their minds to the King nor yet to us".<sup>29</sup> The two chiefs meant to pursue their plan in defiance of all opposition.

Tui Nayau's moral dilemma arose from a visit two months earlier from a son of chief Sefanaia Ravunisa, who asked if he would accept a *soro* from the Lomaloma chiefs and send some more teachers. He agreed to both requests.<sup>30</sup> Lyth, aware of "the still unsettled troubles of Vanuabalavu" and of the continuing threat to Lakeba from Somosomo, nevertheless rebuked the Tongan missionary Joeli Bulu for his "disposition to administer some Lakeba physic" to Vanuabalavu, in other words to use force to encourage conversion.<sup>31</sup> The plans of Ma`afu and Vuetasau exacerbated Lyth's frustrations with the Tongans, whose continued residence on Lakeba he described as "a second Egyptian bondage".<sup>32</sup> By 25 February 1853, most of the *folau* was ready to sail, headed by Ma`afu's canoe *Tainawi*. Other prominent Tongans such as Semesi Fifita, and even Tui Nayau himself, were expected to join.<sup>33</sup> Ma`afu, perhaps feeling that he should not openly defy the missionary, proposed a compromise: "The King should [first] send a canoe ... to

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26 Lyth, Journal, 6 Jan 1853.

27 *ibid.*, 8 Feb 1853.

28 *ibid.*

29 *ibid.*, 12 Feb 1853.

30 *ibid.*, 7 and 10 Dec 1852.

31 *ibid.*, 10 Dec 1852.

32 *ibid.*, 14 Feb 1853.

33 *ibid.*, 25 Feb 1853.

Tuikilakila and that he Ma`afu should undertake the commission – if that should fail then what should be done would be a further consideration – that ... was the only reasonable course – for good to go before and bad to follow – not vice versa – as he understood the King to have said".<sup>34</sup> Ma`afu suggested that he and Lyth have separate interviews with Tui Nayau to persuade him to acquiesce. He claimed that his only purpose in voyaging to Cakaudrove was to seek Tuikilakila's agreement to restore the Christian teachers. Lyth was not convinced:

I put it to [Ma`afu] whether it was not both his mind and William's to go and punish the Vanuabalavu people because of the offence they had given them – this he could not but admit had something to do with it tho' he denied that revenge was the only motive.<sup>35</sup>

Two nights before the planned departure, Tui Nayau advised Ma`afu that the *folau* was not to sail to Somosomo. Ma`afu agreed, only to announce in the morning plans to sail immediately to Vanuabalavu instead, claiming that he, other chiefs and the two missionaries had agreed on the change. Lyth, his patience exhausted, could not refrain from sending a message to Ma`afu, asking his forgiveness for "having believed he was an honest man".<sup>36</sup> But Ma`afu would not be dissuaded. On the morning of departure, he declared flatly to Lyth that he was sailing to Somosomo to see Tuikilakila, while Vuetasau would proceed "to make the lotu warm at Vanuabalavu".<sup>37</sup>

The *folau* of eight large canoes set sail on the morning of 2 March, only to be driven back by contrary winds when they had cleared the island. One of the canoes lost its mast and sail overboard, while another struck some rocks. The scheme was confounded further when many of the voyagers contracted influenza soon after their return.<sup>38</sup> Lyth saw divine intervention: "He blew upon the unrighteous project and they returned confounded and chagrined. Ma`afu is ready to sail when the wind and weather will serve – to Somosomo, on the King's and their own business".<sup>39</sup> Although Ma`afu and Vuetasau realised that the time was not yet ripe to increase their influence in Vanuabalavu, Lyth was right to think that the "unrighteous project" was delayed rather than abandoned.

While both Tongans and missionaries were preoccupied with plans for the delayed voyage, news continued to arrive from the Yasayasa Moala concerning the fortunes of the newly converted villages there. On Matuku, Tui Yaroi, the only chief still holding out, was "awaiting the folau from Lakeba that is

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34 Lyth, Day Book, 25 Feb 1853.

35 *ibid.*

36 *ibid.*

37 *ibid.*, 28 Feb 1853. See also Lyth, Journal, 1 Mar 1853.

38 Lyth to GS, WMMS, 10 Jan 1854.

39 Lyth, Journal, 4 March 1854.

to lotu him".<sup>40</sup> Ratu Mara, who had left Lakeba late in January, had called at Moala, picked up Donu and sailed with him to Matuku. He mourned "his loss" of Moala, "his great trust", and was thought likely to foment trouble in Matuku.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile Ma`afu, his Vanuabalavu plans delayed, turned his attention elsewhere. On 2 April, accompanied by an envoy of Tui Nayau, he left in the *Tainawi* for a formal visit to Bau. His purpose was to wait on Cakobau in order to convey fresh assurances of loyalty from Tui Nayau, following the death of Tanoa four months earlier. For unexplained reasons, Vuetasau tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the departure of this *folau*.<sup>42</sup> Ma`afu's prestige in the eyes of Cakobau could only have been enhanced by this visit, since the Vunivalu had previously encountered him only in roles subordinate to those of older Tongan chiefs such as Lualala and Tu`ipelehake. On Lakeba, Ma`afu's absence was quickly felt. Ives was still trying to recover one of the girls he had earlier abducted from John Malvern's care, a move supported by Tui Nayau alone among the chiefs. "All are looking forward to Ma`afu's return as the event that will settle the question", Lyth recorded.<sup>43</sup> With his power in Lakeba now beyond dispute, Ma`afu appeared the obvious choice for the mission to Bau. Hitherto, he had played a role largely determined by himself and had made the most of his opportunities. Now, he was engaged by the paramount chief of Lau in the exercise of a customary diplomatic function. Vuetasau's opposition to Ma`afu's voyage might have been occasioned by his realisation that his Tongan friend was, for the first time, acting entirely on Fijian business. While Tui Nayau's use of his Tongan kinsman as an envoy was in accordance with Lakeban tradition, it is possible that Vuetasau resented the enhanced status implied in such a mission.

While it is uncertain how long Ma`afu remained in Bau, by mid July he was again in Matuku, where hostilities had recommenced. After news reached Lakeba "of the murder of two lotu men sent by Donu to the town of Yaroi", Vuetasau and Waqaimalani set off at once on the now familiar mission to assist the Christians. On Matuku, their first engagement against a small village near Yaroi was unsuccessful and resulted in the deaths of several Fijians and Tongans from the Lakeban party. In August, following news of the death of Kolilevu, Tui Yaroi's Christian son, and about 20 others, Ma`afu apparently underwent some "searchings of heart", seeing the hand of God in the series of reversals. When he and Mataiase Vave, the Tongan teacher living at Tubou, informed Vuetasau of their dilemma, the latter confessed that he had left Lakeba without Tui Nayau's consent, so determined was he to respond to the appeal from Donu and Kolilevu for assistance against Tui Yaroi. "This disclosure surprised Ma`afu, who

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40 *ibid.*, 12 Feb 1853.

41 *ibid.*, 24 Jan, 9 and 12 Feb 1853.

42 *ibid.*, 2 Apr 1853.

43 *ibid.*, 6 May 1853.

professed to have been simply actuated by a desire to succour the persecuted lotu people as he viewed the case, having been kept in perfect ignorance of the real root of the war".<sup>44</sup> Since Vave was about to return to Lakeba, Ma`afu asked him to inform Tui Nayau of the real state of affairs. A native teacher, probably Vave, who accompanied Vuetasau on his hurried voyage to Matuku, later largely confirmed Ma`afu's professed ignorance. According to the teacher, Vuetasau and the other chiefs of Lakeba "feared the Tonguese very much so they determined to go to Matuku" following news that "the Christians were being clubbed" there. Lyth, who gave permission for the teachers to accompany Vuetasau, said that he did not know the cause of the violence on Matuku. "The root of the matter was hidden from him. Ratu William [Vuetasau] alone knew. Everyone thought that it was on account of the persecution to which [the] Christians had been subjected, even Henry Maafu thought the same".<sup>45</sup>

Whatever Ma`afu professed to believe, he and Donu had voyaged to Matuku with a large complement of Tongans, Totoyans and Moalans and approached the island's shores with shouts of war. Ma`afu's profession of ignorance was a lie; he had been determined on war from the start and waited only for an opportunity, which came in the summons from Donu and Kolilevu. While, as at Totoya, he had not been party to the original plot, he needed no persuading to join the belligerents' cause. After these facts were confirmed by further reports from Matuku, Lyth met several of the teachers to consider punitive action. On 29 August, Donu and Vuetasau were "expelled the Society ... Donu for having originated the war and William for not preventing it when he could".<sup>46</sup>

Lualala, fearful lest something happen to "his son Ma`afu", said he would sail to Matuku and restore peace. If Tui Yaroi did not agree, Lualala would take the town, leaving Tui Yaroi and his followers to "soro by lotuing". Both Tui Nayau and Lyth condemned this "Tongan method of making Christians".<sup>47</sup> Finally, news came on 27 September that the war on Matuku was over and that Tui Yaroi had finally lotued. He did so only after his sons and their families left his village and were detained by Vuetasau in the *lotu* fortress. "Tui Yaroi and his sons [were] reserved to be brought to Lakeba as virtual slaves". The day after this news reached Lakeba, the weekly church meeting in Tubou expelled all church members, including local preachers and teachers, who had voluntarily participated "in the Matuku business".<sup>48</sup> Lyth was later to inform his colleague Robert Young, visiting Fiji, that after the Matuku war, "a lesson was taught that will not soon be forgotten ... that church membership and aggressive war are

44 This account is based on Lyth, *The War in Matuku*, in his *Journal*, 24 Aug – 2 Dec 1853, 117–122.

45 [Unnamed] native teacher to Rev. John F. Horsley, 13 Sep 1865, Fison Papers.

46 Lyth, *The War in Matuku*.

47 Lyth, *Journal*, 29 Aug, 9–13 Sep 1853.

48 *ibid.*, 27–30 Sep 1853.

incompatible".<sup>49</sup> Seeking to ensure that Ma`afu had learned the lesson, Lyth gave him "a little advice" early in December, expressing disapproval of the course of events in Moala and Matuku and beseeching him to eschew such conduct in future. "He received the advice as well as could be expected, and after the first shock, said he knew the affair at Matuku to be wrong".<sup>50</sup> A few days before this reproof, Ma`afu had evinced, if not regret, certainly awareness that his actions in Matuku were indeed ill-advised. Tevita `Unga had come to Lakeba with some of the spoils from Matuku, intending that they be returned to their rightful owners. Ma`afu, "doubtless feeling it to be a silent reproof against his own people's conduct, had signified his displeasure that the things had been brought, and gave orders that they should be burnt".<sup>51</sup>

His fortunes at a temporary ebb during the weeks following Matuku, Ma`afu appears to have lived quietly at Lakeba, possibly aware of the need to toe the missionary line. When Lyth told him of plans "to have a separate cause" in the Tongan settlement of Uea and to appoint a newly-arrived local preacher there, Ma`afu approved, saying he would investigate the best means of having a chapel constructed in the village.<sup>52</sup> One day in late October Lyth, his new colleague John Polglase, Mataiase Vave and others waited on Ma`afu at his house, very likely in order to assert subtle pressure, this time in numbers.<sup>53</sup> Whatever degree of rehabilitation Ma`afu had achieved, his prospects were shortly to be enhanced by a distinguished visitor to Lakeba. Tupou, anxious to visit a European settlement, had accepted an invitation to sail in the mission ship *John Wesley* for a voyage to Bau and Sydney. He arrived unheralded at Lakeba on 6 November and, during his stay of less than a week, conferred a singular honour on Ma`afu and Lualala, appointing them as joint governors of the Tongans in Fiji. Missionaries had more than once urged the King to appoint a governor as a way of establishing some formal means of control over the Lauan Tongans, who had been the subject of continual gnashing of missionary teeth since Cross and Cargill reached Lakeba in 1835. Similar appeals had come from Tongan local preachers on the island.<sup>54</sup> Lyth, though, must have experienced mixed feelings at seeing authority placed in the hands of Ma`afu. While the young chief was well qualified by means of his rank and established leadership role among the Tongan community on Lakeba, his recent exploits in Moala and Matuku had demonstrated yet again, at least to Lyth, that he required a large measure of control himself.

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49 Robert Young, *The Southern World*, 2 vols, London 1865, 291.

50 Lyth, *Journal*, 10 Dec 1853.

51 *ibid.*, 29 Nov 1853.

52 *ibid.*, 26, 27 and 31 Oct 1853.

53 *ibid.*, 26 Oct 1853.

54 Lyth to Thomas Williams, 22 Nov 1849, WMMS LFF; Lyth, *Circuit Returns 1850-1853*.

It would be more than a month before there was any reaction to the King's move. Still intent on Ma`afu's rehabilitation, Lyth referred to "a hopeful sign" on 13 December when Ma`afu called to discuss a proposed *vono*, or general meeting of the village, which was duly held six days later.<sup>55</sup> Ma`afu, Vuetasau and large numbers of people from Tubou and Uea attended. The purpose of the *vono* was to inform the people of the decisions made at a series of meetings between Tupou, Ma`afu, Vuetasau and other chiefs during the King's visit in November. The principal decision was of course that to appoint Ma`afu and Lualala as governors. Lyth, setting aside any reservations he might have felt, described the appointments as "the commencement of an era long desired, prayed and laboured for".<sup>56</sup> Although he had known of the decision for at least six days,<sup>57</sup> neither he nor his colleagues Robert Young and Nathaniel Turner, who were accompanying the King, seem to have been aware of it during their visit, as none mentioned it in their various documented accounts.<sup>58</sup> Despite the alliance between King and missionaries, there were clearly some matters considered chiefly business, about which the missionaries could be informed in proper season. The King would have entertained no doubt that when the missionaries were apprised of the appointments, they would wholeheartedly approve.

Lualala was at least a generation older than Ma`afu, a difference which meant that control of the Lauan Tongans was effectively placed in the hands of the younger man. Since Ma`afu's appointment was partly a response by Tupou to missionary pleas of long standing, consideration should be given to how far Ma`afu was the "agent" or representative of the King. Tupou had overcome the last resistance to his rule in Tonga less than 18 months earlier, which allowed him to devote more attention to the Tongan diaspora in Fiji. It is impossible to draw definitive conclusions about the full implications of the appointment, since we cannot know what was said in the discussions between Ma`afu, Tupou, Lualala and others. The appointment endowed Ma`afu with an official status, acknowledged by Tui Nayau and the missionaries, to complement the position of leadership which his own efforts, in peace and war, had established. There is no evidence, and indeed it is most unlikely, that the appointment formed part of any longer term plan for Tongan intervention in eastern Fiji.<sup>59</sup>

It has been erroneously stated that Ma`afu was expelled from church membership in 1853 for his part in the events on Matuku.<sup>60</sup> Such a move would have lost

55 Lyth, Journal, 13 Dec 1853.

56 *ibid.*, 19 Dec 1853.

57 *ibid.*, 13 Dec 1853.

58 See Lyth, Journal, 6–12 Nov 1853; Nathaniel Turner, Journal, 6–12 Nov 1853; Young, Ch. 13.

59 For a discussion of Tupou I's supposed imperialistic ambitions in a much wider context, see I.C. Campbell, "The Alleged Imperialism of Tupou I", *JPH*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1990, 159–175.

60 See, for example, A.H. Wood, *Overseas Missions of the Australian Methodist Church*, Vol. 2, Fiji, Melbourne 1978, 134; G.C. Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians*, Sydney 1931, 157–158, 294. One work, while not naming the second chief expelled, does indicate that he was not Ma`afu: Deryck Scarr, "Cakobau and Ma`afu: Contenders

the missionaries far more than it gained them: even before his appointment as governor, Ma`afu was the acknowledged leader of the Lauan Tongans, all nominally Christian, and his expulsion could well have affected the precarious loyalty of his fellows to the church. Although Lyth was censorious of Ma`afu for his actions in Matuku, he considered the Tongan less culpable than Vuetasau and Donu, who were expelled. The notion that Ma`afu was similarly treated arose from a misinterpretation of Lyth's letter to his Society of 3 March 1854, which refers to the expulsion of "two chiefs [who] had lent themselves and their people to aid a bad cause".<sup>61</sup> Significantly, Robert Young made no mention of an expulsion of Ma`afu in his lengthy account of his visit to Fiji, which does refer to the expulsion of Vuetasau "for persisting in making war upon the people of Matuku that they might be compelled to lotu".<sup>62</sup> It is impossible to think that, had Ma`afu been expelled, the two missionaries and Robert Young, all writing about Lakeba affairs during the final months of 1853, would have omitted any mention of it. The supposed expulsion quickly became one of the many myths obscuring Ma`afu's life.

Lyth described the war in Matuku as "a political dispute, commenced on political grounds. The Christian name had been profanely assumed by some, for no other purpose than to further their own ambitious projects, and to ensure the co-operation of the Lakeba chiefs".<sup>63</sup> Ma`afu, who had sailed to Matuku with hostile intent, was, although he did not commence hostilities, one of those who sought to fulfil "their own ambitious projects". On 3 October he, Vuetasau and other chiefs were interrogated on several matters by Lakeba's assembled teachers. Vuetasau attempted to justify Matuku by saying that they had only followed the practice of the Tongan *lotu*. Tupou had behaved in similar fashion against heathen chiefs in Tonga, Vuetasau reminded the gathering, "and Lakeba and Tonga were one. Why did we not go and put Tubou out of Society?" Lyth referred to the authority of the Bible over any supposed precedent set by the King of Tonga.

Ma`afu sat and listened while missionary and chief reiterated their apparently irreconcilable views. For Vuetasau, Matuku was "the war of the lotu", while Lyth asserted that "religion had nothing at all to do with it". After the *vono* concluded, Ma`afu hastened to Bucainabua to assure Lyth privately that he had resisted Vuetasau's invitations to join his force and "did not go until William went for him himself". He expressed his disgust over Vuetasau's "raking up all the errors of Tonga for his own defence". Lyth knew better, of course, but Ma`afu's avoidance of expulsion might have owed something to his eloquence in

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for pre-eminence in Fiji" in J.W. Davidson and D.A. Scarr, eds, *Pacific Islands Portraits*, Canberra 1970, 108.

61 Lyth to GS, WMMS, 3 Mar 1854, WMMS LFF.

62 Young, 284.

63 Lyth to GS, 3 Mar 1854.

denying guilt and transferring blame. All his active life, Ma`afu knew when to take the plunge and when to draw back from the edge, denying intent. Vuetasau, ever obdurate, had voiced his exasperation at the *vono* by demanding of Lyth: "Wherein are you caused pain – are you plundered of your property?"<sup>64</sup> Ma`afu, who knew better than most the cause of the missionary's pain, sought only to soothe and comfort.

After leaving Lakeba, Tupou and his party proceeded to Bau to confer with Cakobau. Formally installed as Vunivalu in July, Cakobau had suffered a series of reverses during the year and was, at the time of Tupou's visit, "on the verge of ruin or revolution".<sup>65</sup> The worst setback had come in August with an unsuccessful attack by Bauan forces on the Rewan village of Kaba. Mara had now assumed leadership of the Rewan forces arrayed against Bau, whose fortunes had reached their nadir. For years, missionaries had urged Cakobau to admit a resident missionary to Bau; now, in late 1853, Cakobau's position allowed him no refusal when Calvert again raised the matter. Joseph Waterhouse landed at Bau in October and after exerting considerable pressure on a reluctant Cakobau, he was allowed to remain.<sup>66</sup>

By way of contrast, Cakobau welcomed Tupou's unexpected arrival. During their initial discussion, the Vunivalu "feelingly referred to his present reduced position". Reassured by the King's sympathy, Cakobau presented him with a large *drua*, the *Ra Marama*, which Tupou arranged to collect during his return voyage from Sydney. The gift was accompanied by Cakobau's expressed wish "that kingly help might be afforded". Tupou did not fail his host: in a reference to Kaba, he declared: "The rebel fortress seems to me anything but impregnable". As Waterhouse later wrote, "it was evident that each King understood the other".<sup>67</sup> Dr Berthold Seemann, the botanist who made a lengthy visit to Fiji in 1860, documented a firm tradition that "the arrangement relative to the subjugation of Kaba" was made on board the *John Wesley* during Tupou's stay in Fiji in late 1853.<sup>68</sup>

The meetings between Cakobau and Tupou, unlike those held by the King at Lakeba, are well known to posterity, thanks to the record left by witnesses Waterhouse and Young. Since the understanding reached between the two men was to bear fruit in 1855 in a massive Tongan intervention in Fiji in support of Cakobau, it is important to remember that at the time of the King's 1853 visit, there was no formal alliance, either political or military, between Bau and Tonga.

64 Lyth, Journal, 3 Oct 1853.

65 Lyth to [his mother] Mary Lyth, 5 Nov 1853, Letters home from Richard Burdsall Lyth and Mary Ann Lyth 1829–1856.

66 Waterhouse, 152–155.

67 *ibid.*, 157–158.

68 Berthold Seemann, *Viti: an Account of a Government Mission to the Vitian or Fijian Islands*, London 1862, 254.

Cakobau was reassured by the promise of future help from the King, who hoped to see the Vunivalu accept the *lotu*, although whether he pressed that point during his visit is unclear. Certainly Cakobau would have well understood the political advantages of conversion. Ma`afu, meanwhile, already in good standing at Bau and with his success in the Moala group under his belt, must have been more confident of his rehabilitation in the eyes of the Lakeba missionaries.

Intent perhaps on making further amends, Ma`afu left Lakeba in December on board the *Tainawi* to visit Oneata and Kabara, returning on 4 January 1854.<sup>69</sup> During the ensuing weeks, he basked in missionary approval by attending service regularly, seeking again to meet in class and establishing a school in Uea. He declared to his fellow Tongans, “until now we have been heathens, not Christians ... now we will begin to be Christians”. People painting their faces were, by Ma`afu’s orders, to be put to work. Lyth was pleased when some Tongan youths stole one of Ma`afu’s canoes in order to sail to Somosomo or Bau “to escape the restraints of a Christian land – a most hopeful omen this for Uea”. In February, Ma`afu approached Lyth “respecting some misconduct of his own”. The missionary, “humbled and encouraged”, described the reform in Uea as “most impressive”. Ma`afu instructed the people to attend the school unless they were sick and reminded them to maintain a modest form of dress. He even diverted men from the construction of his house so they could help build the new chapel in Uea.<sup>70</sup> Lyth described as “truly astonishing” the reforms effected by Ma`afu, who had introduced “order and propriety in the place of confusion and irregularities of all kinds in the town where he and most of the Tonguese reside”.<sup>71</sup> It remained only to see for how long Ma`afu would remain steadfast.

Diversion from the straight and narrow was not long in coming. A deputation from Lomaloma had reached Lakeba in December 1853, seeking the return of their native teachers in order to meet the increasing demands of public worship.<sup>72</sup> Five teachers accordingly left in January 1854 for Lomaloma, where their arrival caused “great rejoicing” and convinced the remaining unconverted chiefs and people to *lotu*. Yaro remained largely heathen, although the chief permitted a teacher to reside in his village and to conduct worship.<sup>73</sup> The following month, Tuikilakila was murdered at Somosomo by one of his sons, who in turn died by the hand of another son.<sup>74</sup> While his death meant that the prospects for the *lotu* in Vanuabalavu were likely to improve, the general instability prevailing in Cakaudrove increased the possibility of outside intervention, notably from Ma`afu.

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69 Lyth, Journal, 22 Dec 1853 and 4 Jan 1854.

70 *ibid.*, Jan – Feb 1854, *passim*.

71 Lyth to Mary Lyth, 27 Feb 1854, Letters home from Richard Burdsall Lyth and Mary Ann Lyth 1829–1856. See also Lyth to GS, WMMS, 3 March 1854.

72 Lyth, Day Book, 1 Dec 1853; Lyth, Journal, 6 Dec 1853, 18 Jan 1854.

73 Lyth to GS, WMMS, 3 Mar 1854; Lyth to Mary Lyth, 27 Feb 1854.

74 Lyth, Journal, 23 Feb 1854; Lyth to GS, WMMS, 3 Mar 1854; Brewster Papers B5, Notes on pre-European history of Fiji, 1796–1867 (E.J. Turpin), Roth Papers, AJCP M2792. It was generally believed that Cakobau

The death of Tuikilakila did nothing to alleviate the reduced fortunes of Bau and its ruler. After Cakobau's setback when his forces failed to regain control of Kaba in August 1853, a fresh and well-prepared campaign the following March was also unsuccessful, owing to "the presence and active assistance [to the rebels] of some of the whites and half-castes who wished to protect Kaba in order to pressure Ovalau".<sup>75</sup> In April, Cakobau received a letter from Tupou, written about a month after his return to Tonga from Sydney. The letter, which went first to Lakeba, was delivered to Bau by a messenger sent by Ma`afu.<sup>76</sup> In it, the King advised Cakobau that he would visit him again "when we have finished planting". The letter continued:

It is good you should be humble; it will be well for you and your land. I wish, Thackobau, that you would lotu. When I visit you, we will talk about it ... But it will be well for you, Thackobau, to think wisely in these days.<sup>77</sup>

The suggestion to *lotu* appeared to be a significant departure for the King, since no such advice had apparently been offered when Tupou called at Bau on route to Sydney.<sup>78</sup> But there had been another letter, written soon after the King's visit, in which Tupou had requested Cakobau to become a Christian. Waterhouse was to note that "the chief acknowledged receipt of this communication without referring to George's request", although he did give permission for the erection of a chapel at Bau.<sup>79</sup> The letter of February 1854 was something more than a friendly suggestion to *lotu*. It intimated, Calvert said, "that evil might come to Bau".<sup>80</sup> However serious Cakobau considered the threat to him, he knew that only his conversion would win the King of Tonga wholly to his side.

Despite the veil of missionary fervour which inevitably enshrouds the documented reasons for Cakobau's conversion, the final decision was certainly his. After another failed attempt to subdue Kaba, Cakobau remarked to his priest:

You promised that we should take Kaba, but Jehovah had love for the Kaba, and your love was of no avail. Don't you suppose that this religion will end – that it will be as a dream, which is done away with when one wakes in the morning. I have decided, and we shall all become Christians.<sup>81</sup>

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had been behind the murder. For a discussion of theories concerning his involvement, see Shelley Sayes, Cakaudrove: idea and reality in a Fijian confederation, unpublished PhD thesis, ANU 1982, 255–256.

75 Waterhouse, 165–166. For an account of the second attempt to take Kaba, see *ibid.*, 161 et seq.

76 Lyth, *Journal*, 20 Apr 1854.

77 Tupou I to Cakobau, 28 Feb 1854, quoted in Waterhouse, 168–169. See also Calvert to GS, WMMS, 20 May 1854, WMN, Third Series, No. 13, Jan 1855, 8–9.

78 Calvert, Vewa Record, Personal Papers.

79 Waterhouse to GS, WMMS, 1 Jun 1854, WMN, Third Series, No. 14, Feb 1855, 65. The full text of the letter is found in WMMS LFF.

80 Calvert, Vewa Record.

81 Calvert, *Journal*, 30 April 1854.

Waterhouse, to whom Cakobau had first announced his decision on 27 April, believed that the Vunivalu had been alarmed at Tuikilakila's death, which seemed to illustrate dire biblical warnings that the wrath of the Lord will be visited upon people and places that reject the Word.<sup>82</sup> Tupou's letter had arrived "at this crucial time", following as it did Cakobau's ominous reversal at Kaba.<sup>83</sup> His public profession of Christianity on Sunday 30 April, in the presence of more than 300 of his chiefs, family members and other residents of Bau, was accompanied by sermons from both Calvert and Waterhouse. The missionaries saw it as the beginning of a new era in Fijian history, as indeed it was. They also recognised the political nature of Cakobau's decision: Christianity was a force the Vunivalu could no longer resist. His enemies were preparing to hammer at his door, while his one powerful friend had not only offered support if Cakobau would *lotu*, but had reminded him of the probable consequences if he did not. In the end, Cakobau made the decision for no better reason than to preserve his power.<sup>84</sup> Even then, the *lotu* could not ensure his survival. Waterhouse, recognising the political motives for the conversion, believed that Cakobau's death "was sought, not because he was a Christian, but because of his former ambition, pride, cruelty and ingratitude to tried friends". The Vunivalu scorned Waterhouse's suggested program of political reform and faced the rejection of his own peace proposals from Qaraniqio.<sup>85</sup> Since much of his unpopularity now extended, by implication, to the faith he adopted, it seemed that the only benefit likely to ensue in the short term would be intervention by Tupou.

Although, at the time of Cakobau's conversion, Ma`afu had been governor of the Tongans for almost six months, he nowhere figures in any contemporary account of the events at Bau, Rewa and Cakaudrove. His greater prestige and status were still confined to Lau and the Yasayasa Moala. A few days before the ceremony at Bau, Ma`afu was rejoicing in his newly completed house, "an ornament to the town of Uea", and discussing with Lyth and Vuetasau plans to restore liberty to Tui Yaroi and other Matuku captives and to convey them home.<sup>86</sup> His mind was quickly diverted from these concerns when news arrived from Mataiase Vave of a massacre of 17 Christians in Lomaloma on Easter Sunday. The ringleader of the murderers was reported to be Tuilakeba, "chief of the turtle fishers". Vave's messenger, Mafoa, brought two appeals for help to Lakeba. One was from the nominal chief of Lomaloma, who appealed directly to Tui Nayau, while the surviving Christian teachers there sent their request to the two missionaries on Lakeba. Lyth and Polglase "desired ... Ma`afu to help us in our troubles by

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82 See Matthew 10:14–15.

83 Waterhouse, 177.

84 For accounts of the events on 30 April, see Waterhouse, 179–180; Waterhouse, Report on the Bau Circuit 1853–1854, MOM 323; Calvert, Journal, 30 Apr 1854.

85 Waterhouse, *King and People...*, 190–193.

86 Lyth, Journal, 21 Apr 1854.

going to the relief of our teachers and friends at Susui". He sailed on 29 April in the *Tainawi*, accompanied, in another canoe, by Joeli Bulu and Jonah Tonga as missionary representatives.<sup>87</sup>

There is conflicting evidence concerning the involvement of Ma`afu in the mission to Lomaloma. He later stated that after reaching Lakeba, Mafoa went first to Tui Nayau, who refused assistance. Then, following Mafoa's subsequent appeal to him, Ma`afu set off for Susui with two large canoes.<sup>88</sup> The traditional account on Vanuabalavu indicates that Vave's messenger brought Ma`afu a letter reporting the murder of one Ratu Tomasi, who had been eating turtle meat without sharing it with a chief named Tui Keba.<sup>89</sup> Ma`afu's claim to have acted only after Tui Nayau refused to intervene conflicts with contemporary accounts. According to Lyth, after Ma`afu readily agreed to go to the help of the endangered teachers and people, Tui Nayau "desired [him] at the same time to offer his (the King's) assistance to the Lomaloma chief who, ... himself driven from his own rightful soil by a rebellious party of his own subjects, had appealed to [Tui Nayau] for protection and advice".<sup>90</sup> Ma`afu gave evidence on the matter at a Court of Arbitration convened by the British Consul in 1865 to determine the legal ownership of Vanuabalavu. Much of what he said was disingenuous, an attempt to deprecate the influence of Tui Nayau while at the same time enlarging on his own. But all that lay in the future in 1854, a time when praise from Lyth was unstinting. "Ma`afu did his work excellently well", the missionary declared, "and returned home in peace".<sup>91</sup>

According to another missionary, "the whole affair was more than sanctioned at Somosomo".<sup>92</sup> If that was so, it does not belie the fact that the power of the Somosomo chiefs to become actively involved in Vanuabalavu was now limited. Raivalita, who had succeeded as Tui Cakau only two months earlier, was far from secure in his position. In any case, Ma`afu would have needed no persuasion to intervene, especially in view of the levying rights granted him five years earlier, rights which he had had little chance to enforce. Ma`afu later stated that he picked up some Christians who had taken refuge on Susui and returned them to Lomaloma, where he helped them construct a defensive fence around their village. While he and some of his party were bathing, they were fired upon by "the heathen". Two days later, reinforced by 200 Tongans from Lakeba, Ma`afu sailed to Mualevu. There, after two days of fighting, the Yaro chiefs surrendered and offered *tabua* and baskets of earth to Ma`afu,

87 *ibid.*, 29 Apr 1854.

88 Evidence of Ma`afu, Report of a Court of Arbitration, 1 and 2 Feb 1865, Register of Deeds, Sep 1858 – Oct 1874, No. 381, BCFP 1858–1876.

89 The names Tui Keba and Tui Lakeba referred to the same person.

90 Lyth, The Report of the Work of God in the Lakeba Circuit for the year ending June 1854, Fiji District Minutes 1827–1852.

91 *ibid.*

92 Williams and Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians*, 1870 edn, 305.

“expressly stating that they gave themselves and their district, and during the same week the chiefs of the Lomaloma district did the same for the second time they having presented earth to Ma`afu on his first arrival”. Later in the same month, Ma`afu further stated, he sent two men named Samate and Lavaki to Somosomo to inform Raivalita that he (Ma`afu) had come to Lomaloma at the request of its chiefs and had since conquered the Yaro people. Both parties had given themselves and their land to him.<sup>93</sup>

At the 1865 Court of Arbitration, Samate and Lavaki corroborated Ma`afu’s evidence. Samate expressed his belief that Vanuabalavu belonged to Ma`afu, while Lavaki said that when Ma`afu’s message was conveyed to Raivalita, the Tui Cakau had said, “Very good, if I ever want to go there, I will ask Ma`afu”.<sup>94</sup> Despite this apparent unanimity, it is useful to consider the oral history recorded in the *Tukutuku Raraba*. The Lomaloma chiefs presented several *tabua* to Ma`afu at Susui, telling him that if he helped them to overcome the Mualevu people, “they would like him to accept Lomaloma and its people in his charge”. The *Tukutuku Raraba* goes on to record a battle between Wainiqolo and a Mualevu force on a beach between Lomaloma and Mualevu. Defeated survivors from the Mualevans retreated to a fort in Boitaci village, from which Wainiqolo’s men soon expelled them. Another oral tradition makes mention of Ma`afu’s “anger” when Puleiwai, a “respected” Tongan living in Mualevu, was ambushed and murdered by Wainiqolo and two other men whom Ma`afu had sent to Mavana to fetch him. Ratu Qoronyasi, Tui Mavana at the time, was supposedly related to Ma`afu.<sup>95</sup> The outcome of the battle on the beach and other skirmishes was that Ma`afu and his forces burnt Mualevu village before returning to Lomaloma. Ma`afu gave the island of Cikobia to Wainiqolo as a reward and after returning to Lomaloma to pay a final call on Mataiase Vave, quickly set sail for Lakeba.

While this traditional account naturally makes no mention of dates, there is evidence that the events they describe concluded within days. Ma`afu had returned to Lakeba before 13 May, since on that day he sailed again for Vanuabalavu, on Tui Nayau’s orders, “to convey a party of the Thithia and Nayau people to relieve the Tonguese who were keeping watch at Susui”. Ma`afu’s intention had been to proceed from Vanuabalavu to Moala for pigs and yams, in order to prepare for the expected arrival at Lakeba of Tupou and a large *folau*. This plan was abandoned when he received Tui Nayau’s orders. On 23 May, while he was helping the Lomaloma Christians to erect a protective fence, one of his men was shot dead by heathen forces. Hostilities recommenced immediately but were over within four days, “when, to the astonishment of all parties, the whole

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93 Evidence of Ma`afu, Report of a Court of Arbitration.... Much the same account is found in Statement of Ma`afu regarding the Tongan claim to Vanuabalavu and adjoining islands, Nov 1864, BCFP, Copies of OC, General, 30 Jan 1863 – 27 Aug 1869.

94 Evidence of Samate and Lavaki, Report of a Court of Arbitration...

95 TR, yavusa Lomati, Ratu Tevita Rasiga, spokesman, 17 Mar 1938, Native Lands Commission, Suva.

island surrendered to Ma`afu, and some of the principal conspirators were given up to him". Once all his opposing forces were subdued, Ma`afu allowed the remaining conspirators to escape. The consequence was that, with the exception of a few young men, the whole of Vanuabalavu, including the chiefs of Yaro and Lomaloma, had accepted the *lotu* and "agreed to merge their ancient differences and live in peace". Ma`afu and his force returned to Lakeba on 3 June, with Tuilakeba, the principal perpetrator of the April massacre, one of several prisoners.<sup>96</sup> No wonder the Tongan was thought to have acted "excellently well".

By 1854, the levying rights granted Ma`afu by Tuikilakila and the gift of the soil by the Vanuabalavu chiefs, bases for Ma`afu's claim to the sovereignty of Vanuabalavu, were firmly in place. With the island remaining nominally subject to Cakaudrove, its people were expected to provide massive tribute to Tui Cakau and his entourage whenever they visited.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, effective control of Vanuabalavu from 1854 lay with Ma`afu and his Tongans. While some details of the brief campaign cannot be reconciled among the different accounts, the essential fact is that Ma`afu's intervention gave him effective sovereignty of the island, a situation Raivalita accepted because he had no choice. Subsequent judicial enquiry, firstly at the Court of Arbitration in 1865 and secondly at the Lands Claims Commission hearings in 1880, confirmed Ma`afu in possession. When he asserted that his sovereign rights were bestowed entirely in accordance with Fijian custom, it did not matter that this claim rested on a foundation less than entirely secure. Ma`afu ruled Vanuabalavu by right of conquest; the presentation of *soro* by the Vanuabalavu chiefs and acknowledgement of his position by Tui Cakau were only icing on the cake. Ma`afu's acquisition of Vanuabalavu was yet another step, the most important one to date, whereby the Tongan "prince", as Europeans often referred to him, achieved his transformation into a chief of Fiji.

Only nine days after his return "home" to Lakeba, Ma`afu set sail yet again, this time for the Yasayasa Moala.<sup>98</sup> While his immediate purpose is unknown, the events of the previous two years meant that those islands, like Vanuabalavu, would henceforth count among his principal concerns. Lakeba was then described as "the centre of political, religious and educational influence" in eastern Fiji, a situation Lyth said had come about "through Tongan energy and enterprise". He also acknowledged that while the new locus of power was nominally Lakeba, "the real one is Tongan and Tongan power, wherever known, is feared".<sup>99</sup> One consequence of this change occurred following the death in

96 Lyth, *The Report of ... the Lakeba Circuit for the year ending June 1854...* See also Lyth, *Day Book*, 29 May and 3 Jun 1854; Lyth, *Journal*, 5 May, 13 May, 3 Jun and 3 Jul 1854; Calvert, *Journal*, 24 Jun 1854. For an account, probably apocryphal, of atrocities committed by Ma`afu and his forces on Vanuabalavu, see "Sundowner" [H. Tichborne], *Rambles in Polynesia*, London 1897, 45–56.

97 Calvert to Stephen Rabone, 26 Jan 1864, *WMN(A)*, No. 27, Apr 1864, 428.

98 Lyth, *Journal*, 12 Jun 1854.

99 *The Report of ... the Lakeba Circuit for the Year ending June 1854...*

custody on Lakeba of Tui Yaroi. Another Matuku chief was appointed, not as Tui Yaroi, but as Tui Matuku, a new title bestowed from Lakeba, rather than by customary process on Matuku itself. The Moalan Baba, freed from captivity, became Tui Moala, while the chief of Totoya lost the nominal authority over Matuku and Moala that he had traditionally possessed.<sup>100</sup> The several new appointees recognised that their authority derived, not simply from Lakeba, but from Ma`afu and the Tongan power base on that island.

These changes, while decisive, were not as clear-cut as they might appear in retrospect. When the British Commission of Enquiry, sent to investigate Cakobau's 1858 offer of cession, visited Lakeba in 1860, Tui Nayau informed the Commissioner, Colonel William Smythe, that the Moala group constituted an independent state, while Vanuabalavu owed its allegiance to Cakaudrove.<sup>101</sup> Although traditional tribute obligations were still observed, the reality was that following the end of the *valu ni lotu* in June 1854, effective control of the Yasayasa Moala and Vanuabalavu lay in Ma`afu's hands. It was his conquests and their aftermath which brought these islands under the eventual suzerainty of Lau, an achievement which raises the question of whether Ma`afu was acting in the interests of the government of Tonga, effectively King Tupou. Although it can be argued that he was bent on securing supreme power in Lau and possibly elsewhere in Fiji, there is no evidence that, in 1854, he was acting at the behest of Tupou. Lyth, in his pertinent analysis of the political changes consequent upon the *valu ni lotu*, makes no mention of any involvement by the Tongan King.<sup>102</sup> The new and enlarged Lauan state, now well in the process of its evolution, was the work of Ma`afu, the Tongan forces at his command and the Wesleyan missionaries. Even Tui Nayau, who condoned and sometimes directed Ma`afu in his military adventures, could be ascribed a hand in its creation. For him, the withdrawal of Cakaudrove from Vanuabalavu, as well as the ending of Bauan infiltration of the Yasayasa Moala, helped to sustain the precarious independence of Lau more than any of the other political changes he had witnessed. For Ma`afu, by way of contrast, the new conquests gave him a degree of power and authority unprecedented in the long history of Tongan involvement in eastern Fiji.

Oral tradition held that after the defeat of Mualevu, Ma`afu assumed direct personal control of Vanuabalavu, having "a house built for himself at Lomaloma" and appointing "magistrates and other officials". The tradition further held that Ma`afu did not return to Lakeba until the time of the Kaba rebellion and the arrival of Tupou in Fiji in March 1855.<sup>103</sup> These last details are certainly wrong.

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100 TR, Yaroi yavusa (Matuku), Nasau yavusa (Moala) and Lakeba yavusa, quoted in Reid, 44.

101 Sarah M. Smythe, *Ten Months in the Fiji Islands*, Oxford and London 1864, 229–230.

102 Lyth, *The War in Matuku*.

103 *Towards a report on the proceedings of the Native Lands Commission in the Province of Lau*, Native Lands Commission, Suva 1913, 6–7.

Aside from the lack of contemporary evidence for any Tongan settlement on Vanuabalavu in 1854, we know that Ma`afu returned to Lakeba on 3 June and sailed south for the Yasayasa Moala nine days later.<sup>104</sup> The six months or more until February 1855 are a blank in Ma`afu's life, owing partly to the departure from Fiji in October of Lyth, whose journals and other writings are the most important sources for Ma`afu's movements during the early 1850s.<sup>105</sup> The most that can be said about Ma`afu during these months is that he had not yet moved his residence to Vanuabalavu.

Towards the close of 1854 there was unease in both Fiji and Tonga about the activities of the French in Tahiti and the possibility that they sought to extend their influence to western Polynesia. Following visits to Fiji, Tonga and Samoa during the following year, Captain Stephen Fremantle, an officer of the Royal Navy's Australian Squadron, noted that Tupou had concluded a treaty with France. Believing that both Tongans and Europeans were wary of France's ulterior motives,<sup>106</sup> Fremantle was apprehensive that the French priests there would assert a degree of political and social control in Tonga such as the Wesleyan missionaries had done so effectively since the islands' reunification in 1845. Tupou's own concerns were reflected in the treaty, concluded with Governor Josephe du Bouzet of Tahiti in January 1855. The most important of its eight articles was the first, which provided for perpetual peace between Tonga and France. Implementation of the treaty meant that Tupou was free of a potential threat which had long disturbed his peace of mind. He could now turn his attention to other aspects of his kingdom's foreign policy.<sup>107</sup>

The King's letter to Cakobau, received in April 1854, had made it clear that Fiji was in danger and that Tongan help would be dependent on Cakobau's acceptance of the *lotu*.<sup>108</sup> Early in 1855, preparing for his promised second visit, Tupou proposed to bring a *folau* of more than 30 large canoes. Thomas West, a Wesleyan missionary working in Tonga, was urged by Calvert "to persuade [the King] ... to reduce the number of his fleet to eight or ten canoes, lest any harm might be created, in the then distracted state of Fijian parties". Tupou would not consent, since he felt that a small *folau* would, in the same "distracted state" of Fiji, be seen as a sign of weakness and "would be the signal for our destruction".<sup>109</sup> For the King, prudence lay in a display of majesty and

104 Lyth, Journal, 3 Jun and 3 Jul 1854.

105 Lyth left John Polglase and his brother-in-law William Fletcher in charge of the Lakeba station. These missionaries' journals have apparently not survived.

106 Captain Stephen Fremantle to Ralph Osborne, 12 Dec 1855, FO58/84b.

107 For the English text of the Tonga-France treaty, see I.H. Roberts, ed., Tongan Papers; Consular Jurisdiction in Fiji Islands, with reference to Pacific Islands kidnapping, 39–41, FO 58/124; Thomas West, *Ten Years in South-Central Polynesia*, London 1865, 398–399. For the French text, see West, 399–400; Consul Williams, Foreign Various, Consular Domestic 1860, FO58/93.

108 Tupou I to Cakobau, 28 Feb 1854.

109 West, 397–398.

power. He also impressed upon West the need to exercise further control over the Tongans in Fiji, whose "bold and enterprising and overbearing conduct ... [had] often led to serious disputes". West agreed, acknowledging the debt owed to the Tongans, whose presence fostered the spread of Christianity and the safety of both missionaries and teachers.<sup>110</sup> The King had told West that he had no wish to take part in any of the Fijians' quarrels and in his subsequent letter to Cakobau, he had informed the Vunivalu that he would soon pay a visit "to bring away my canoe".<sup>111</sup> Several months later, West saw the need to correct some false impressions concerning Tupou's motives:

Other ... important reasons beside that of friendship toward Thakobau have led to the visit of King George to Feejee and these ought to be known so that it may not be set down, as many will have it, to his ambition and love of power or an unnecessary interference in Fijian affairs.

West referred to the King's long-held wish to visit Fiji again, a visit prevented by the islands' unsettled state and by the instability occasioned by the Tongans resident there. Many of them were said to have rendered Lakeba "the rendezvous of worthless characters and of chiefs and their dependents who were disaffected at different times to the reigning chiefs of Tonga". Significantly, West made specific mention of Ma`afu in this context:

Of late the power of the Tonguese party has been greatly increased under the leadership of Maafu who was at one time one of the King's chief opponents, and they have given great annoyance and trouble to the King of Lakeba and the Feejeeans generally. They have proceeded so far as to make plausible pretences to fight and take possession of several islands belonging to the Lakeba dominions. Nor do they owe any allegiance to Tuiniyau ... although resident on the island.<sup>112</sup>

There is no reason to doubt West on the motives for the King's visit. It is worthy of note, in the wider context of the growth of Tongan power in Fiji, that a Wesleyan missionary should refer to the "plausible pretences" of Ma`afu and his forces in taking possession of the Yasayasa Moala and Vanuabalavu. West did not acknowledge Ma`afu as a champion of the *lotu*, choosing instead to present the chief's Fijian conquests as successful efforts to establish a personal power base. West, although working in Tonga, was better able to see through Ma`afu than Lyth on Lakeba had been. His opinion was the first documented expression of a view no modern historian would dispute. West makes the further intriguing reference to Ma`afu having been "one of the King's chief opponents", a hint that before his departure from Tonga, Ma`afu might indeed have intrigued against

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110 *ibid.*, 393.

111 Tupou I to Cakobau, 28 Feb 1854.

112 West to GS, WMMS, 1 Nov 1855, WMMS LFF.

Tupou. Too much could be made of the missionary's aside, however, since there is no contemporary evidence that Ma`afu was ranged against his kinsman. The most significant aspect of West's letter to his Society, written while Tupou was still in Fiji, is its revelation that Ma`afu's conquests during the *valu ni lotu* were entirely his own, and not part of any plan by Tupou to involve himself in the affairs of Fiji.

Meanwhile, Bau's immediate prospects continued to deteriorate. When several towns on nearby Viti Levu changed allegiance from Bau to Rewa in October 1854, Qaraniqio eagerly anticipated both the destruction of Bau and the ingestion of its ruler. Despite Calvert's exhortations, Qaraniqio indignantly rejected the *lotu*, and when he died of dysentery in January 1855, the missionary saw the hand of God. Since the chief had been unable to name a successor, other Rewan chiefs lost the will to continue the struggle against Bau, with all its incipient hardships, once a conciliatory message arrived from Cakobau. Following a formal presentation at Bau from the Rewan chiefs, peace was concluded on 9 February.<sup>113</sup> There nevertheless remained in Rewa several disaffected chiefs who could not be reconciled with Cakobau's conversion and who saw their fight against him as a defence of the old ways against the new. Their strength, already significant, was enhanced by the commitment to their side of Mara, who had his own reasons for continuing to defy Cakobau.<sup>114</sup> It is likely also that the expected intervention by Tupou helped unite the Rewan chiefs, both *lotu* and heathen, to join forces in order to mount an effective defence against the invader. Once the disparate forces ranged against Cakobau were gathered at Kaba, Mara boasted that the Tongans could never hope to take the village, a boast which caused Calvert to resign himself to the inevitability of armed conflict. The missionary later learned that Mara's defiance had only firmed Tupou's resolve to intervene.<sup>115</sup>

Ma`afu, still living on Lakeba, made a hurried departure on 10 February, supposedly heading for Tonga by way of Kabara.<sup>116</sup> If his purpose was to consult Tupou, he might have been unaware that the King had left Tongatapu on 15 January en route for Vava`u, there to supervise the preparation of his *folau*.<sup>117</sup> Towards the end of February, after the King's return to Tongatapu, the immense fleet finally sailed. It reached Lakeba on 9 March, where John Polglase's wife Mary counted 36 canoes "and upwards of 3,000 people".<sup>118</sup> The fleet had touched

113 Calvert, *Journal*, 5–9 Feb 1855; Williams and Calvert, 1870, 370–371; Waterhouse, *King and People...*, 202–203.

114 Calvert to Joseph Waterhouse, 29 May 1855, MOM 323.

115 Calvert, *Journal*, 3 Jun 1855; Calvert to GS, WMMS, 3 Jun 1855, quoted in Calvert, *Events in Feejee 1855*, London 1856, 4–8. See also Deve Toganivalu, "Ratu Cakobau", *TFS*, 1912–1913, 1–12, for further background on the Bau-Rewa struggle.

116 Mrs John [Mary] Polglase, *Diary*, Aug 1850 – Jan 1859, 14 Feb 1855.

117 West, *Ten Years...*, 393–394.

118 Polglase, 9 March 1855.

at Kabara and Moce en route.<sup>119</sup> It was later reported that the King's purpose in coming to Fiji was to "bring Tonguese property" to Cakobau in return for the *Ra Marama* and to congratulate the Vunivalu on his renunciation of heathenism.<sup>120</sup> While these reasons were true enough, Tupou's principal mission in Fiji was political, since he was resolved to sustain Cakobau against his heathen enemies and to redefine the role which the long-established Tongan population was to play in Fiji.

At Lakeba, Tupou's *folau* was augmented by "a considerable force well supplied with firearms", a force probably commanded by Ma`afu. It seems likely that he and his followers were part of the fleet when it reached Moturiki, an island east of Viti Levu, on 21 March. The stay at Moturiki was made in accordance with Fijian custom, so that preparations for the King's formal reception at Bau could be made. Acting on a request from the Governor of Tahiti, Tupou sent a small canoe, with 20 persons on board, across to nearby Ovalau to deliver letters to the French priests there. He also sent a *tabua* and a bundle of kava to Tui Levuka, who had recently lotued. As the canoe neared Totogo, the village north of Levuka where the priests lived, its occupants were fired on by four men acting on orders from the chief of the Lovoni people in the interior of Ovalau. Some local Fijians were apprehensive that the presence of a Tongan teacher, Paula Vea, might serve as "an excuse for [the Tongans'] visiting the island".<sup>121</sup> When the firing began, Tui Levuka, accompanied by resident missionary James Binner, arrived in haste in order to call to the Tongans to pull away from the shore. In the ensuing confusion, the leader of the Tongans, Tawaki, was mortally wounded. Standing out to sea to avoid an approaching canoe containing Mara, the Tongans made their way back to Moturiki.<sup>122</sup>

Mara, whose position was greatly affected by Tupou's alliance with Cakobau, had every reason to cause the Tongans to be lured into a trap. He could appeal to the Vunivalu's Fijian and European enemies on Ovalau by posing as an enemy of the Tongans<sup>123</sup> and in fact tried to persuade the retreating Tongans to land at Levuka. Tupou learned several days later, after his arrival at Bau, that Mara "had presented whales' teeth to many of the chiefs of the Windward Islands in Ovalau, for the purpose of inducing them to join in a war against the Tonguese at Lakeba. He had also [requested] the people of Ovalau [to] fire upon, and

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119 West, *Ten Years...*, 398.

120 William Wilson to Elijah Hoole, 9 Jul 1855, WMMS LFF.

121 Paula Vea, Statement, Joseph Waterhouse correspondence 1851–1864, MOM 568.

122 Calvert to Elijah Hoole, 3 Jun 1855, WMMS LFF; Statement of Paula Vea. See also West, *Ten Years...*, 398–399; Calvert, *Journal*, 24 Mar 1855; William Grant Milne, *Journal on board HMS Herald 1853–1858*, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Official Correspondence c1825–1865. The view later expressed by Mara's grandson Gustav Mara Hennings that it was Mara, not Tui Levuka, who sought to prevent the Tongans from landing, can be discounted. (Gustav Mara Hennings, "Ratu Mara", *TFS*, 1911, unpaginated).

123 In 1854, a visitor estimated Ovalau's population at 3,500, including about 100 "whites and half castes". Francis Hixson, *Remarks HMS Torch from Sydney to Feejees*, April 1854 – February 1855, ML.

destroy ... any ... Tonguese canoe of King George's fleet that might happen to touch at the island".<sup>124</sup> Calvert, visiting Bau at the time, gave the same account of the events near Levuka.<sup>125</sup> The murder of Tawaki meant that Tupou could no longer present his visit as a ceremonial state occasion and a show of solidarity with a fellow Christian monarch. If the murder were not avenged, the safety of all resident Tongans in Fiji, as well as the thousands of visitors, would be placed at risk.<sup>126</sup> If Cakobau wished to request military assistance from his visitor, the King was very willing to listen.

Despite the request made to Tupou to wait at Moturiki, the death of Tawaki caused the angry King to order the fleet to Bau at once, so that Tawaki might be buried. Tupou and his advisers were now "unanimously resolved to help [Cakobau] in the subjugation of his rebellious people".<sup>127</sup> When he arrived, Tupou "ordered the chiefs of Tonga[tapu], Haabai and Vava`u, to meet separately, and consider what course they were disposed to follow in reference to Tawaki's death". Their resolution was to demand both an explanation and reparation from Mara. When Cakobau was advised of the Tongans' position, he announced to Tupou "your fleet came with peaceful intentions, but now it is right that we should fight together".<sup>128</sup> Tupou meanwhile yielded to Calvert's request to send a message to Mara, urging him to sue for peace and saying that if the Tongans laid siege to Kaba, where Mara was now ensconced, they would certainly be successful. Mara's response was open defiance; he claimed that the Tongans could never take Kaba and boasted of the warriors from several other Rewan towns who were at his command.<sup>129</sup> A clash was inevitable and, as Calvert wrote, "its results for good or evil will be immense".<sup>130</sup>

Although Cakobau had long been urged to abandon the war against Rewa, as much for its deleterious effect on Christian evangelisation as for its inherent evils, the time for peace was long past.<sup>131</sup> Tupou attended an immense prayer meeting on 2 April, later promising to prevent loss of life as far as possible.<sup>132</sup> On the same day, the Tongan fleet proceeded from Bau to Kiuva, a village on

124 West, *Ten Years...*, 399–400.

125 Calvert, *Journal*, 24 Mar 1855.

126 For a summary of views expressed in Tonga four months later, when Tupou was still in Fiji, see William Harvey to George Bennett, 27 Jul 1855, in William Henry Harvey, *Seven Letters from W.H. Harvey to Dr George Bennett*, 26 May 1855 to 12 Apr 1860. See also Calvert to Hoole, 3 Jun 1855; William Harvey, *The Contented Botanist. Letters about Australia and the Pacific*, ed. by Sophie C. Ducker, Melbourne 1988, 238–239.

127 Waterhouse, *King and People...*, 128. Robert Coffin, an American sailor, witnessed the arrival at Levuka of "48 sail carrying over 2,000 warriors under King George of Tongataboo". The fleet was on its way to Bau. Robert Coffin, *The Last of the Logan*, ed. by Harold W. Thompson, Ithaca NY USA 1941, 97.

128 West, *Ten Years...*, 400.

129 Calvert to Waterhouse, 29 May 1855, WMMS LFF.

130 Calvert, *Journal*, 2 Apr 1855.

131 Calvert to GS, WMMS, 28 Jun 1849 (extracts), *WMN*, New Series, No. 140, Aug 1850, 130–131.

132 Calvert to GS, WMMS, 3 Jun 1855; Calvert to Hoole, 3 Jun 1855.

the east coast of Rewa, drawing fire from Kaba as it sailed past.<sup>133</sup> The Kabans “waited with impatience” to engage the Tongans, having been reassured by their oracles that the “Christians” would be destroyed.<sup>134</sup> After waiting at Kiuva for four days to allow the disparate groups of Fijians allied with Cakobau to join them, the combined fleets finally arrived off Kaba peninsula early on the morning of 7 April. The confidence of Mara and his allies behind the fortifications appeared undiminished:

The heathen and other wicked men were greatly rejoiced that they had embroiled [Tupou] in Fijian war thus, as they supposed, having an opportunity of trying the strength, worth and truth of the `lotu' and even some nominal Christians in Bau said if the Tonguese were not successful they would become heathen again. The priests became inspired, the gods prophesied destruction of the Tonguese fleet, the enemies cut wood to dress the bodies of the slain and the town was filled with the most courageous men in Fiji.<sup>135</sup>

When the Tongans landed, they were immediately fired upon. Tupou's plan was to cut wood for the construction of a fence, so that those within the Kaba fortress could be starved out. However, after some Tongans were shot and clubbed and their bodies dragged into the village to be cooked and eaten, the Vava`u forces immediately stormed the fortification, captured it easily and set it on fire. On the other side, where Tupou's Fijian allies were advancing on a separate front, the Kabans stationed at a defensive fence abandoned their posts and ran into the village. Meeting no resistance, the Fijians joined with their Tongan allies in quickly breaching Kaba's defences and entering the village, where the bodies of the slain had been laid out before various temples. Mara, with more than 100 followers, managed to escape, running over sharp shells along the reef and swimming to the town of Vatoa, opposite the Kaba peninsula. On arrival, he uttered a cry of despair to a Wesleyan teacher that has resonated through the history of Fiji:

Aye, Acqila, your spirit is still in you, because you have not seen them.  
The man is a fool who fights with Tongans ... They are gods, not men.<sup>136</sup>

Mara quickly escaped to Ovalau with a few followers. Inside Kaba, while the Tongans exercised mercy to their captives, their Fijian allies showed little restraint in slaughtering adults and children. Altogether, about 180 Kabans were killed, with over 200 made prisoner. Among the Tongans, deaths amounted to

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133 Calvert, Journal, 2–3 Apr 1855.

134 WMMS, Bau Circuit Report 1855, Minutes of Mission District Meetings 1855–1857, MOM 5.

135 Wilson to Hoole, 9 Jul 1855.

136 Calvert to Hoole, 3 Jun 1855.

only 14, with about 30 wounded, of whom six later died. When the prisoners were delivered to Cakobau, their lives were spared and most were allowed to return to their homes.<sup>137</sup>

On the very day of the battle of Kaba, Calvert found time to record his opinion that "this is a day much to be remembered in Feejee".<sup>138</sup> In political terms, Kaba marked the beginning of the period when effective power in Fiji passed from Fijian hands into those of outsiders, first the Tongans and, within a single generation and by Fijian consent, the British. This change would bring a new stability, since the Tongans' authority could not be challenged in the way that Bau's had been in the eastern parts of the islands. In the aftermath of Kaba, the most pressing question was the nature of the Tongans' new role. Since Tupou and his forces would eventually return home, that question centred on the many resident Tongans and, in particular, on their emerging leader, Ma`afu. To the authority and prestige which Ma`afu had acquired through his appointment as governor and his victories in the *valu ni lotu* would now be added power devolved from the military success of his king.

There exists no contemporary reference to Ma`afu's participation in the battle of Kaba. A twentieth century writer claimed that at a critical moment in the battle, Ma`afu threw a fresh division into the attack, enabling Kaba's defences to be breached and the town taken.<sup>139</sup> There is support for this assertion in two traditional accounts. The *Tukutuku Raraba* of Sawana *yavusa* records simply that Ma`afu accompanied Tupou's forces to Kaba,<sup>140</sup> while another tradition places Ma`afu at the head of a contingent of his own called the Kailoma.<sup>141</sup> While it seems that Ma`afu's role in the battle was significant, the details hardly matter. As a consequence of the engagement and of his close involvement with Tupou throughout the King's long visit to Fiji, he was well placed to become the most powerful chief in those islands.

The events during the weeks following Kaba demonstrated how the power formerly enjoyed by Bau and Rewa had suddenly shifted to Tupou. According to a Bauan oral tradition still extant in 1970, the bodies of the Tongans who fell at Kaba were brought to Bau and buried in the ceremonial mound known as Navatanitawake.<sup>142</sup> If the tradition is accurate, there could have been no more eloquent witness to the status and authority of the Tongans than the interment of their dead on the chiefly island of Fiji. In the immediate context of April

137 *ibid.*; Calvert, Journal, 7 Apr 1855; Waterhouse, *King and People...*, 205; Waterhouse to GS, WMMS, 11 Jun 1855, WMMS LFF.

138 Calvert, Journal, 7 Apr 1855.

139 T. Reginald St Johnston, *South Sea Reminiscences*, London 1922, 115.

140 TR, Tikina ko Lomaloma...

141 G.V. Maxwell, *Report on the Proceedings of the Native Lands Commission in the Lau Province*, Suva 1913, 7.

142 Aubrey Parke, "Navatanitawake ceremonial mound, Bau, Fiji: some results of 1970 investigations", *Archaeology in Oceania*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Apr 1998, 20.

1855, Tupou received a letter from David Whippy, the respected American Vice Consul at Ovalau, who had been living in Fiji for more than 30 years. Whippy, writing only a week after Kaba on behalf of himself and other Europeans resident at Levuka, expressed regret that any quarrel should have arisen between them and the King. He asked Tupou to “keep this war from Ovalau”, reminding the King of the “outrages out of number” endured by the foreign residents of Fiji.<sup>143</sup> A fortnight later, further letters arrived from the whites of Ovalau, requesting the King to keep any future war away from their island.<sup>144</sup> Anxious to protect their lives and property as they were, the Europeans knew where the new locus of power in Fiji effectively lay.

Tupou stated that he had only gone to Kaba because Mara was there. For the future safety of Tongans living in Fiji, the King felt he had to act against Mara, whom he saw as the cause of their being fired upon at Ovalau and of the bad feeling prevailing against the Tongans. For the same reason, he intended, as did Cakobau, to show mercy to the vanquished Kabans and their numerous allies.<sup>145</sup> This avowal of reluctance to be involved in war and of determination to temper his power with both justice and mercy, ambitions worthy of a Christian King, must have been music to missionary ears. It remained to be seen whether, in the light of events over the next 14 years, Tupou had been less than forthcoming in outlining the motives which had led him to the ramparts of Kaba.

Mara had still to be dealt with and his friends subdued. There remained in Rewa several villages whose chiefs professed continued loyalty to Mara, among them Nakelo, whose chief came to Bau begging for peace. He was so amazed to find that his captured son had been spared that he lotued at once. It was quickly apparent that only the village of Kumi, on the coast of Verata, whence Mara had escaped to Ovalau, refused submission to Bau. Tupou agreed to Cakobau's request to subdue Kumi, so that it might not threaten Bau in the future. On 13 April, 143 canoes left Bau and stood off Kumi, where the Vunivalu sent a message requesting the inhabitants to vacate the village so that it could be burnt. Flee the inhabitants did, Kumi was duly burnt by the Tongans, and all resistance was at an end. Cakobau, who owed his survival to Tupou, in gratitude presented the King with an 86-ton schooner called the *Cakobau*.<sup>146</sup> It now remained for the King to visit Rewa and other parts of Fiji, in part to familiarise himself with the islands whose fate now lay effectively in his hands.

Tupou and his entire party left Bau for Rewa on 11 May, the King sailing in the *Ra Marama*, accompanied by Cakobau in his own canoe. At Buretu, one of the

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143 David Whippy to George, King of Tonga, 14 Apr 1855, United States 34th Congress, First Session, House of Representatives, Executive Document No. 115, 25 Jun 1856, letter no. 83.

144 Calvert, Journal, 10 and 24 Apr 1855.

145 *ibid.*, 10 Apr 1855.

146 Calvert to Waterhouse, 29 May 1855; Calvert to Hoole, 7 Jun 1855.

rebel villages, the local chiefs presented Cakobau with several *tabua*, while at Nakelo, where the royal party spent the night, immense quantities of food were offered to both the Vunivalu and Tupou in the presence of crowds of people who had come to witness the unprecedented spectacle of 40 canoes, long streamers attached to their mastheads, proceeding up the river. At several villages, baskets of earth, *tabua* and other tokens of submission were laid before the Vunivalu in accordance with customary practice. Always these ceremonies were watched by Tupou, a reminder to all that Cakobau, under whose suzerainty Rewa now lay, operated under a Tongan aegis. At one village, a meeting was called of all the rebel chiefs, who were enjoined by Tupou to keep the peace in future, under pain of "chastisement by the combined powers of Bau and Rewa".<sup>147</sup> This move, an attempt to secure the future security of Bau, could not have been made without the ultimate protection of Tongan military power, a protection of which Tupou's hearers would have been well aware. Calvert, who accompanied the King on his tour of Rewa, did not neglect to describe the King's prowess in the management of the *Ra Marama*: "He is a thorough master in all he does, both by superior wisdom and superior physical power", the missionary enthused.<sup>148</sup> The question which many must have asked at the time was whether Tupou wished to extend the same degree of mastery to Fiji itself.

For all his military success at Kaba, and his continued support of Cakobau, Tupou never forgot the principal reason for his presence in Fiji: espousal of the *lotu*. The missionaries took satisfaction in the mass conversions, in both Bau and Rewa, which followed in the wake of Tupou's triumph and the consolidation of Cakobau's position. On 15 May, the King left Bau for a visit to Kadavu, with the intention of pressing the Christian message on the chiefs there. During his absence, moves occurred to promote peace on Ovalau, where opposition to Cakobau was still significant. In May a local trader, American Thomas Dunn, arrived at Levuka on board his ship *Dragon*. Meeting Mara on board, Dunn urged the renegade to go to Bau and make his peace with Cakobau. Mara replied that he would like to do so but feared earning the displeasure of the Europeans resident in Levuka who he claimed protected him. Dunn immediately went ashore and brought Tui Levuka, David Whippy and another European resident on board. The result of a meeting between them and Mara was a plan for them all to proceed to Bau within a few days to make peace offerings. Dunn requested Waterhouse to urge the return of Tupou and the Vunivalu as soon as practicable, so that a formal peace might be concluded.<sup>149</sup> Because of the *Dragon's* sailing schedule, the meeting at Bau took place on 18 June, four days before Cakobau's

147 Quoted in Calvert to Hoole, 7 Jun 1855. See also Calvert to Waterhouse, 24 May 1855, MOM 323; Calvert, Journal, 11–14 May 1855.

148 Calvert, Journal, 11 May 1855.

149 *ibid.*, 3 Jun 1855.

return.<sup>150</sup> Nothing conclusive resulted, leaving Ovalau as the one former “rebel” area not avowing allegiance to the Vunivalu. With many of the Europeans there still fearful of Cakobau and some chiefs toying with the idea of seeking French protection, one missionary foresaw anarchy if the disaffection on Ovalau could not be overcome before Tupou returned home.<sup>151</sup> With Mara’s fangs not yet drawn, the ascendancy of Cakobau was far from assured.

Meanwhile, the Tongan *folau*, encountering contrary winds on its way to Kadavu, was forced to put in at the island of Beqa, where there was insufficient food to support the horde of unexpected visitors. A Beqan chief, Tui Sawau, seized the opportunity to complain to Cakobau about some villages in isolated parts of the island, which had prepared no food for the visitors and whose inhabitants “were only subject to the skies”. When a party of Tongans approached the villages, stones were rolled down at them. Cakobau quickly passed the request to Tupou, whose messengers soon persuaded the inhabitants of all the recalcitrant villages but one to place themselves under the authority of Tui Sawau. Ma`afu and `Unga were sent to “fetch the chief and people” of Naceva, the one village holding out. The outcome was that, once all eight of the villages which had defied Tui Sawau were cleared, they were burnt. The people “were advised to live together ... and not quarrel among themselves”<sup>152</sup> and about 1,000 of them lotued. Once again, only Tongan intervention had been able to subdue forces opposed to a Fijian chief. The added significance of the Tongans’ visit to Beqa is that it resulted in the only documented reference to Ma`afu during Tupou’s long stay in Fiji. We see him in a clearly subordinate role, acting at the behest of his king. There is a marked contrast here with the victorious Ma`afu of the *valu ni lotu*, when he acquired the Yasayasa Moala and Vanuabalavu in a manner sanctioned by custom. If he were to be confirmed as master of Lau, it could only be with the acquiescence of Tupou.

At this mid point of Tupou’s long visit to Fiji, it is useful to make brief reference to a constitutional question which would in time help to define Ma`afu’s relationship with the evolving kingdom of Tonga. Although Tupou’s ascendancy and the unity of his kingdom had been assured since 1852, Tonga lacked a written constitution and was governed in accordance with law codes heavily influenced by Wesleyan missionaries. The King’s power, within the traditional Tongan hierarchy, was supreme and in no way subject to the will of the people. Such an arrangement conformed to Tongan custom, but if Tupou were to succeed in maintaining his country’s independence and in securing international recognition, he would inevitably face pressure from outside to

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150 *ibid.*, 18 Jun 1855.

151 Samuel Waterhouse to Jabez Watkins, 19 Jun 1855, Waterhouse Family Papers, Box 2.

152 Calvert, Journal, 22 Jun 1855. See also Calvert to Hoole, 24 Jul 1855, WMMS LFF. Calvert did not accompany Tupou and Cakobau on their visit to Beqa and Kadavu, as he had done in Rewa, but learned the details of the visit after the fleet returned to Bau.

establish a regime more compatible with western, particularly British, notions of responsible government. While in Sydney in 1853–4, he had met Charles St Julian, an English-born law reporter who acted as Consul for the kingdom of Hawai`i. In subsequent years, Tupou and St Julian corresponded on the need for constitutional changes in Tonga, with St Julian offering advice, often gratuitous but usually detailed and well-informed, on specific changes he thought desirable. While the details of these lengthy exchanges need not be considered here, it is of passing interest to note one letter written by St Julian in June 1855, when Tupou was still actively promoting the *lotu* in Fijian waters. St Julian urged the King, who was anxious to secure international recognition of Tongan independence, to ensure that the rule of succession be "thoroughly determined, [so] that the heir ... of the throne can be properly trained and prepared, under the guidance of the reigning sovereign".<sup>153</sup> This question was not to be properly addressed until the promulgation of the first Tongan constitution 20 years later. In 1855, when the principle of primogeniture was by no means established in Tonga, any consideration of Tupou's possible successor could not have excluded Ma`afu. The son of Tupou's predecessor as Tu`i Kānokupolu and already an acknowledged leader among the Tongan diaspora in Fiji, Ma`afu must have loomed as a possible future King. He had been living in Fiji for eight years and for two years had been exercising some of the customary functions of a Fijian chief. Both his relationship with his King and his part, if any, in the evolving polity of his homeland would soon require definition.

We cannot know whether these questions exercised the minds of Ma`afu and Tupou as they sailed southern Fiji waters in the middle of 1855. The *folau* proceeded from Beqa to Kadavu and Vatulele, where again mass conversions occurred, before returning to Bau. Calvert, anxious for the King to continue his good work, "urged Tupou to do all he could for Feejee, which he appeared disposed to do".<sup>154</sup> Doing "all he could" meant continued practical support for Cakobau and active promotion of the *lotu*. By early June, Tupou was again at Bau, accompanied by "his little son", intending to take home a small canoe given him by Cakobau during a previous visit.<sup>155</sup> As always, religious could not be separated from political considerations, now almost inevitably involving outsiders. When a Royal Navy hydrographic survey ship, HMS *Herald*, arrived in Levuka in July to begin a nautical survey of Fiji, its commander, Captain Henry Mangles Denham, was immediately sucked into the vortex of Fijian politics. Tui Levuka and other Ovalau chiefs asked him to accept the cession of the island to Great Britain, a request with which Denham was initially sympathetic, even

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153 Charles St Julian to George Tupou, 26 Jun 1855, Foreign Office and Executive File, AH. For a detailed discussion of the correspondence between St Julian and the King, see Marion Diamond, *Creative Meddler: The Life and Fantasies of Charles St Julian*, Melbourne 1990, Ch. 4.

154 Calvert, Journal, 15 Jul 1855.

155 William Wilson, Journal, 8 Jun 1855 (extract), MOM 567.

though he lacked any authority to represent the British government. He took pains to outline to the chiefs the conditions implied in an act of cession and agreed to hoist the British flag at Levuka a few days later.<sup>156</sup> The proposal had the support of prominent European residents of Lau and was accompanied by the despatch to Denham of several baskets of earth.<sup>157</sup> Cakobau and Tupou came together on board the *Herald* to lend support to the local chiefs' wishes. Denham demurred, saying that the question should also be considered by chiefs in other parts of Fiji, while a greater authority than he should decide whether to entertain the offer.<sup>158</sup> The captain was then unaware that Tui Levuka had given Monseigneur Bataillon, a French bishop visiting from Tahiti, a signed paper requesting French protection and asking that a French warship be despatched from Tahiti.<sup>159</sup> Since there were six towns on Ovalau which, although subject to Bau, were in open rebellion, much would depend on Cakobau's attitude towards any notion of cession.

In the event Cakobau expressed approval of the idea, provided his differences with Ovalau's chiefs were settled and the six recalcitrant towns were reconciled with Bau.<sup>160</sup> His enthusiasm was such that he announced to Denham his desire to "lead" Ovalau's annexation, as an example to the rest of Fiji.<sup>161</sup> Both he and Tupou, who was still visiting Bau, were invited by Denham to be present at the flag-raising ceremony, but declined. The proposal had no hope of success, in view of the unwillingness of the British government of the day to acquire any Pacific possessions and of the peculiar concept of "cession" held by Cakobau. For the Vunivalu, cession could only involve the occasional visit of a British warship to look after his interests. He would not contemplate British control over the land or people of Fiji.<sup>162</sup>

The attitude of Tupou towards the question of cession is unclear. Having objected to any form of British protectorate over his own country, he might now have been disposed to change his mind, owing to the various overtures being made to him by the governor of Tahiti and to the friendship treaty signed the previous January.<sup>163</sup> His immediate concern though, as he prepared to visit Ovalau in Cakobau's company, was to settle his differences with those who had shot Tawaki four months earlier.<sup>164</sup> On 25 July, when the two chiefs arrived at

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156 Denham's conditions are listed in Hydrographic Notice No. 2/1856, based on a letter from Denham to Admiral John Washington dated 24 Jul 1855, HO, file 3d. Quoted in Andrew David, *The Voyage of HMS Herald to Australia, the South-West Pacific under the command of Captain Henry Mangles Denham*, Melbourne 1995, 174.

157 Charles St Julian, *Official Report on Central Polynesia*, Sydney 1857, 6.

158 Denham to Fremantle, 29 July 1855, Fremantle Family Papers 1807–1860.

159 Calvert to Hoole, 24 Jul 1855; Calvert, Journal, 17 Jul 1855.

160 Calvert, Journal, 17 and 19 Jul 1855.

161 Henry Denham to Adm. Hydrographer, n.d., enclosed in Fremantle to Osborne, 12 Dec 1855, FO 58/84b.

162 Calvert, Journal, 17 and 26 Jul 1855.

163 Calvert to Hoole, 24 Jul 1855.

164 *ibid.*

Ovalau with a fleet of 11 canoes, a conference of all contending parties took place on board the *Herald*. It involved, as well as Tupou and Cakobau, Tui Levuka, Ratu Mara, David Whippy, a number of chiefs from both Ovalau and Bau and of course Captain Denham. When Denham became aware of Tui Levuka's duplicity in making overtures to Monseigneur Bataillon as well as himself, he announced he would have to refer the cession request to his commanding officer, Captain Fremantle, whose vessel, HMS *Juno*, was expected in Fijian waters later in the year.<sup>165</sup> Although he strongly favoured cession of the whole of Fiji to Great Britain, Denham could not entertain any offer made in such improper circumstances. In any case, to do so would have exceeded his instructions and earned his government's displeasure. Commenting on the abandoned plans for the ceremony at Levuka, Denham declared "the flag hoisted must be clean".<sup>166</sup>

At the meeting, Cakobau managed to convince his suspicious fellow chiefs of his good intentions towards Ovalau. Agreement was reached that when the Vunivalu returned from his forthcoming visit to Cakaudrove, in company with Tupou, a formal *soro* from the rebel Ovalau towns would be presented to him.<sup>167</sup> With all effective opposition now at an end in central Fiji, Cakobau could turn his attention to a *matanitu* which had caused him much difficulty in the past. The company of Tupou would set the final seal to the Vunivalu's supremacy and, the missionaries hoped, assist the progress of the *lotu* in Cakaudrove. Although the King regretted that so many lives had been lost at Kaba, he was still determined, if only now as an interested observer, to secure both peace and Christianity for Fiji.

Tupou, Cakobau and the fleet received a warm welcome in Taveuni, where Raivalita had emerged victorious from several months of warfare following his father's murder in February 1854. He was formally installed as Tui Cakau in the presence of Tupou, a move implying the Tongan King's approval and support.<sup>168</sup> In response to a request from Raivalita, Tupou sailed to the island of Rabe, subject to Cakaudrove, where 20 Tongans, whose canoe had drifted to the island on a voyage from Lakeba to Tonga, had been killed and eaten. Rabe people had also killed two Somosomo chiefs, one of them a half-brother of Raivalita.<sup>169</sup> When Tupou, on a mission "to make enquiries", arrived at the island on board the *Cakobau*, he and his party were well received. It afterwards transpired that a man from Tuniloa island who came on board the *Cakobau* had planned to murder Tupou but lost heart. When the man returned to shore, six Tongans

165 Calvert, Journal, 19 Jul 1855.

166 *ibid.* See also the remarks of Francis Hixson, Acting Second Master aboard HMS *Herald*, 13–29 Jul 1855, Francis Hixson Papers 1848–1860.

167 Calvert, Journal, 25 Jul 1855.

168 Great Council of Chiefs, 1879, *Published Proceedings of the Native Councils, or Council of Chiefs, from September 1875*, Suva, n.d.

169 Seemann, 245.

who had earlier gone ashore from the King's vessel were themselves murdered. The King immediately made sail back to Somosomo. Raivalita, who regarded these new atrocities at Rabe as the last straw, presented the island to Tupou as a personal fief and, supported by other Somosomo and Bauan chiefs, asked the King to return to Rabe and destroy its people. This Tupou bade fair to do. After landing on the island, his forces killed 280 people, while a further 60 drowned while attempting to escape.<sup>170</sup> With the destruction complete, Rabe would thereafter be regarded by the King as his own property, separate from Ma`afu's acquisitions in eastern Fiji.<sup>171</sup> According to a future Prime Minister of Tonga, chiefs from Rabe had placed soil from Rabe at the King's feet in a formal token of the transfer of sovereignty.<sup>172</sup> In the immediate context of Tupou's visit to Fiji, Rabe's rebellion against Tui Cakau was at an end. The island joined Vanuabalavu and the Yasayasa Moala as lands under one form or another of Tongan control.

While Tupou, Cakobau and, presumably, Ma`afu, were visiting Cakaudrove, events occurred elsewhere in Fiji which, although not involving Tonga, were to undermine the sense of security that Cakobau enjoyed. In September the USS *John Adams*, Commander Edward Boutwell, having called at Rewa, arrived at Levuka to investigate further the claims arising from the destruction by fire of Consul Williams' house six years earlier. When Boutwell presented the Bauan chiefs with a formal demand for US\$30,000 "for depredations and losses to American citizens in Fiji", the chiefs refused to sign a document admitting the justice of the claim.<sup>173</sup> Boutwell knew that when the fire occurred, the island of Nukulau was not subject to Cakobau's control. He was also aware that the Vunivalu did not enjoy authority commensurate with the title of Tui Viti, by which he had been known to Europeans for more than a decade. As unscrupulous as Consul Williams, Boutwell persisted in the claim "because [Cakobau] was the greatest robber, and had invited King George of the Tongan Islands, to join him in subduing Fiji".<sup>174</sup> After Boutwell finally raised the indemnity to US\$43,686, Fremantle accused the American of "supercilious hauteur" and "extortion". Noting that the alarm raised in the minds of many Fijians by Boutwell's "peremptory proceedings" caused them to look to Great Britain for protection, Fremantle duly received from Tui Levuka a renewal of the offer to cede Ovalau. Believing that Tui Levuka and the other chiefs "were afraid of King George, of the French, of the Americans, and in fact of each other", Fremantle informed Tui Levuka that discussions with the British government would be necessary before

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170 Calvert, Journal, 22 Sep 1855; Calvert to Hoole, 20 Oct 1855, WMMS LFF; Thomas West to GS, WMMS, 1 Nov 1855, WMMS LFF.

171 According to an anonymous British visitor in 1861, Ma`afu in 1860 "in the name of King George received payment for ... assistance rendered [at Rabe]". "W", "The Fiji Islanders", *The Athenaeum*, No. 1791, 22 Feb 1862, 260.

172 Shirley Baker to John Hill, 2 Aug 1880, Tonga Government Letterbook May 1873 – Nov 1874.

173 Calvert, Journal, 29 Sep 1855; Calvert to Hoole, 20 Oct 1855.

174 Commander Boutwell to *National Intelligencer*, 30 Mar 1859, quoted in Williams and Calvert, 579.

any decision could be made.<sup>175</sup> As far as fear of the French was concerned, a French armed transport, the *Perroquet*, had been anchored at Levuka only four days before the *John Adams* arrived. On a voyage from Tahiti to New Caledonia, the ship had called "to see if the French clergy are in want of official aid".<sup>176</sup>

Cakobau, returned from Taveuni and summoned aboard the *John Adams*, signed an acknowledgement of the American debt "through fear" and was given two years to pay.<sup>177</sup> For the Vunivalu, the situation was rich in an irony he would not have appreciated. His authority, limited as it was, had been underwritten by the military successes of Tupou and his forces, while his Fijian enemies had been reduced to impotence. Now, he was faced with demands as incomprehensible as they were unjust from a foreign power whose force could not be gainsaid. Only some form of British protection would offer him any chance of repudiating the American "debt". Within four years, his security was to be further undermined by Ma`afu, whose power base in Lau would, following the departure of Tupou, enable him to challenge the Vunivalu for supremacy in Fiji.

The threat from Ma`afu was not immediately apparent when Boutwell was confronting Cakobau. Tupou and the bulk of his *folau* left Wairiki on 18 September, reportedly "for home".<sup>178</sup> Within a month of this departure, Ma`afu formally handed over to his King all the lands he had acquired in Fiji. While there is no contemporary account of the occasion, it seems to have taken place on Vanuabalavu. In an 1864 statement to the then British Consul, Ma`afu recalled the circumstances:

In the latter end of 1855 (say November) King George, on his return from Bau and Taveuni, called at Vanua Balavu, the people in anticipation of his visit having built him a large house. On this occasion Ma`afu formally handed over to him the islands he had acquired, when King George said to Ma`afu, take care of them for the Tongan Government...<sup>179</sup>

Three months after Ma`afu made this formal statement, he made further reference to his gift to Tupou:

Be it known unto all men that Vanua Balavu and all other lands situated in Fiji and which were formally given to me, that in the year ... (1855) I gave the said lands to George Tubou and the Government of Tonga,

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175 Fremantle to Osborne, 12 Dec 1855, FO 58/84B. For precise details of the claim, see Boutwell to Cakobau, 25 Sep 1855 and Boutwell to Fremantle, 19 Oct 1855, both enclosed with the above.

176 Denham to Fremantle, 24 Sep 1855, Fremantle Family Papers 1807–1860. For an account of the movements of USS *John Adams* and HMS *Herald*, see David, 201–204.

177 Enclosure in John Bates Thurston to Captain C.W. Hope, n.d., in Charles Webley Hope, Letter-Journals.

178 Calvert, Journal, 22 Sep 1855.

179 Statement of Ma`afu, November 1864.

and the only connection I have now with the same am [sic] that I am governor of the people and Lands belong[ing] to the Government of Tonga and situate in Fiji.<sup>180</sup>

The “lands” in question included the Yasayasa Moala, acquired by right of conquest, as well as Vanuabalavu and the islands within its reef, which had been ceded to Ma`afu in accordance with Fijian custom. It is important not to place too great an emphasis on Ma`afu’s claim that these islands “belong[ed] to the Government of Tonga”. In the 1860s, neither Tonga nor Fiji constituted a nation state in the modern sense of the term. The “Government of Tonga” then effectively meant Tupou himself. In handing over his lands to the King, Ma`afu was performing his duty as a Tongan chief. On 4 January 1856, only one week after his return to Tonga, Tupou addressed a *fono* of Tongatapu chiefs on the subject of Ma`afu. The King

spoke in the highest terms of Henry in Feejees, lamented much and said, how he was grieved at his loss – That he had no-one here, to whom he could look or upon whom he could depend. That if Henry was here he [Tupou] may then sit down and enjoy himself, or walk about at his pleasure.<sup>181</sup>

Tupou’s confidence in Ma`afu meant that he would have been content to leave the Tongan lands in Lau, nominally his own, in the capable hands of his younger kinsman.

By 1864 and 1865, when Ma`afu’s formal statements were made, he had been exercising authority in the two island groups for a decade. That authority had never been called into question in the islands themselves. It is significant that Ma`afu chose to describe his sovereignty in terms of a gift from his king, rather than basing his rule on the usages of Fijian custom, as he was entitled to do. Ma`afu possibly believed that both the British Consul and the government he represented would readily understand and accept a sovereignty deriving from a Christian monarch whom they admired and whose government they recognised. There is no reason to suppose that the agreement of late 1855 implied any desire on Tupou’s behalf to exercise greater authority over Ma`afu’s Fijian lands in the future. Ma`afu’s authority in those lands was acknowledged to accord with both Fijian and Tongan custom. In that acknowledgement lay the seeds of his future appointment as Tui Lau.

The departure of Tupou and his *folau* for home must have occurred soon after the King’s agreement with Ma`afu. The fleet reached Lakeba on 15 October, where its 35 large canoes carrying 2,000 men impressed a visiting Irish professor as “a

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180 CRD, BCFP, Register No. 379, 4 Feb 1865.

181 John Thomas, *Journal*, 28 Dec 1855 and 4 Jan 1856.

very pretty sight" as they sailed into the Tubou roadstead.<sup>182</sup> During a stay of several weeks, awaiting a fair wind for Tonga, Tupou encountered Thomas West and his wife when they arrived from Ha`apai. West noted, perhaps naively, that the Tongans evinced "a genuine satisfaction that the Gospel would now have a free course through Fiji, such as it had never had before". Tupou and his queen, who had accompanied him throughout his Fijian visit, joined over 1,000 of their fellow Tongans in attending a farewell service given in their honour. When the Wests were about to set sail, Tupou presented the missionary with his war club, saying that he could "afford to part with it now that the work in Fiji was done, in which it might have been of service to himself".<sup>183</sup> On a more practical level, the Tongans' Lakeba hosts felt the strain of feeding such a vast number of people.<sup>184</sup> The visit was prolonged, since the King had time to visit Ono, in southern Lau, whence he returned to Lakeba on 10 November.<sup>185</sup> It seems likely that either on that voyage, or when he finally left for home, Tupou conveyed Ma`afu as far as Kabara. The latter is recorded as arriving back at Lakeba on 24 December, having been taken on board at Kabara by a visiting ship on its way to Lakeba.<sup>186</sup> Tupou finally reached Tonga on Christmas Day, arriving at Ha`apai in time to appear "first at public worship". "No warrior", the resident missionaries remarked, "ever returned from battlefield less affected by the evils of war than King George".<sup>187</sup>

The implications of the tumultuous events of 1855 appear to have been lost on John Polglase, the Wesleyan missionary stationed at Lakeba. In his circuit report for the year, he recorded the astonishing observation that "no important political change has taken place in ... the Feejee group during the year".<sup>188</sup> The truth was exactly the opposite; as Polglase should have been aware, the predominance of Christianity was now assured in Fiji, with the exception of central and western Viti Levu. While Thomas West ascribed the triumph of his faith to "the religious example of the Tonguese",<sup>189</sup> a more likely cause was the demonstrable inefficacy of the old gods, coupled with the conversion of Cakobau. Everywhere, even before the departure of the Tongans, resident missionaries were besieged by requests for teachers which could not be met in the short term.<sup>190</sup> The eventual triumph of the faith was assured; even with the various outside pressures being felt by Fiji, the *lotu* was bound to triumph. Just as the military victories of the Tongans, on behalf of themselves and Cakobau, defeated the old gods, they also, as part of the same process, greatly hastened

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182 Dr William Harvey to Mary Christy Harvey, 15 Dec 1855, in Dr William Harvey, *Letters on Tonga and Fiji*.

183 West, *Ten Years...*, 408.

184 William Harvey to Mary Christy Harvey, 12 Dec 1855.

185 Polglase, 12 Nov 1855.

186 *ibid.*, 24 Dec 1855.

187 WMMS, Ha`apai Circuit Report 1856, Minutes of Mission District Meetings 1855–1857, MOM 5.

188 WMMS, Lakemba Circuit Report [1855], Minutes of Mission District Meetings 1855–1857, MOM 5.

189 West, *Ten Years...*, 403.

190 *ibid.*, 411; *The Empire*, 10 Dec 1855; Calvert to Hoole, 20 Oct 1855.

the destruction of the traditional Fijian polity. Adherence to the Christian God was in itself a check on chiefly power. The fragmented political structure of Fiji, with its ever-shifting alliances, meant that it was very difficult for one chief to exert himself over the whole group, as Cakobau hoped to do and as had occurred in Tonga, whose society was structured very differently to that of Fiji. The internecine struggle between Bau and Rewa had seemed likely to end with Rewa dominance in central Fiji, until Tongan intervention turned the tables and left Bau in the ascendancy. Thenceforth, Tongan power was long to be a permanent feature of the polity of Fiji; no Fijian chief, however powerful, could be master of the group but by Tongan leave. The process whereby Fijians were to lose control of their own affairs had begun. The new and decisive ingredient in the Fijian political mix, Tongan power, was quickly centred on Ma`afu, who continued the process begun long before Kaba and not concluded until 1869, when he became a chief of Fiji in his own right.

Captain Fremantle, reporting at length to the British Admiralty at the conclusion of the visit of HMS *Juno* to Fiji and Tonga, questioned Tupou's motives and urged the British government to consider seriously the annexation of both groups. Fremantle wrote of the "doubtful aspects" of Tupou's expedition, of the "distress" caused by the need to provide food for the Tongan multitude and of the "swaggering domineering tone" of the visitors. More importantly, he accused Tupou of having, at the end of his "cruise", taken possession of Lau, whose inhabitants, the most Christianised of all Fijians, supposedly preferred to be subject to Tongan rule. Fremantle concluded with some gratuitous advice to Tupou not "to wish to extend his dominions" following proceedings "as a friendly neighbour [which] have been very questionable". No evidence was offered for Tupou's expansionist plans, which were supposed to include Samoa as well as Fiji.<sup>191</sup> In any case, Tongan military involvement beyond the shores of Tonga had traditionally been undertaken to support allies or clients, not to extend Tongan rule. Conquest was not an issue, except in cases of rebellion, as had occurred on Tongatapu during the earlier years of Tupou's rule.

Fremantle was not the only commentator then and since to ascribe imperialist ambition to the King of Tonga. Yet there has never emerged any evidence that Tupou, in 1855, had any concerns beyond bringing peace to Fiji and aiding the spread of the *lotu*. West, who knew Tupou well, was aware of such views even before the Tongan fleet returned home:

No doubt the proceedings of King George and the Tonguese generally will be closely scrutinised and strongly animadverted upon by interested parties who will not scruple to give currency to statements and remarks derogatory to the king's character.<sup>192</sup>

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191 Fremantle to Osborne, 12 Dec 1855.

192 West to GS, WMMS, 12 Nov 1855. See also West, *Ten Years...*, 403.

West also made the point that after his successful campaign in Rabe, Tupou "once and firmly refused" the offer from Tui Cakau of the island of Taveuni.<sup>193</sup> Tupou's restraint, under severe provocation, in dealing with the rebels on Ovalau, and his and Cakobau's conspicuous acts of mercy towards defeated Rewan chiefs, were not consistent with any desire for conquest. In sailing home with his magnificent prizes, the canoe *Ra Marama* and the schooner *Cakobau*, Tupou would have been content with a job well done. It would be several more years before there emerged even the suggestion that he was casting longing eyes over the Lauan archipelago.

Although several writers have referred to Tupou's "instructions" to Ma'afu at the end of the Tongans' long stay in Fiji,<sup>194</sup> there is no evidence for any arrangement between the two men beyond that detailed by Ma'afu in his statements considered above. Ma'afu's successes in the Yasayasa Moala and in Vanuabalavu had occurred without any assistance from Tupou. His personal ambition was unquestionably great, as was his ability to seize any opportunity that presented itself. The power which he and the other Tongans resident in Fiji enjoyed at the end of 1855 owed more to his own achievements than it did to the endorsement he received from Tupou. Ma'afu would emerge within three years as a bitter and menacing rival to Cakobau. While, according to himself, he held his Fijian lands as a gift from his king, they and the power they represented were the fruits of his own military prowess and his diplomatic skill.

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193 West to GS, WMMS, 1 Nov 1855. It is impossible to believe that such an offer, if it occurred, was made in earnest.

194 See, for example, R.A. Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, Suva 1950, 117; Basil Thomson, *The Diversions of a Prime Minister*, Edinburgh and London 1894, 364; Reid, 90.

This text taken from *Ma`afu, prince of Tonga, chief of Fiji: The life and times of Fiji's first Tui Lau*, by John Spurway, published 2015 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.