EDITOR'S FORUM

THE DEFINITION OF AUTHENTIC OCEANIC CULTURES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO TONGAN CULTURE

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The meaning of the term "culture" has been the subject of serious debate among eminent social scientists throughout the years, particularly anthropologists and sociologists. As recently as 1973, Louis Schneider, a leading sociologist, had to admit that "even at this late date, when social scientists have repeatedly mulled over some of their essential terms . . . there is still insufficient clarity among them about 'culture' and cognate categories, which too often are messy items" (Schneider 1973:120-21). However, for the purpose of this paper, "culture" refers to the total way of life of a society, which is a "group of people who are dependent on one another for survival and well being." (Harris in Schneider 1973:120). Culture includes the society's material possessions, technology and economy, social organization, its regular daily and ceremonial behavior system, value and belief system, expressive system including language and art, social control and thought patterns. Culture is a complex whole which is the sum total of a rather complicated interaction of its various components with the environment. In the process of this interaction, change is stimulated so that culture is continually growing or being transformed. It is a living entity with dynamic capacities for growth (Crocombe 1972:2).

The role of the environment, whether natural or man-made, cannot be underestimated. The first British settlers of Australia found it difficult to see any beauty in the Australian landscape, birds, animals, vegetation and so on. Even early paintings tended to distort the true appearance of the landscape and inhabitants to fit in with what was familiar. It remained for the Australian-born artists and writers to develop a genuine appreciation of and see beauty in the unique Australian environment--its landscape, rocks, vegetation and fauna. When the ancestors of the Maoris first arrived in New Zealand from their original homes in the tropics, their culture had to be adapted to the demands of their new environment with its colder climate and different vegetation and fauna. When the *Pakeha* or

early Europeans came, their culture changed the New Zealand environment and this inevitably affected Maori culture, which has greatly changed from its earlier form, yet has also retained distinctive Maori attributes.

It cannot be argued that culture is something fixed, static or divorced from the people of a society at a particular historical epoch. Many writers discussing people of Oceania have tended to convey such a timeless and unchanging impression; but Oceanic cultures, like cultures everywhere, are constantly shaped and reshaped to meet the changing needs and aspirations of their members. Cultures everywhere are dynamic with a great capacity for growth and change, sometimes with surprising speed. Even in the most isolated and apparently static society there are always some members who do not adhere to the accepted norms of the culture at all times. Some innovative individuals may defy traditions within the culture--tradition being those aspects of the culture which had been practiced by the ancestors and which may or may not still be practiced. These innovative individuals are the ones who usually stimulate change or growth in the society in spite of the usual formidable resistance from the more conservative majority who would prefer to maintain the status quo and who are deeply suspicious of change for fear of possible harmful and unpleasant alternatives, and a corresponding loss of the existing privileges. However, when innovations are finally accepted by the society at large, they automatically become traditional aspects of the culture. If others are rejected, they are simply forgotten. This process of acceptance or rejection is not usually done consciously. In fact, resistance is usually stronger if coercion is consciously applied. Every member of a society is to some extent molded by the culture. What one prefers to eat, wear, make, sleep on, think, believe, enjoy or dislike, love or hate, and the question of how or why one behaves in a particular fashion under certain circumstances are mainly determined by the culture. Yet once some individuals begin to change, whether through innovation from within the culture or through outside influence, there is the potential for change within that culture.

"Authentic" Oceanic cultures here refers to those cultures which originated among Pacific islands societies prior to or at the time of the first organized foreign settlements in the area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Spreading over a vast area which consists of about a third of the world's surface and separated from one another by expanses of ocean, these cultures were numerous, small and diverse. While those in Polynesia and, to a lesser extent, Micronesia were relatively homogeneous, in Melanesia diversity prevailed, as greater land masses, natural

barriers such as mountain ranges and more difficult terrain, climatic variation, larger populations and other social factors tended to isolate small communities from each other. However, in spite of the apparent diversity of cultures in this region, they, in fact, shared a lot in common. With the exception of the inland areas of the larger islands, especially Papua New Guinea, the coastal Melanesians and other islanders shared very similar natural environments in the form of typical tropical vegetation and their material possessions and the means of exploiting their islands' resources were very similar to each other. The types of food eaten, for example, and how they were prepared were very similar throughout Oceania and markedly different in comparison, for instance, with the neighboring regions of Southeast Asia, Asia, or America. In their subsistence economies, none of their crops were storable for periods longer than a year, unlike the rice of tropical Asia or the grains of temperate climates. Therefore, crops could not be accumulated as a form of wealth, and any surplus had to be shared, commonly at times of feasting and ceremonial. In doing so, the more successful farmers acquired prestige rather than material wealth; but through this, they were still able to gain influence and power over others. In social organization and attitudes towards the same, these Oceanic cultures shared a lot in common. Kinship relationships were the basis of social relationships, and group activities designed for security and survival were of paramount importance. While one can perceive these broad resemblances between the cultures of Oceania, it would be misleading to assume that there was any self-conscious acknowledgment of such similarities until quite recently. Politicians and academics nowadays like to refer to it as a "Pacific Way," but this is quite a new idea which has emerged very recently and the coinage of the term has been attributed to Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara of Fiji (Tupouniua, Crocombe, Slatter 1975:1). The Pacific Way is for the present and future generations of Pacific islanders to develop. In the meantime, all these authentic Oceanic cultures have undergone many changes as a result of the external influences which have affected the Pacific region just as they have all other parts of the world. To illustrate the types of changes these Oceanic cultures have undergone in general, I shall now turn to one of them, the Tongan culture, which many observers have repeatedly alleged to have remained traditional. I shall attempt to show that in reality the Tongan culture has undergone radical changes. While the discussion will focus upon the way Tongan culture has changed from its past to its present

[1] Kāinga has other meanings. It can mean relatives. For a comprehensive discussion of this meaning see (Kaeppler 1971: 174-93; Decktor Korn 1974:5-13). It can also mean a group of people from a particular area (Kavaliku 1977:48) or church.

form and what future developments are likely, many of the points raised can be readily applied to the developments in other Oceanic cultures.

Tonga, a constitutional monarchy, lies within the tropics between 15° and 22° south of the equator, being about 1,770 km. northeast of New Zealand. It is the only independent kingdom in Oceania, and has the distinction of being the only group that has never been colonized. In 1900, it became a protected state of Great Britain but resumed full independence in 1970. The kingdom is made up of 150 small islands, thirty-six of which are inhabited. Its total area is only 640 km^2 and it has a population of about 100,000, most of whom are of Polynesian stock (Crane 1978:4).

The allegation often made by observers that Tonga is the most traditional of all the societies in Oceania needs closer examination. If it implies that little or no change has occurred in the society and its culture, then these observers are definitely mistaken. But if, on the other hand, it means that the Tongan culture has developed in its own distinctive way, then the observation seems correct as the remainder of this discussion will attempt to show.

Like other Polynesian societies, Tonga was a stratified society with a chiefly political system. Blessed with relatively mild and beautiful climate, fertile soil, and combined with efficient management of their economy, the Tongans were able to produce enough food both from the land and sea to support the system where chiefs did not have to soil their hands in manual work and were there to protect and supervise the commoners in their activities. Except in times of war or natural disaster, such as hurricanes or drought, the staple crops such as yams, taro, *kumala,* banana, breadfruit and coconuts were always in abundance. Cooking was plain with little use being made of spices; but some traditional dishes, particularly those prepared for chiefs, involved a lot of hard work and were very time consuming to prepare.

Housing for the commoners was a simple construction of bush materials which could be erected by anyone or by a small number of people with great ease in a short time. The relatively mild and healthy climate

[2]Firth analyzes culture on two levels, the pragmatic and the symbolic. He says "the newer way of looking at culture is as a symbolic system, a way of expressing meanings, partly through language and partly through non-verbal actions. So a marriage ceremony doesn't just have the function of uniting two people for companionship in a socially, legally--and maybe religiously approved way, for production and rearing of children in legitimate relation to society. Every action in the marriage ceremony . . . is a symbolic way of saying things about the values of the society in some positive approving way:" (Firth 1974:19)

did not demand any complicated type of construction for survival. The houses for the chiefs were, on the other hand, very elaborate indeed for social, political and religious reasons and required specialist craftsmen, a lot of manpower and great expense to erect, taking up to two or three months or even longer to construct. Considering the kinds of tools used at the time, this was not surprising. It was also costly, since substantial amounts of food had to be prepared every day to feed the principal builder and his men and also the elders who were normally engaged in drinking *kava* and plaiting sinnet which was used to lash the framework of the building together and fasten the material for roofing and the reed walls. The preparation of food, the making of *kava,* and the provision of other drinks involved a lot of people, both men and women. At the completion of the work, a huge feast would be prepared to celebrate the occasion, in which a presentation of food and *koloa* (gifts of mats and tapa [bark] cloth in particular) would be made to the principal builder and his assistants. Mainly for these economic reasons, only the chiefs could afford to build such lavish and elaborate edifices. Any labor that involved physical strength and endurance was done by men. In house building, for example, men did all the construction work except for the making of *pola* (plaited coconut leaves for the roofing) and mats for the floors. Men also engaged in fencing, gardening, canoe building and deep sea fishing. The tools for gardening and production of other wealth were made from timber, shell, and stone which required constant replacement or repair for lack of durability, making the work extremely hard and time consuming.

The women engaged in the manufacture of *tapa* cloth from the bark of the mulberry, wove mats, baskets and fans from pandanus leaves and made other household goods under the supervision of chiefly women. While women's work demanded a lot of industry, time and organization, it did not require muscular strength. Women in Tonga were not expected to carry heavy loads or do hard manual work as their counterparts in Melanesia did. Their status was comparatively high and they wielded much influence though they seldom held formal political office as chiefs in their own right.

Social organization and relationship played an important part in the production and distribution of wealth. As noted earlier, the chiefs played a supervisory role while the commoners carried out the actual physical work. The best of everything went to the chiefs in recognition of their social position and responsibilities. Taboos and restrictions were usually placed on certain resources and products which were reserved for the exclusive use of chiefs, for instance turtle or a variety of yam considered to be the best, *kahokaho,* and for ceremonial occasions.

Social stratification was characteristic of all Polynesian societies and to a lesser extent also Micronesia, but it was most complex and elaborate in the Tongan chiefly system. At the pinnacle of the society were the *ha'a tu'i* comprising three royal dynasties, the Tu'i Tonga, the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua and the Tu'i Kanokupolu. Next in descending order were the *hou'eiki* or chiefly class, followed by the *mu'a* (gentry class), the *matāpule* (chiefs' attendants class), the *tu'a* or *me'avale* (commoner class) and finally the *pōpula* (slave class). In addition to these classes there were also professional classes. These were the *taula* or priestly class, the *ha'atufunga* (caretaker class), the *toutai* (navigator class) and the *tufunga* (skilled tradesmen) class.

Relationships among these classes were strict and of crucial importance to the smooth running of the society. Three important values governed these relationships: *faka'apa'apa* (respect); *fatongia* (obligation) and *mateaki* (loyalty). All were expected to respect their superiors, not only in word but also in action. A special language of respect was used in addressing royalty or in talking about them, another was used for the chiefs, and one of humility was used by the commoners when talking to their superiors about themselves. There was also a common language used by members of each social class. People of the same class talking among themselves about eating, for example, would use the word *kai;* but when talking to a superior about their eating, they would use the word *mama* which literally means "chewing." When talking to a chief or about a chief eating, the word *'ilo* was used, and to the eating by a royal personage the appropriate word was *taumafa.* In the presence of royalty, commoners would prostrate themselves; and in addressing a superior, one had to crawl and sit in front of him with hands clasped in front as a sign of respect and probably for reasons of security since it would be impossible to make an attempt on the superior's life from such a position. It was taboo for an inferior to assume a position higher than the head of his superiors.

Good citizenship was marked by the way one performed one's *fatongia* 'obligations.' Members of each social class knew his or her *fatongia* to other members of his class and to the members of other classes, particularly those of higher status. The *fatongia* involved obedience and, at times, sacrifices. The chief's obligations were to protect the group from outside interference or attack, to settle their disputes and to provide conditions under which his people would work and enjoy peace and prosperity. In return the people performed their *fatongia* to him by working his garden, providing him with the best of everything they produced or possessed and attending to whatever he might want them to do. At its best the whole *fatongia* relationship was governed by the principal of reci-

procity. The royal dynasties had similar *fatongia* to the whole country, as the chiefs had to their own groups, and the chiefs and people brought tribute to the royalty. Land was vested in the Tu'i Tonga and the heads of the other dynasties, and the chiefs received their entitlements to lands from him. Unlike other Oceanic cultures where land belonged to the group, tribe, or clan, in Tonga, it belonged to the title holder. This was another reason for performing the *fatongia* to superiors. Fear also played a part, for chiefs had absolute and arbitrary power over the commoners. The chiefs were believed to possess *mana* (spiritual power) which derived from their descent from one of the royal dynasties, which in turn stemmed from the founding ancestor 'Aho'eitu who was the son of one of the Tangaloas or sky gods. Failure to perform the *fatongia* would lead to severe physical punishment from the chiefs or supernatural punishment from the gods.

The third value which governed these relationships was *mateaki* or loyalty. One was expected to have complete loyalty to one's chief and one's *kāinga* and to one's country. In his attempt to unite Tonga into a kingdom, Tonga's most outstanding national leader, Tāufa'āhau who later became known as King George Tāufa'āhau Tupou I, encountered resistance from some powerful chiefs. In one of his battles, Tāufa'āhau saw one of his warriors speared in the abdomen and holding on to part of his intestines which had come out. When Tāufa'āhau remarked at his wound, the brave warrior replied, "Tāufa'āhau, it is your victory, not my wound that counts." This anecdote typifies the absolute loyalty to one's leader which was so highly esteemed by Tongans.

The relationships so far outlined definitely determined day to day behavior, but became most apparent in a formalized way in important ceremonial occasions where each class had to perform its prescribed responsibilities and where individuals and groups were reminded of their relationships to each other. The most important occasions were at marriages, funerals, and the installation of titles, ceremonies which were carried out with deep reverence and solemnity, each with its own rituals which were strictly adhered to. The greatest of the national ceremonies was the *'inasi*, the annual presentation of first fruits to the Tu'i Tonga, as representative of Hikule'o, the god of fertility and harvest. In the ritual preparation and drinking of *kava* and the presentation and distribution of various gifts which were integral parts of every ceremony, each class had a role to play and rituals had to be strictly observed, for mistakes carried severe punishment and public disgrace for those concerned.

These values were learned early in the relationships within the various socio-political units in which individuals grew up. The smallest of these

was the *'api* (household), at the next level was the *fa'ahinga* (extended family) and then the ***kāinga***[11] (the group under the effective rule of a chief). Above this level were the *ha'a,* a loose confederation of genealogically related chiefs and their ***kāinga,*** and finally the *fonua* (the whole country). The relationships within the *'api* or household are crucial to an understanding of those within the wider socio-political units, since these were modelled upon them (Gifford 1929:21; Martin 1827, II:135). Within the *'api,* two important relationships existed, the ***fānau*** (children relationships) and the ***mātu'a fānau*** (parental-offspring relationships). Two principles governed the relationships within the ***fānau,*** namely sex and age (Lātūkefu 1967:4). The sister was superior to her brother in rank, irrespective of age, and the elder was superior in rank to the younger of the same sex. Relationships of respectful avoidance existed between brother and sister as they entered adulthood. It was taboo for a brother to enter his sister's house and vice versa and this was also extended to their spouses. The sister's superior rank was also extended to her children who would occupy the important and privileged position of *fahu,* implying unlimited authority over their maternal kin. The sister's eldest daughter was the principal *fahu* over her maternal uncle.

In the ***mātu'a-fānau*** or parental-offspring relationship, the *tamai* (father) was head of the household and as such was accorded respect and deference. It was taboo to touch his hair, use his personal possessions, or to eat the remnants of his food or drink. Breaches of these taboos resulted in severe punishment, either physical or supernatural. These taboos were also extended to the father's brother and particularly to his sister, who was known as *mehikitanga.* The taboos surrounding the paternal aunt were very stringent and breaches of them entailed severe punishment. She was the highest ranking member of the household and had ultimate authority over her brother's children. The taboos surrounding the father's side of the family were compensated for by the complete freedom and informality which prevailed between children and their mother and her relatives.

The belief system was important in sanctioning the social order. As noted above, any violation of the taboos was believed to anger the gods and natural disasters such as drought, hurricane, or sickness and death were attributed to the displeasure of the gods. Most of the ceremonies were designed to appease the deities; for example, it was believed that failure to carry out the *'inasi* festival would result in national disaster. The social order was reflected in the belief system and reinforced and perpetuated by it. Commoners, for example, were believed to lack souls; and when they died, they simply became vermin. Only the chiefs had

mana and souls; and when they died, their souls automatically went to *Pulotu*, the Tongan paradise, where they became secondary gods. This belief justified the chiefs' treatment of commoners who were arbitrarily subjected to their whims and led to the submissive acceptance by commoners of their lot. Moral values also reflected the social system; for example, murder, theft, and adultery were not regarded as offences unless they were committed against equals, superiors, or sacred objects.

Social and religious values were also reflected in the expressive system of the culture which played an important role in the ceremonies and the entertainment of the chiefs. The language was rich and poetic. Metaphors and similes were used liberally, particularly in poetry; and elements of natural objects, such as the fragrance of flowers or the sound of waves were used to depict ideas of beauty, valor, etc. Dancing was usually accompanied by the singing of poetic verses and the movements of the hands and feet were designed to illustrate the meaning of the words. Many of the dances to entertain the chiefs were closely connected with sex, but the dances for ceremonies were closely linked with the traditional religion or praised the heroism of prominent ancestral leaders. Some of the dances were performed exclusively by the chiefs.

Men in Tonga were far behind their counterparts in Fiji or New Zealand in manual skills, and this was partly due to the scarcity of suitable timber. Tongan carving was crude; but to compensate for this, the Tongans developed and perfected the arts of warfare and seafaring. By conquest they established an empire that covered Samoa, Tokelau, Tuvalu, 'Uvea, Futuna, Rotuma in the north of Fiji, and the Lau islands east of Fiji. From Fiji they collected finely carved war clubs, spears, kava bowls, stone adzes, turtle shell, fish hooks, and huge double canoes expertly built of large planks by Fijian craftsmen and from Samoa the most finely woven mats, *kie Ha'amoa* (Samoan mats), greatly valued by the chiefs for ceremonial purposes. Tongan women produced large and attractive tapa (bark cloth), some 100 feet in length by fifteen feet in width and wove beautiful mats of all kinds for flooring, bedding, and ceremonies, though none could rival the *kie Ha'amoa.* Standards of personal beauty, as with other aspects of culture, were greatly influenced by the tastes and views of the chiefs. The chiefs were almost always people of tall physical stature, fine looking, with fair complexion and smooth large legs, particularly at the calf. These attributes were greatly admired qualities in a person's physical appearance. Anyone with thin legs was not regarded as attractive and therefore commoner rather than chiefly in appearance.

The thought patterns of the Tongans were molded by their culture and their physical environment. Abstract thinking was more poetic and

religious than scientific and philosophical. Most people were concerned with the immediate practical problems of daily living and survival. Phenomena which were beyond comprehension were merely attributed to the gods and mythical folk heroes. No formal system of learning existed as it did among the Maori. The younger generation learned the skills and professions, values and behavior expected of them by observing and imitating their elders. The young were expected to learn to do things in the manner of their ancestors. To question the validity and wisdom of the status quo was unthinkable for any person of low rank. Such a privilege was the prerogative of high chiefs only; but even among this powerful group, any innovator among them had to face strong opposition from the rest because of loyalty to the memories of the ancestors or for social, political, and religious reasons.

So far I have given a brief sketch of the Tongan traditional culture, and have endeavored to show how, on the one hand, members of the society through the complex interactions of the various facets of their way of life and their physical environment managed to create a culture distinctively their own, and how, on the other hand, the culture continually helped to mold the individuals within the society. It was a well integrated culture, dynamic and full of potential for change and was never static in spite of the expressed desire of the majority of community leaders to preserve its purity and their reluctance to depart from traditional precedents. A close look at modem Tongan culture and the processes that helped to produce it, should illustrate this point vividly.

If any of our ancestors who died a century ago were to return to Tonga today, they would be shocked by the changes that Tongan culture has undergone during this period, particularly if they looked at the culture from what Raymond Firth has referred to as its pragmatic level.[2] After a hard, close scrutiny from the symbolic level, however, they would find Tongan culture still recognizable, for values tend to endure and change rather slowly, though change they have, for changes in one aspect of culture inevitably affect the others. These changes have been stimulated by the exposure of the Tongans to outside influences. Contact with the neighboring island groups (particularly Fiji and Samoa) have, as pointed out above, introduced new elements into the culture, particularly in the expressive system of the culture. The most significant, outside influences on the culture, however, came as a result of the contact with Europeans--the explorers, traders, beachcombers, missionaries, New Zealand and American military personnel during World War II, and the tourists today. The increasing migrations of Tongans to New Zealand,

Australia, USA, Great Britain and other countries to visit, study, work, or to live and only periodically return to visit their families has also had an important impact on Tongan culture.

Tongans, like people everywhere, want to make life easy, comfortable, and enjoyable. The first aspects of the culture to undergo drastic changes were the material culture, technology, and economy. While it was more difficult to understand, appreciate, and accept European values, beliefs and thought patterns, and while it was difficult to admit that these were superior to their own, the Tongans readily accepted that European technology was superior, making traditional labor easier and more efficient and less time consuming. European goods were quickly found to be more attractive and durable and were soon coveted by everyone. Today traditional stone and shell tools and wooden implements used for cutting and digging have been completely replaced by steel tools. Traditional clothing are only used now for ceremonial purposes. European-type materials and imported cloth are now universally used although the Tongas together with the Samoans and the Fijians have adopted certain types of fashion, a shirt and a *vala* (a laplap or sarong) for men and a dress with ankle length *vala* for women. For formal occasions, the Tongans add a *ta'ovala* which is a mat specially woven to be worn around the waist, thus completing what is now regarded as the Tongan national dress. Footwear, mostly sandals or thongs, are also worn. For church and formal occasions, a tie and a coat are also added to the garments of dignitaries. The few with academic qualifications wear their academic gowns and hoods over their Tongan dress on formal occasions. The adoption of European-type materials in place of leaves, tapa cloth, and mats were for reasons of convenience, durability, hygiene as well as aesthetic. The addition of the *tao'vala* to the national dress is a symbolic action making it uniquely Tongan and at the same time providing continuity in the culture, since it was a part of traditional ceremonial dress to wear mats around the waist, especially in the presence of chiefs (Trumbull 1977:141).

Housing is becoming more Westernized. When I visited my village, Kolovai, situated eleven miles west of the capital Nuku'alofa, three years ago, the elders said that very soon there would be no more Tongan houses in the village. When I visited it again in January 1979, their prediction proved fairly accurate, for there were only a handful of Tongan houses still standing, and all the rest had been built of timber or cement blocks with corrugated iron roofs. Some are attractively designed, beautifully built, and comfortably furnished while the majority are just simple structures often without ceiling or furniture. In some cases, the actual design and shape still resembles the traditional Tongan houses, and certain fea-

tures continue to be common, such as a separation between sleeping and eating or cooking quarters. In the villages, traditional methods of cooking using earth ovens continue to be used and these must be done outdoors, while the *kava* circle of drinkers is now commonly held indoors and requires a large room with little or no furniture so that mats can be laid down for seating, or for indoor feasts to be held in Tongan style. Many observers lament what they claim to be the desire of the Tongans to ape the Europeans, and correctly point to the fact that the traditional Tongan houses built of bush materials are cooler during the summer and warmer during the winter. However, few of these nostalgic traditionalists have ever had to live for any length of time in any of these houses, particularly a dilapidated one during the rainy season. The Tongans prefer the European-type house mainly for economic and prestige reasons. Its materials last, whereas the thatch roof of the Tongan house has to be replaced every two or three years, and this involves a lot of work and expense. The roofs and walls of the traditional houses were mainly made from plaited coconut leaves and the cutting of the leaves for this purpose retards the growth of the coconut. The construction of the type of dwelling traditionally used by the chiefs involved cutting down coconut 'trees from which the materials for the framework of the house were made. This would drastically affect the production of copra which remains the mainstay of the modem Tongan economy. The other reason for the new trend in housing is that it is prestigious to own a European-type house and the quality and comfort of these houses is continually improving as Tongans become influenced by overseas fashions through education and travel. In addition, the higher personal income which is now available either from a salaried job or through remittances sent by members of the family working overseas or from business and commercial farming, makes it possible for Tongans to acquire modern houses and furnishings or other consumer goods imported into the country.

Modes of transport have also changed dramatically. The canoes which had been the sole means of transport have been almost entirely superseded by buses, trucks, and private cars. Motor vessels and air transport have taken over the interisland travel, and the Tongan government runs a shipping line of overseas cargo vessels. When I was a child, horse-drawn carts and bicycles were the main form of transport from the villages of the main island, Tongatapu, to the capital. Now they are only used to travel to the gardens or within villages, as more Tongans have acquired some form of motor vehicle or use those owned by others.

The developing monetary economy has stimulated farmers to grow new crops such as melons, pineapples, and vanilla for cash, as well as

those traditional crops such as bananas or coconuts which they can grow for export. This has affected the availability of land for the traditional staple crops such as yams and led to times of scarcity when these staple foods command a high price in the town markets. Diet and methods of preparing foods have also undergone changes. Flour, sugar, rice, corned beef, and tinned fish now feature prominently in everyday Tongan diet in addition to the main traditional vegetables such as yam, taro, sweet potato, etc. This is especially true on the main island of Tongatapu where more than half the population now resides. The preparation of food for normal everyday use is now done with the help of kerosene, gas, or electric stoves by those who can afford them.

Feasting in traditional style remains a very important aspect of present-day Tongan culture, and feasts are prepared in the *'umu* or earth oven. Elaborate preparation of foods is involved, requiring many helpers, as pigs, roasted or baked, yams, sweet potatoes, *kape* (giant taro), sea foods, corned beef cooked in Tongan style known as ***lū*** *pulu,* chickens, sweet puddings from breadfruit and many other favorite foods are carefully displayed on the *pola* (long coconut frond trays covered with banana leaves) which are placed in front of the seated guests. The amount of food prepared depends upon the importance of the occasion and upon the social status of the giver. Speeches are delivered while people are eating so that feasts become an occasion for oratory and public speaking. The sponsors of feasts use them as a way of exhibiting their prosperity and popularity. The more popular one is in the community, the more support he gets from others in the work and food contributions for the feasts. In the case of a chief, it can also indicate the degree of loyalty of his subjects and the relative prosperity of the community. Even Tongas living abroad in countries such as USA, New Zealand or Australia, continue to observe, in a modified way, the customs surrounding Tongan feasts, indicating that this is one of the highly valued aspects of their culture.

The initial impact of European contact which quickly revolutionized material culture had little effect on the social organization, for its effects on traditional values was minimal. Traditional social strata persisted and commoners were merely enabled, through new and more efficient technology, to improve the quality of their *fatongia* to their superiors. A significant effect of the new technical change on the value system, however, was due to the fact that certain powerful and influential chiefs began to question the validity of the traditional beliefs as a result of their conviction that the whiteman's God gave Europeans access to wealth, technology, and power; and, therefore, that God must be superior to their own traditional Tongan gods. This doubt paved the way for the work of

the missionaries and helped to ensure the eventual success of their proselytism of the Tongans.

The missionaries came specifically to destroy traditional values which they believed to be antithetic to Christian doctrines, and which therefore were preventing the Tongans from attaining God's salvation. After encountering initial opposition from the chiefs and traditional priests, they eventually succeeded. With the help of the medical and educational sides of their work, they managed to convert a few, among whom were some powerful chiefs, particularly King George Tāufa'āhau (Lātūkefu 1974:83-99). Christianity was eventually accepted almost universally in the form of Methodism by his supporters and Catholicism by his political opponents. The trinity--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--were accepted by most early converts as three separate gods, taking the place of the Tangaloas, the Mauis, and Hikule'o. The souls of the dead became spirits, the good ones going to heaven to live there and perform good deeds for the living, thereby combatting the evil intentions of the bad spirits who roam the earth before ending up in hell and everlasting damnation. The most remarkable aspect of all this was the acceptance of the belief that, like the chiefs, commoners also had souls, and everyone, chiefs and commoners alike, had to attain certain moral standards before they could reach heaven, otherwise they were condemned to eternal hellfire. This was drastically different from the traditional religion which had accepted that only chiefs had souls and could look forward to an after life which came to them automatically by right of birth rather than through their personal conduct.

While it may be difficult to question the sincerity of King George's religious convictions and his belief that Christian civilization would be best for his people, there can be little doubt that he also used Christianity to achieve his own political ends, namely the establishment of a central government under his ruleship as Tu'i Kanokupolu (Lātūkefu 1970). He championed the cause of the Methodist missionaries; and with their blessings and moral support, he managed to unite Tonga into a kingdom in 1845 when he became Tu'i Kanokupolu and later when he succeeded in becoming ruler to the whole of Tonga. Opposition to this led to the last civil war in Tonga in 1852. In the meantime, with the help and guidance of the Methodist missionaries, he had introduced the rule of law by promulgating a simple law code in 1839, known as the Vava'u Code. This was revised in 1850 and again in 1862 and culminated in the Tongan Constitution of 1875 (Lātūkefu 1975). It was through these codes of law that King George was able to bring about some radical changes in the traditional social organization, particularly in respect of the relations be-

tween chiefs and commoners. He declared all people, chiefs and commoners alike, to be equal in the eyes of the law, and by 1862 had granted to commoners their full emancipation from the arbitrary and absolute power of the chiefs. The later Constitution of 1875 provided for a system of government in which commoners participated, though their degree of participation was more limited than those of chiefly or noble birth. It also enabled commoners to become landowners in their own rights, and through the education system which had been provided by the churches initially and later by the government, the sons and daughters of chiefs and commoners were treated equally, thus giving opportunities for many commoners to gain the qualifications needed for positions of importance in the decision making and development of the country. Today, many of the leading public servants, business men, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and ministers of religion are commoners. Several commoners have also become ministers of the Crown, for example, the present Minister for Finance, Mahe Tupouniua; the Minister for Health, Dr. Sione Tapa; and the Minister for Education and Works, Dr. Langi Kavaliku are all commoners who have proved themselves in their respective professional fields. Intermarriage between commoners and chiefs, with the exception of the royal family, has now become more frequent. Commoners are now sharing more and more with the chiefs those aspects of the culture which were in the past the exclusive prerogative of the latter. The language of respect which was at one time reserved for chiefs is now applied to the outstanding commoners who have achieved positions of leadership in the government or in churches. In spite of protests from some nobles, it is now commonly used to address the commoners in public meetings. The *kava* circles which were formerly exclusively held for chiefs and royalty are now widely used by commoners with or without the traditional rituals. When the *tao'vala* (waist mat) was introduced, it indicated the social status of its wearer, since the finer its weave, the higher was the person's rank. Commoners were expected to wear the coarsest type of *ta'ovala.* Today, any commoner who can afford to obtain a *ta'ovala kie* (finely woven mat) can wear it without fear of intimidation, although to do so in the presence of royalty would be regarded as inappropriate and presumptuous. The status of commoners today is a far cry from the days when they were mere chattels, folks without souls to be used by the chiefs however they pleased for their own exclusive benefit. The traditional law of the club has been replaced by a constitutional form of government with the monarch as head of State, Parliament, Privy Council, Cabinet and Judiciary. Although social stratification still exists today, there is definitely a continuing breaking down of strict barriers between social classes.

In the heyday of missionary influence, the missionaries and their converts were instrumental in bringing about many changes to the culture; but after becoming the dominant influence in the country, they became conservative and strongly advocated the maintenance of the status quo. From the outset, they realized the value of the chiefs' influence over the people and the effectiveness of working through them to achieve their own ends. The chiefs, on the other hand, have recognized the advantages of using the influence of the church to protect their remaining privileges. A marriage of convenience had now developed between the church and the state. Because the central government has now taken over the responsibility of protecting the people and their interests from the local chiefs, and the church the spiritual welfare from the traditional priests, the people gradually became dependent upon these two centralized institutions for material, educational, and spiritual advancement.

The principles which governed the social relationships between the social classes, *faka'apa'apa* (respect), *fatongia* (obligation), and *mateaki* (loyalty) were strengthened by the acceptance of Christianity with its emphasis on *'ofa* (love) which one Tongan writer recently noted is for Tongans "the main characteristic feature of their society" (Kavaliku 1977:47) and *fukamolemole* (forgiveness). Although *'ofa* existed in the traditional social relationships, the coercive elements such as fear of the chiefs' *mana* and absolute power were much stronger. Christianity dispelled many of these fears and emphasized that *'ofa* should be the governing principle. As a result of the church and state taking over most of the responsibilities for the welfare of the people, respect, obligation, and loyalty are no longer confined to relations with chiefs and the *kāinga;* but they are now directed more to the immediate family, church, and the nation.

The emphasis put by Christianity on the importance of family life has resulted in the growing importance of the nuclear family, which has become the focus of the principles discussed above. The amount of money sent in remittances by Tongan workers abroad to their families at home speaks volumes for the closeness of family ties among the Tongans. The aged are still respected and properly cared for as an integral part of the family. Grandparents remain close to their grandchildren, and the death of a member of the family is deeply felt by close and distant kin and is attended by elaborate funeral and mourning rituals. The traditional privileges of the *fahu* and the strict taboos which were observed between brother and sister, or children and their paternal kin have already begun to erode and will no doubt continue to do so. However, respect and affection remain, helping to ensure their continuing observance as part of the Tongan identity. The enthusiastic support which the people still give to

the king and government and church at times of national celebration point to the continuing importance of these principles for the villagers. For instance, on the occasion of the ending of Britain's protectorate in 1970 when the villagers on Tongatapu provided for a royal feast attended by 800 visitors, they brought 1,050 suckling pigs, 1,500 to 1,600 chickens, 1,200 servings of *lūpulu* (corned beef with coconut cream and taro leaves), 3,000 crayfish, 2,500 yams, 4,000 plantains, 1,300 servings of *ʻota* (raw fish), 300 watermelons and 1,700 drinking coconuts (Trumbull 1977:147) all of which were given freely. A similar feast for an even larger number of overseas guests was staged in the palace grounds in November 1975 to mark the centenary of the Tongan Constitution, and food was provided by the villagers on the same lavish scale. In the following year, they fed several hundred visitors who came for the sesquicentennial celebrations of the arrival of the first Methodist missionaries. Christianity and church activities have now become integral parts of present Tongan culture.

The expressive aspects of traditional culture were at first severely affected by the coming of the missionaries who prohibited traditional dancing because of its close association with religion and sex, and because after a late night of dancing the people slept during church services. As a result of this prohibition, new types of dancing, free of the old association with sex and traditional religion, were created and sponsored by leading Methodist converts. *Lakalaka* (standing dance performed by large groups of men and women), *tauʻolunga,* and *maʻuluʻulu* (sitting dance) have become popular Tongan dances today; yet in their movements and styles of dancing, they show continuity with the past, to the extent that Kaeppler states that "these 'new' dances are not really new. Rather, they are simply evolved forms of indigenous dance types with new words and new music." (Kaeppler 1970:267). The *lakalaka* and *māʻuluʻulu* are more formal, while *tauʻolunga* can be performed either in ceremonies or simply for entertainment. In addition, European or imported styles of dancing have also become popular among younger Tongans.

Singing remains an important aspect of expressive culture with much time and effort spent in practice by village or church choirs, usually of unaccompanied voices singing in harmony. Traditional Tongan chants have given way to more modem and sophisticated singing, much stimulus being given to this by missionaries, especially the Rev. Dr. J. E. Moulton who devised a Tongan musical notation in the late nineteenth century which is still used today. He translated many hymns and anthems into this notation, and these have become widely known and continue to be-taught in Tongan schools and villages. One can today hear choirs of up to two

hundred voices singing classical pieces unaccompanied, with great credit. Love songs and dancing songs are composed using tunes more acceptable to modem tastes. String instruments and brass instruments are now used to accompany singing instead of bamboo sticks and traditional nose flutes.

There have been many new developments in crafts such as mat making, basket weaving by women, and carving by men. The main impetus has come from the money which can be earned from the sale of these items to tourists. Critics of tourism often lament what they refer to as the bastardization of native culture in the interests of tourism. In fact, tourist demand for Tongan artifacts in the form of baskets, handbags, mats, slippers, and carvings has led to imaginative improvements in workmanship, design, and the use of new materials in combination with traditional ones, for example, waterproof plastic lining on the interior of some baskets with painted tapa exteriors. Some of the modern artifacts sold to tourists, nowadays, are more beautifully designed and skillfully made than any that I saw in the past! The demand for tapa (bark cloth) remains although it is no longer used as a form of clothing or covering at night. It continues to be a valued ceremonial exchange item among Tongans themselves, being the most common form of gifts at feasts, weddings, and essential for funeral ceremonies. At the funeral of Queen Sālote in December 1965, her casket was carried along a tapa pathway from the plane, when it arrived from New Zealand where she had died, and the funeral procession walked along the main roads which were covered with mats and tapa (Kaeppler 1978:1). Tapa is also in demand by tourists and it remains an important village industry, still manufactured by groups of women on an informal kinship basis rather than in a commercial manner.

The Tongan language, like any other living language, has changed. It was reduced to written form by early missionaries; and with developments in modem linguistics, its orthography has been improved and standardized so that its written form more accurately reflects the spoken sounds. The vocabulary has altered with the loss of some words and the addition of many new ones. Old poems collected by Dr. Moulton and his students last century are no longer understandable to modern Tongan speakers. Many foreign words have been Tonganized to express new concepts or refer to new objects. Thus universe is *'univeesi,* centenary is *senituli,* and horse *hoosi.* Many Tongan names are derived from these imported words, for instance the name Siupeli is derived from the word "Jubilee."

The changes in other aspects of the culture inevitably affected some modifications in the thinking patterns of Tongans. The introduction of formal education with its emphasis on the scientific explanation of natural phenomena, and more advanced mathematical concepts, the contact with

the wider world through travel, intermarriage and tourism have all widened Tongan horizons and deepened their experiences, thereby affecting their thought patterns. It has become possible for many younger Tongans to become "bi-cultural;" namely to speak English and adapt to European ways while at the same time maintaining their Tongan identity and following Tongan customs when the appropriate situation arises.

It should now be clear that Tongan culture, being a living and dynamic one, has undergone significant changes, many of which were stimulated through the increasing contact with the outside world. Although at times strong pressures have been applied by outsiders such as missionaries on the people to accept change, in the final analysis it was the Tongans themselves who ultimately decided either to accept or reject changes. The decision to accept certain changes was basically motivated by the conviction that such changes would improve their quality of life. The new elements have been integrated into the culture and are usually modified to fit in with the existing traditions. The elements whose functions have been taken over by new ones are usually discarded or take on a symbolic function such as the use of *ta'ovala* (waist mat), for example, helps to "legitimitize" the acceptance of the new elements into the culture. Those who lament the changes usually believe that cultures should be preserved in their so-called purity, which usually means the status quo. They fail to realize that you can only preserve that which is dead, and that a living culture is constantly changing in response to the changing needs and aspirations of society (Lātūkefu 1976:19). The disappearance of certain aspects of Tongan culture or their modification have not, as many have claimed, destroyed it. In fact, they have, in general, improved the culture and at the same time they have in no way affected its distinct identity as Tongan culture.

Any attempt to predict the future of any culture is fraught with danger because of the unpredictability of future events, particularly political or economic changes which can bring about rapid or drastic cultural change. However, in the light of past trends, one may indulge in some guarded future predictions. The material culture will continue to be affected by technical changes outside Tonga. Greater use of modem machinery and fertilizers in agriculture will increase commercial production and there will be greater demand for modern facilities such as electricity, housing, and communications. The trend in housing, built from lasting imported materials is likely to continue; but the development of Tongan designs and the use of modified traditional shapes as a symbolic gesture and to maintain identity, may develop further among those who can

afford this. Migration to the United States, New Zealand, and Australia will continue on a larger scale and overseas education will increase. Unless the oil crisis reverses the trend, the present growth in motor vehicles and motorized boats is likely to continue with the help of remittances from relatives overseas.

The changes in material culture and greater opportunities for higher education and overseas travel will result in greater prosperity, sophistication, and independence among the commoners. This will increasingly and significantly affect social organization, the value system, and social control. Hitherto, the commoners who have managed to advance to the top through the system have been absorbed by it and are enjoying the privileges gained by it; but most of the commoners remain ignorant of their constitutional rights and are deprived of real independence in thought, let alone action. In the future, the real barriers between the social classes are likely to disappear, and the present strong religious emphasis is likely to be greatly modified as more people adopt a secular view of life.

However, respect, obligation, and loyalty will continue to be offered to the state and the churches, not on account of fear, but because of *'ofa,* since these institutions have become and continue to be important parts of Tonga cultural identity. In addition, many pepole regard involvement in civil and church affairs as an opportunity to attain prestige and public recognition. The same thing will apply to feasting and other aspects of the present culture.

Many educated Tongans, including prominent church leaders such as Bishop Fīnau of the Roman Catholic Church and the Rev. Siupeli Taliai, Secretary of the Methodist Conference, are now questioning certain aspects of the present political system, such as the power of the monarch to veto legislation and to appoint ministers, the parliamentary representation which consists of seven representatives of the thirty-three nobles, elected by them, and seven representatives of the rest of the population, elected by them, and also the land system where commoners still have to depend on the good will of the nobles to acquire land and permission to register it. Significant reforms in these areas are required if a smooth development of the culture is to occur. The plight of the monarchical systems in Greece, Ethiopia, and Iran are vivid examples of what happens when appropriate changes are stubbornly resisted.

As the world is shrinking, Tongan culture will share more in common with other cultures, particularly those of Oceania with which they already have a lot in common, as their leaders continue to search for a genuine "Pacific Way." The establishment of regional organizations such

as the South Pacific Commission, the South Pacific Conference, the Pacific Forum, the South Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Conference of Pacific Churches, the Pacific Theological College, the University of the South Pacific, the Pacific Games and Pacific Arts Festival have all facilitated the emergence of a genuine "Pacific Way" through the cultural interchange which is constantly taking place now within the region. Tongans are actively participating in all these new developments, but any foreign elements accepted into Tongan culture would be made to work in the Tongan setting and become accepted as genuine parts of it, helping it to develop in a way peculiarly its own and thereby maintaining the Tongan identity and Oceanic authenticity.

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