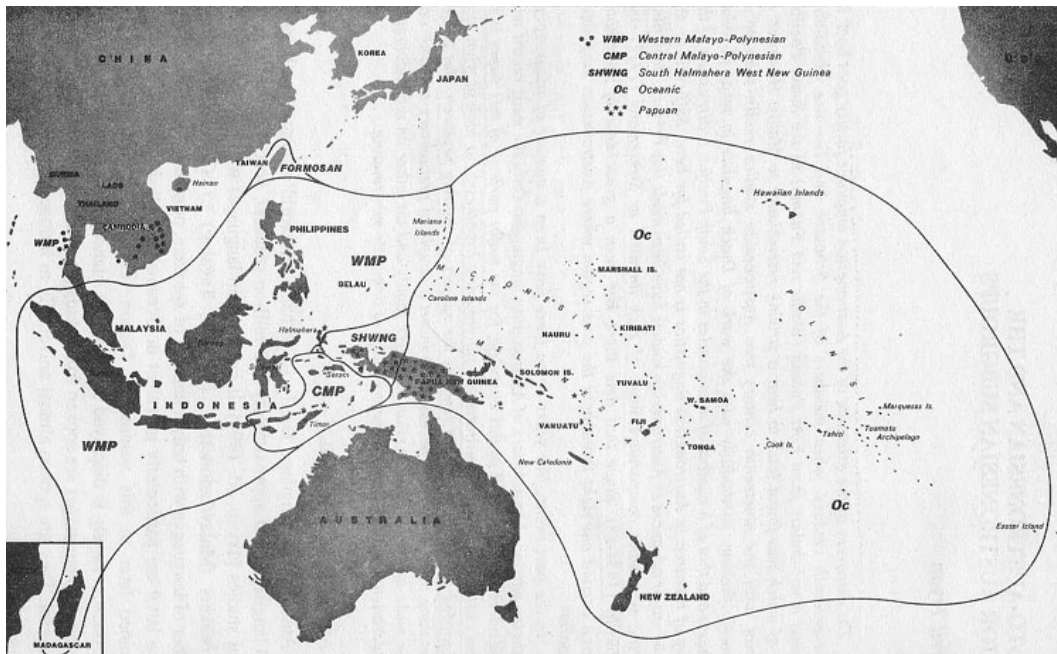


TE MĀTĀPUNENGA AS A COMPENDIUM OF THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

Te Mātāpunenga is a collection of annotated references to the concepts and institutions of Māori customary law. For convenience, each reference is placed under one of 122 separate headings, referred to in the work as Titles; many entries, of course, could logically appear under any of several alternative Titles, and they are cross-referenced accordingly. The Titles are essentially a list of key words, 125 in all (three have dual referents: *tuakana/teina*, *pepeha/whakatauki*, and *tāhae/whānako*). Four of the words are early adoptions from other languages, three from English (*kōti*, *kāwanatanga*, *kawenata*) and one (*ture*) from Hebrew; another seven are derivatives or elaborations of base terms which themselves constitute the head word for a discrete Title. This leaves a nett total of 114 key terms of local or Polynesian origin. Each Title is prefaced by a note on the etymology of the word and its range of meanings in modern Māori, and, in many cases, a guide to entries in *Te Mātāpunenga* as a whole which relate to the use or implications of the term concerned. In this preliminary material other terms related to the topic under discussion are also mentioned explicitly: there are about another hundred of these, but they are distributed very unevenly (more than 30 are associated with slavery and servitude, for example), and will not be considered further in this discussion.

This paper will look briefly at the origins of the 114 local and inherited Polynesian terms used in the Titles, and what they tell us about the development of ideas pertaining to customary laws and institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand.

From Taiwan to Madagascar and Rapanui.



The Polynesian settlement of this part of the Pacific marked humanity's conquest of the last habitable frontier: once the first sustainable settlements had been established, the only truly unexplored territories would be those where long-term survival for human beings isolated from the rest of the world would be impossible. Polynesian languages form the southeastern branch of the Austronesian language family, a group of about 1300 contemporary languages

spoken natively in an area from Madagascar in the west to Rapanui (Easter Island) in the east. Austronesian speakers left the Asian mainland, presumably from somewhere in what is now southern China, about 6,000 years ago, and established themselves on the island now known as Taiwan. From there, groups of them pushed south into the Philippines, and, over the ensuing centuries, continued southwest to Borneo, Sumatra, Java, the Malay peninsula and beyond; south through the Celebes; and southeast to the island of New Guinea. This latter wave of migrant Austronesian speakers moved over the ensuing generations along the north coast of New Guinea to the Bismarck Archipelago, where they seem to have paused long enough to develop a distinctive language and culture, now labelled “Oceanic”, which was carried progressively further into the Pacific, with modifications at each stage of the journey, eventually reaching an area traditionally called Puluotu, somewhere in the Fiji group.

From there it was carried to Polynesia, where its speakers were the first human settlers. They arrived in Tonga (probably first) and Samoa during the first Millennium BC, and were well-established as a separate linguistic group (“Proto-Polynesian”) about 2,500 years ago. After a few hundred years, as populations grew and contact became more sporadic, linguistic differences became more marked, and a new language, labelled by linguists “Proto-Nuclear-Polynesian”, emerged, centred on Samoa. Speakers of this language eventually sailed further into the Pacific, colonizing first the Society, Tuamotu and Marquesan islands (around 400 A.D.), and pushing east to Rapanui (around 700 AD), north to Hawaii (probably earlier than 800 AD), and lastly, around 1000 A.D., settling Aotearoa. Contact with Rapanui seems to have been lost early, and although occasional two-way voyages to Aotearoa, with the Kermadecs as a stopover point, may have been made for a while, direct contact between this part of the world and the rest of eastern Polynesia also seems to have been soon lost. Hawaii became similarly isolated by about 1200 A.D.

The relationship between languages is discovered, in large part, by carefully studying their vocabulary and comparing this with the vocabularies of other languages, neighbouring and more distant. Languages are grouped together on the basis of the innovations which they share, after known adoptions from other languages (whether related or not) are discounted.¹ Often a “basic vocabulary” list is used in order to discover and index immediate relationships, but the entire vocabulary of a language is available for providing evidence of what may have been inherited from earlier stages. This process involves noting similarities and differences in sound as well as meaning between words thought to be related, and building up ordered pathways which account for changes in form between different stages of a language. It will often end up that the likely form of an earlier stage is reflected in different ways among cognate forms in later stages (those in which the particular earlier form is reflected). For example, the Proto-Malayo-Polynesian word for “sky”, reconstructed as *langit, is a word which survives unchanged in Philippine languages like Ilocano. Polynesian languages have “lost” the final consonant in inherited words, leaving *langi as the Proto-Polynesian reconstruction. Within Polynesia, Proto-Polynesian *l is retained in that form in Hawaiian, while *ng becomes *n, giving us *lani*; in Māori Proto-Polynesian *l becomes “r”, and *ng is retained as a velar nasal (except by Tuhoe and Ngai Tahu speakers), so we have *rangi* as the

¹ A good, concise explanation of the methods used by historical and comparative linguists to reconstruct previous stages of a language and determine the relationships among languages is given in the Introduction to Malcolm Ross et al. (2003), pp. 1-16. For discussions of the “semantic” and “lexical” methods, see Blust 1987, Dyen & Aberle 1974, and Zorc 1994. Many of the etymologies discussed in this paper are based on material presented in the POLLEX database (Biggs & Clark, n.d.) and the Austronesian Comparative Dictionary (Blust 1995).

reflex of **langit* and cognate of *lani*. It can get much more complicated than that, but in all cases a clear rule-governed progression must be demonstrated before we can say with assurance that words are cognate with those in another language or reflexes of a parent language.

The actual meaning of the ancestral word is determined by one or both of two complementary methods: taking the current meanings of reflexes in different branches of the language group in question and assuming that those which are very similar or identical reflect the original meaning of the term (the “lexical method”), or looking at all the known meanings, working out logically what they have in common and why they might be different, and determining the probable original meaning on the basis of this analysis (the “semantic method”). Often either approach will yield a similar result, and in any case it must be remembered that in the absence of direct evidence from another source (which we do not have in regard to the earlier stages of Polynesian and most other Austronesian languages) our labels are at best well-informed guesses. We are also very dependent on the quality of the information available to us. Many linguistic reconstructions are made on the basis of dictionaries, some of which are excellent sources of information with wide-ranging examples of the uses and nuances of various words, and others of which are highly selective and minimally informative word lists. Even the most parsimonious word lists will help us establish relationships, but they may obscure deeper links between ideas which would only be revealed by a much more detailed description.

Aotearoa: A Laboratory for the Study of Lexical Innovation and Change

The late Professor Bruce Biggs observed that “New Zealand would seem to provide a laboratory for the study of lexical innovation and change. It was settled a thousand years ago . . . , and, for eight hundred years, was, as far as we know, not in contact with any other language” (Biggs 1994, p. 21). In that article he looked at two sets of vocabulary: “that of canoe culture (which persisted in New Zealand), and coconut culture (which was lost)”. He points out three ways of dealing with this: coining new words, adapting existing words, and taking words from other languages. The latter was not an option in New Zealand, and of the remaining options, adaptation was favoured over invention. (Many of the apparent coinages may well be adaptations, too: for example, *whakataukī*, a local invention, may be a rearrangement of inherited components.) In the new environment language will be adapted to reflect changes, and to fill gaps: a richer physical or cultural environment will motivate people to create new words and expressions; one less rich than they had previously known will usually lead to the loss of vocabulary referring to objects and ideas no longer relevant, especially in cases like New Zealand before the 18th century, where there was no writing and no interaction with people from distant places to keep memories of some phenomena alive. Thus, 12 of the 13 terms associated with canoe culture present in East Polynesia were retained in Māori, with similar or new meanings, but only half the coconut terms, all of which were given altered meanings (for example, *niu*, derived from the ancient word for a coconut tree, came to mean a slender wand used in certain ceremonies, and, much later, was applied to a pole also erected for ceremonial purposes).

The patterns described by Professor Biggs are reflected also in the terms selected as Titles for Te Mātāpunenga. The rows in the table below cover eight stages in the progression from Taiwan to Aotearoa.² The earliest, Proto-Austronesian, covers the initial foray from Taiwan to

² An excellent overview of the Austronesian expansion from Taiwan into Southeast Asia and the Pacific will be found in Bellwood, Fox & Tryon (eds) 1995; see especially Chapter 2 by Darrell Tryon. The expansion into and within Polynesia is outlined in Kirch and Green 2001, pp. 77-81.

the Philippines. Each of these words have come down in some recognizable form to languages in several major branches of the family, including at least one of the aboriginal languages of Taiwan. The second stage is Proto-Malayo-Polynesian. These words seem to have been invented when those Austronesian speakers who settled in the Philippines lost touch with those who stayed in Taiwan; they are widely dispersed throughout the Austronesian family, but they are not reflected in any known Taiwanese language. The next set combines those from the time Malayo-Polynesian speakers heading southeast became separated from those in the Philippines and also the others heading south and west through what is now Indonesia and Malaysia. This is when the “Proto-Oceanic” language developed from an earlier Eastern Malayo-Polynesian idiom. The fourth set comprises the words which seem first to have appeared as the Oceanic Austronesian speakers headed through the island chains of the Solomons and Vanuatu towards Fiji. We next have a group of words labelled “Proto Polynesian”. These have cognates in several major branches of the Polynesian family, including the subgroup of which Tongan and Niuean are the most prominent members. The original forms of these words can be assumed to have been present in the language spoken when the Polynesians first settled the islands that now constitute Tonga and Samoa. Later, a distinct language, Proto-Nuclear-Polynesian, developed in and around Samoa. Speakers of this language settled Eastern Polynesia, again developing their own distinctive language and eventually spreading out in various directions from the Tahiti-Tuamotu-Marquesas heartland, probably colonizing Rapanui before the linguistic split was complete, and then settling Hawaii, the Cook Islands and Aotearoa. In time, all of these settlements developed their own distinctive idioms, and the final row indicates the number of words which were developed or modified here. One of the latter (not included in the Table) is the word *Mātāpunenga* itself. It is drawn from a coinage by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo (the Māori Language Commission), combining two elements not found elsewhere: *mātā* “filled, packed with” and *punenga* “useful knowledge”, to provide an equivalent for “encyclopaedia”.

The columns summarize the nature of the relationship. The first shows the number of words than can ultimately be traced to a particular stage of the language. The second, indicates the more immediate source of the Māori term, if its meaning has changed significantly along the way. For example, the modern Māori word *tuakana* “older sibling of the same sex” is thought to be a reflex of Proto-Malayo-Polynesian **churang* “in-law”. The reflex of this word in Proto Oceanic, **ngkangka*, or possibly **kaka*, had acquired the sense of “same sex sibling”, and had been prefixed with *tua-* and suffixed with the pronoun **-na* “his/her” by the time it was inherited by Proto-Polynesian (and later by Māori) in the form **tuakana* “older same-sex sibling”. This word has been counted as “Proto Malayo-Polynesian” in its origin, but with Proto-Polynesian as its more immediate source. The third column relates to the particular senses in which the word is used in Te Mātāpunenga. In the case of *tuakana*, this is still close to the reconstructed Proto-Polynesian meaning, so it is included in that tally. However, many other words inherited from or through Proto-Polynesian are included in the “Māori” total, because the way their meaning has been modified in relation to laws or institutions seems to be unique to Māori. An example is *taniwha*, from the Post-Philippine stage leading to Proto-Oceanic, thence through Proto-Polynesian where, judging from the reflexes in most modern Polynesian languages, it referred to a large species of shark. However, its distinctive meaning in Māori is not apparent in those earlier stages or in the modern Polynesian cognates. (If you are wondering how monsters come to be included in Te Mātāpunenga, read the entries under that Title!)

Origins of Māori terms in Te Mātāpunenga

Language Stage	Ultimate source	Source of current meaning (general)	Source of specialized (“legal”) meaning
Proto-Austronesian	10 (8.8%)	4 (3.5%)	2 (1.8%)
P-Malayo-Polynesian	9 (7.9%)	5 (4.4%)	1 (0.9%)
Oceanic	13 (11.4%)	8 (7.0%)	3 (2.6%)
Eastern Oceanic	9 (7.9%)	7 (6.1%)	1 (0.9%)
Proto-Polynesian	25 (21.9%)	30 (26.3%)	15 (13.2%)
P-Nuclear-Polynesian	9 (7.9%)	12 (10.5%)	6 (5.3%)
Eastern Polynesian	15 (13.2%)	24 (21.0%)	22 (19.3%)
Māori (local)	24 (21.0%)	24 (21.0%)	64 (56.1%)

Thus at most only a fifth of the words heading Te Mātāpunenga Titles are completely home-grown, but almost half the rest have, as far as we can tell, taken on distinctly local connotations.

The Persistence of Memory

It is very likely that other language groups also share some apparent Māori innovations, but this has not yet been revealed by dictionary-makers and may also have been overlooked by ethnographers. Furthermore, even with the information that we do have, some of the words whose contemporary meanings are assigned to a later stage of the history of the language (in the third column) may arguably reflect meanings that were already present in earlier stages, as illustrated by the discussion of some of the words inherited from Proto-Austronesian, below. At the same time that words are sifted, refined and recycled as they are passed on from one generation to the next. Thus, although the referents and nuances of many of the earlier words have been altered, the words themselves have not been discarded, and the threads of meaning are still strong enough for their disparate forms in contemporary languages to be traced back to a common source. In the case of Māori, the influence of Eastern Polynesia is particularly strong, with more than a fifth of the concepts highlighted in Te Mātāpunenga closely aligned in form and content to their Eastern Polynesian counterparts, and another fifth directly reflecting ideas and practices from earlier stages of Polynesian and wider Austronesian history. There is thus a strong conservative current flowing through the language in which the concepts of customary law are expressed, accompanied by a notable degree of adaptation and innovation. Old ideas have been retained and modified while new ideas have been developed. If we are to understand them fully, it is important to know something about the history of these ideas, and also how they have developed in other parts of the Polynesian and wider Austronesian worlds. The etymological information provides a starting point for this voyage of discovery.

Many of the old ideas are very pervasive, and some, like *mana* and *tapu*, have been powerful enough to spread well beyond their Polynesian, Oceanic and remoter Austronesian homelands. They have been ideas waiting for the world to discover. Others, like *mā* "shy, ashamed, embarrassed" have retained the same meaning over five or six millennia. This word, from Proto-Austronesian **ma-siaq*, through Proto-Oceanic **maRa*, appears in Māori in the causative form *whakamā*. The idea, however, is far more widespread than the word itself. Shame

has the same social meaning in many Austronesian societies; it is frequently expressed by another reflex of the same original term, such as the Tagalog word *hiya*. Another theme embedded in the lexicon is what James Fox has called “the concern for origins” as a prime marker of social identity (1995, p.222). This is illustrated in the kinship terms, only three of which are present in Te Mātāpunenga, but which are numerous, complex, and almost all inherited from earlier stages of the language and maintained with meanings virtually unchanged from those elsewhere in Eastern Polynesia. It also is implicit in the status of the *ariki* (from Proto-Polynesian *qariki*, “chief”), the first-born in a lineage who is endowed with spiritual power and potentially, at least, political authority.

Blending the New with the Old

In the enumeration in the table, the only reflexes of Proto-Austronesian words to be counted as having come into Māori with their original meaning intact are *whakamā*, discussed above, and *hara*, from **salaq* “wrong, error.” This word has been inherited by many languages, including Māori, applied to mistakes and infringements of the social or moral order for which the perpetrator may be held culpable or accountable by a human or supernatural agency. However, several other words also appear to reflect very ancient ideas. These include these include two, *mauri* “the life force” and *tupu* “grow, develop”, to which we will return to at the conclusion of this discussion.³ Firstly, however, we can look at four other terms, *hoko* “trade, exchange”, *whenua* “land; afterbirth”, *waka* “canoe”, and *tangihanga* “mourning ceremonies”, along with two compound terms, *kawe mate* and *tūrangawaewae*.

Hoko. The immediate source of this word, to convey the notion of the exchange of goods and/or services, is the Proto-Nuclear-Polynesian word **soko*. The cognate forms in Rapanui and Rarotongan Māori, Marquesan, Tuamotuan and Tahitian have meanings practically identical with Māori *hoko*. It is possible that the word comes from a Proto-Malayo-Polynesian root, **dheket*, reflected in Proto-Eastern Oceanic as **soko*, which has been glossed as “together, collectively”. This word is thought to be the origin of Proto-Polynesian **soko* “to join” – a meaning retained in its cognates in Tongan and Samoan. However this meaning is not associated with *hoko* in Eastern Polynesian languages, although the idea of collective action or association is.

Whenua. This word has two complementary meanings: (1) land, ground or country; and (2) placenta or afterbirth. The first of these meanings comes from Proto Austronesian **banua* “settlement” through Proto-Oceanic **panua* “land, earth, village, house” and Proto-Polynesian **fanua* “land”. The second sense seems to have arisen in Polynesia, where the reflexes of **fanua* also denote placenta (or, in Rapanui, the uterus). The linguistic connection between land on the one hand and collective and personal identity on the other is particularly strongly marked in Eastern Polynesia, where the proto-word **fenua* (clearly a variant of the Proto-Polynesian form) assumed the meanings of “land,” “country” and “placenta”.

Waka. Historical linguists are unsure of the true origin of the Māori word *waka*, although its antiquity is undisputed. It is derived either from a Proto-Austronesian word **wangka* or **wangkang*, “boat”, or from a later word, dating from the time the Eastern Malayo-Polynesian language was evolving into Proto-Oceanic, and also, confusingly, **wangka*, denoting a canoe. Those opting for the later origin argue that the other **wangka* was originally a Chinese word

³ The material presented in this part of the paper is drawn from the various Titles in Te Mātāpunenga, modified and augmented for the purposes of the discussion.

which spread within the Western Malayo-Polynesian languages after the East-West split had taken place. Whatever its origin, the Māori word denotes a canoe, and by extension any vehicle for transporting people and goods, and also those who have been carried transported together, for example, the crew of a canoe, or a tribe (people descended from one or more members of a canoe transporting their ancestors). The connotations of a tribe or descent group are shared directly with other Eastern Polynesian languages. However the association of canoes or boats with common descent or community is found throughout Austronesia, although the words used may not necessarily be cognate with each other (for example in the Philippines the smallest unit of local government is called a *barangay*, a word with an original meaning of “the crew of a boat”).

Tangihanga. This is the nominalised form of the verb *tangi*, which has a general sense of giving forth a sound of a sustained and plaintive or musical nature, and with specific meanings covering to cry, weep over, weep for, mourn, or singing a lament. While this word’s Proto-Austronesian credentials are impeccable, its appearance in Te Mātāpunenga is an example of a local innovation in the word’s application. It refers to the circumstances or occasion of mourning, and the customs related to this. The root word can also be used as a noun to denote a lament or the process of lamentation and mourning. The term *tangihanga* is derived from Proto Austronesian **tangit* “weep, cry” through Proto-Polynesian **tangi* (by which time the additional connotation of giving forth a sound, as noted above, was also present), combined with the Proto-Polynesian suffix *-tanga*. The use of this term to denote an institution is probably unique to Aotearoa.

Kawe Mate. Literally “bringing the death”, this phrase denotes the custom of relatives of a deceased person (especially if they are from a noted family) visiting the marae or communities from which people came to the *tangihanga* for the deceased. The visits normally take place within a few weeks or months from the burial, and enable the whānau, hapū or iwi concerned to thank mourners from other districts, remember and pay tribute to the deceased person, and, on occasion, to return symbolic gifts presented by the group visited at the tangi. The phrase itself seems to have developed in Aotearoa. The component words are inherited, *mate* (from Proto-Austronesian **macey* “die”, and *kawe* “convey, go to get, bring”, from Proto-Polynesian **kawe* “to carry something”).

Tūrangawaewae. This word again does new things with old components. Compounded from the nominalized form of the word *tū* “stand” (from Proto-Austronesian **tuged* “be standing”) and *waewae* “foot, leg” (from Proto-Austronesian **waqay*, with the same meaning). This expression appears to be comparatively recent, first used in Biblical translations to translate the word “footstool”, or in the literal sense of “a place to put the feet”. It later came to mean “a place to stand as of right”, and became a common expression for one’s home marae, especially as alienation of traditionally held land left many people with no other foothold in their tribal homeland. The historian Michael King (2003, pp. 104-5) notes that this sense the term gained wide currency after Princess Te Puea chose the name “Tūrangawaewae” for the national marae she established at Ngaruawahia.

The Essence of Life

In conclusion, let us consider two terms, *mauri* “life force” and *tupu* “grow, develop”, the first of which has attracted considerable attention from scholars, and the other whose wider ramifications have often been overlooked.

Mauri was a central notion in Māori philosophy, although in its abstract sense of “the essence which gives a thing its specific natural character” (Metge 1976, p.57), it had almost faded from memory by the 1960s⁴, only to make a very strong resurgence in recent years, especially in discussions on genetic modification and the natural environment. The meaning of the word is difficult to grasp because it encapsulates two related but distinct ideas: the life principle or essential quality of a being or entity, and a physical object in which this essence has been located. Williams (1971) defines the abstract sense of the term first as “life principle”, and equates the human manifestation of abstract mauri with “the thymos of man”. The Greek notion of the mortal, but immaterial, *thymos*, embracing consciousness, activity, rationality and emotion (in contradistinction with the immortal but more quiescent *psyche*) probably parallels Māori thought on this aspect of *mauri* (and its contrast with the notion of *wairua*) as accurately as is possible in a brief English definition. There is certainly no single English word to express this concept. Joan Metge’s definition, quoted above, covers the wider sense of the abstract connotations of mauri well; it is important to remember that the kinds of “thing” which the mauri integrates include ecosystems and social groups as well as objects and individuals. From the abstract senses of mauri come the expressions *mauri ora* (vital or living mauri – sometimes equated with “person”), *mauri rere* (fleeing mauri – “panic stricken”), and so on. The concrete representations or depositories of the *mauri*, particularly that of a cultivation, productive area of forest, fishery, community or social group, were also called *mauri*; when both the abstract and physical symbol were being discussed at the same time, the term *ariā* might be used for the concrete aspect of mauri. (It should be noted that in some recent writing, the terms *mauri* and *wairua* seem to be used interchangeably; this was not the case in the nineteenth century, by which time the notions of “life essence” and “spirit”, still combined in the cognates of *mauri* in some other Polynesian languages, had been separated in Māori thought).

This is an ancient term, derived from the Austronesian **qudip* “to live”, through Oceanic **ma’udip* (incorporating the stative prefix *ma-*) to Proto-Polynesian **ma’uri* “live, life (principle), alive”. In modern Polynesian languages, cognate terms occur in Samoan (*mauli*, “seat of the emotions”), Hawaiian (*mauli* “life, seat of life, spirit”, also Maui Ola, a name for the god of health who is also called on to protect the integrity of a new household) and Rarotongan (with a similar range of meanings); the term has been refined and deepened as a technical philosophical notion in Aotearoa. However, this deepening and refining is not something unique to Māori, and it may well be that the term, which has been treated in the Table as of Austronesian origin but with a locally evolved meaning, is, even in the way that it is used in Māori, Austronesian in both form and content. The Proto-Austronesian root word, **qudip*, has reflexes in at least 235 daughter languages (Blust 1995), some at least of which, even in their dictionary definitions, seem very close in meaning to the Māori term. For example, in Old Javanese the word (*hurip*) is glossed “life, give life, bring to life, grant life (not kill)” and in modern Javanese (*urip*) as “life; to live, be alive; soul, spirit, inner life”. Despite the fact that their speakers had been out of contact for at least four millennia, the evolution of the term in Māori, Javanese and other languages seems to have followed the same trajectory. Looking at these data in his Austronesian Comparative Dictionary, Robert Blust comments:

Dempwolf [the pioneer exponent of the relationship between the various branches of the Austronesian languages] reconstructed **qudip* “to live”, and although this

⁴ Joan Metge wrote in the revised edition of her book *The Maoris of New Zealand* (1976) that while still believed by “many older Maoris”, this notion “no longer has general currency, probably because it was not reinforced by Christian beliefs, as *tinana* and *wairua* were” (p.57).

semantic reconstruction is justified, it appears incomplete in a number of respects due to differences in the “conceptual focus” ... of the German/English and Austronesian terms.

After discussing the “dominance of vitality” conveyed in the use of the reflexes of this term in so many Austronesian languages, he observes that:

If anything in English reminds us of this conceptual focus it is perhaps the depiction of the life force in Dylan Thomas (1952, p.9):

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age ...

Dylan Thomas did not have a name for this force; the Austronesians did, and their heirs still do. Professor Blust discusses the extended meanings of the term in many Austronesian languages, including the term's use in connection with sneezing (as in the Māori expression *Tihe! Mauri ora*), which “undoubtedly derive from formulaic expressions expressions wishing health or protection from the loss of the soul”. He goes on to say:

Although this is substantially similar to traditional European beliefs, the different emphasis of the Austronesian term in comparison with the English term is seen again in the recurrent references to healing, curing, reviving and recovering (where the life force is reasserting not merely its presence, but its dominance).

In Māori, at least, the local reflex of **qudip, mauri*, has received a lot of attention from linguists, anthropologists and other scholars. But another term, *tupu* “grow, develop”, has so far received intensive examination (as far as I am aware) from only one. It has been overlooked, I think, because of its apparent ordinariness. Yet the intensive examination of original texts, the kind of activity on which which Te Mātāpunenga is based, and which it seeks to stimulate, often reveals an extraordinary richness in the way in which such words are used.

In Māori, the word *tupu* (in Eastern dialects, *tipu*) has a core meaning of growth and increase. It also covers development, social position and the realization of potential. It originates from Proto-Malayo-Polynesian **tumbuq*, through Proto Eastern Oceanic **tumpu* and Proto-Polynesian **tupu*, with an apparently constant sense at each stage of “grow, spring up”. The scholar who brings *tupu* into sharp focus is the Danish anthropologist J. Prytz Johansen. He characterizes *tupu* as “Life in its essential meaning, life which is worth living, the strength and courage of life thus are identical with honour. Life and honour constitute an indissoluble whole: “tupu”...”.(Johansen 1954, p. 48), and later notes that :

What is most interesting...is the fact that *mate*, weakened, when referring to human beings is point by point the counterpart of *tupu*. *Tupu* may mean 'arise, come into existence' and 'mate' may mean 'to be dead'. Just as *tupu* includes the meanings of 'thriving' and 'gathering strength', so *mate* may denote all degrees of 'being weakened'. The context must decide how bad things are...*Mate* thus is the opposite of the vitality and spirit contained in *tupu*.(1954, p.49)

Again, the Māori usages of this term in its philosophical applications are paralleled by those in other Austronesian languages. Robert Blust reports that “reflexes [of **qudip*] in Malayo-

Polynesian languages show recurrent references to vegetation and to growth, a component of meaning which is reinforced by the observation that **qudip* has been replaced in a number of the languages of Sulawesi by reflexes of **tumbuq* ‘to grow’.” In Māori, and probably other languages, the reflex of **tumbuq* has been given meanings complementary to **qudip / mauri*, to express further insights into the nature and ordering of life and living.

Sailing Beyond the Reef

The addition of the etymologies to the definitions provided for each Title provides an opening into a wider world, still largely unexplored. The material within the compendium illustrates the waxing (and in some cases the waning, through forgetfulness and lack of use) of the scope and significance of the ideas which the key words encapsulate. There is even more to be learned, however, about the history of these ideas though exploring their correlates in the other languages of the Pacific, Southeast Asia and Madagascar which share with Māori a common Austronesian heritage. Many of the concepts underpinning Māori customary law have an ancient history, and their future development, their *tupu*, can only be enhanced by an awareness of how the rest of Austronesia has come to regard these matters.

Richard A. Benton

Adjunct Professor, Te Mātāhauariki Institute, University of Waikato
& Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Political Studies, University of Auckland
r.benton@auckland.ac.nz

PRESENTATION DRAFT

A paper presented at *Tūhonohono: Custom and the State*, a symposium sponsored by Te Mātāhauariki Institute, University of Waikato, and the Tainui Endowed College, Hopuhopu, Waikato, 22-24 June, 2007.

© Copyright by Author; may be reproduced with attribution for non-commercial purposes.

Comments welcome.

REFERENCES

- Bellwood, Peter, James. J. Fox and Darrell Tryon (eds.) 1995. *The Austronesians: Historical and Cultural Perspectives*. Canberra, The Australian National University.
- Biggs, Bruce, 1994. "New words for a new world", in A. K. Pawley and M.D. Ross (eds), *Austronesian Terminologies: Continuity and Change*. Canberra: Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, pp. 21-29.
- Biggs, Bruce & Ross Clark (Compilers) n.d. POLLEX Database of Polynesian languages. (Computer file).
- Blust, Robert A. 1987. "Lexical reconstruction and semantic reconstruction: the case of Austronesian "house" words", *Diachronica* Vol. 4, nos. 1-2, pp. 31-72.
- Blust, Robert A. 1995. *Austronesian Comparative Dictionary* (Computer File). Department of Linguistics, University of Hawaii.
- Dyen, Isidore & David F. Aberle. 1974. *Lexical Reconstruction: The Case of the Athapaskan Kinship System*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fox, James J. 1995. "Austronesian societies and their transformations", in Bellwood, Fox & Tryon (eds) *The Austronesians*, pp. 214-228.
- Johansen, J. Prytz. 1954. *The Maori and His Religion in Its Non-Ritualistic Aspects*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard.
- King, Michael. 2003. *Te Puea: A Life* (2nd edition). Auckland: Reed.
- Kirch, Patrick Vinton and Roger C. Green, 2001. *Hawaiki, Ancestral Polynesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ross, Malcolm, Andrew Pawley and Meredith Osmond (eds.) 1998. *The Lexicon of Proto Oceanic: 1. Material Culture*. Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.
- Thomas, Dylan. 1952. *Collected Poems 1934-1952*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons.
- Williams, Herbert W. 1971. *A Dictionary of the Māori Language* (Seventh Edition). Wellington: Government Printer.
- Tryon, Darrell. 1995. "Proto-Austronesian and the Major Austronesian Subgroups". In Bellwood, Fox & Tryon (eds) *The Austronesians*, pp. 17-38.
- Zorc, R. David Paul. 1994. "Austronesian culture history through reconstructed vocabulary (an overview). In A. K. Pawley & M.D. Ross (eds), *Austronesian Terminologies: Continuity and Change*. Canberra: Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, pp. 541-594.