The Strange Rongorongo

Otto Dempwolf and the Islands of Language

Legends of Maui

The Avoiuli Writing System

Special Malayo-Polynesian Issue

Malay Masters

Pasifika Festival

Languages In Peril
Rapā Nui, Chamorro, Rotuman
Look beyond what you know

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Welcome to our Malayo-Polynesian special issue! Many of you are probably wondering why we are doing this issue which focuses mainly on the languages of this branch of the Austronesian languages. More of you are probably wondering what the languages of this branch are and what region they are from. You wouldn’t be alone in wondering that.

When you talk about language families, most language learners will know what you mean when you talk about the Romance languages, or the Slavic and Germanic languages. If you mention Asian languages, they will probably think instantly of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. If you mention Celtic languages, they will surely be able to at least name Irish and Scottish as part of those.

But what are the Malayo-Polynesian languages? These are the ones that are used on a large number of islands and nation states in the Pacific, in the triangle formed by Asia, Australia, and the west coast of the United States. Some of the more popular locations of this area are easily recognizable, once you mention them. Many of them are the island paradises everyone talks about “getting away” to: Hawaii, Tahiti, Fiji, Bali. Others are ones that are mentioned, but you never really know where they are, like Madagascar and Indonesia. They are just “out there” somewhere.

The languages themselves number over a thousand. Some you might have heard of, such as the ones that go with those more common places: Hawaiian, Tahitian, Fijian, Balinese, Malagasy and Indonesian. You might also have heard of Tagalog (also known as Filipino), Javanese, Maori, Samoan, Tongan and Malay. But what do you know about them? Have you ever seen them written or heard them spoken?

The languages of this branch are rarely mentioned or even thought about, for there are so many in such a relatively small area of the world. Papa New Guinea alone has a few dozen of these languages on its island. With this special issue, we are hoping to get some people more interested in these language and the cultures surrounding them. Many of the languages and cultures are declining as they compete with the more dominant cultures of the area while others are thriving with the tourism of thousands of people visiting them every year. We are also working to add resources for a few of these languages to the site, Parleremo, and we welcome anything you might wish to contribute.

Erik Zidowecki
ERIK ZIDOWECKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF
Easter Island is known mainly for its huge Moai statues. Few know that it is also home to an as yet undeciphered script known as Rongorongo.
Easter Island, located in the southeastern Pacific Ocean, has two ancient mysteries related to it. The more famous of these are the huge statues, called Moai, which were created by the early Rapa Nui people and are located all over the island.

The second mystery is related to a writing system which, to this day, remains unciphered. Rongorongo is a system of glyphs that were carved into wood. Just over two dozen wooden objects of varying shape and size, containing these characters, have been collected and are kept in numerous museums and private collections. Even the natives of the island no longer retain the knowledge of what the writing means.

The original description of the script, according to the natives, was kohau motu mo rongorongo, meaning “lines incised for chanting out”. This got shortened to kohau rongorongo (“lines for chanting out”). Now it is just normally referred to as Rongorongo.

History
Polynesian peoples settled on Easter Island some time between 300 to 1200 CE. The oral traditions of the Rapa Nui people claim that either Hotu Matu'a or Tu'u ko lho, the two legendary founders of Rapa Nui, brought with them 67 tablets from their homeland of Marae Renga. This same founder is also said to have brought many indigenous plants like the toromiro tree, sweet potato, sugarcane, and paper mulberry.

Despite them creating a strong culture and thriving for a long time, their isolation proved to be a major problem. As they became overpopulated, they used up most of the islands limited natural resources, including the already scarce trees. When European explorers arrived on the island in 1722, the population had gone from a thriving civilization of 15,000 to one of just 3000. The Europeans caused the population to decline even further by exposing the natives to diseases they brought.

Peruvians started raiding the island for free labor in the forms of slaves in the 1860s. Over the years, hundreds of natives were taken, with few of them surviving long in Peru. When the Bishop of Tahiti put a stop to it, he had the surviving Rapa Nui natives sent back, but an epidemic of smallpox killed most of them on the ship. The survivors carried the sickness with them, and the remaining island population was nearly wiped out. The language Rapa Nui also suffered, as it became mixed with the widely spoken Tahitian. (For more information on the Rapa Nui language, see “Languages in Peril” in this issue).

“Easter Island” got it’s name from the Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen, who was the the island’s first recorded European visitor. He found it on Easter Sunday, and so named it Paasch-Eyland, Dutch for “Easter Island”. The official name of the island is Isla de Pascua, which also means “Easter Island”. The Polynesian name for it, Rapa Nui, means “Big Rapa”, which it got during the slave raids, because of its topographic similarity to the island of Rapa in the Bass Islands of the Austral Islands group. Spanish explorer Felipe González de Ahedo later traveled to the island in 1770 and claimed it for Spain. In 1888, Easter Island was annexed by Chile by Policarpo Toro, a Chilean naval officer, under the Tratado de Anexión de la isla (“Treaty of Annexation of the Island”).

The Christian religion came to the island when Eugène Eyraud, a lay friar of the Congrégation de Picpus, landed on Easter Island on January 2, 1864, and began evangelizing the natives. He kept a record of his stay in which he also told of his discovery of the tablets when he first arrived. However, he did not mention the tablets again, so they remained unnoticed. He left nine months later, then returned as a full priest in 1865. He died a few years later of tuberculosis.

Discovery
Florentin-Étienne Jaussen, the
Bishop of Tahiti, received a strange gift from the newly converted Catholics of Easter Island in 1868. It was a small wooden board with a long cord of human hair wound around it. On the board was a strange hieroglyphic writing. Wanting to learn more, Jaussen wrote to Father Hippolyte Roussel on Easter Island, instructing him to collect all the tablets and find some natives who were capable of translating them. Roussel could only recover a few of the tablets, and the natives could not agree on how to read them.

From Eyraud’s records, they knew he had seen hundreds of tablets on his arrival only a few years earlier, so they wondered what had happened to all of them. Eyraud had also written that the natives had little interest in them. The Bishop questioned the island wise men, Ourupano Hinapote and Tekaki, and they explained that while they knew how to carve the characters with a small shark’s tooth, according to their teachings, there was nobody left on the island who knew how to read the characters. The Peruvians raids had caused the deaths of all the wise men who still knew how, and so the engraved pieces of wood were no longer of any interest to the natives. They simply burned them as firewood or wound their fishing lines around them. Some tablets were used to start fires by rubbing sticks against them. Some were even used in the construction of canoes.

There were more attempts to recover tablets. Three more were obtained by Captain Gana from Chile in 1870, and German ethnologist Thomas Barthel found the decayed remains of half a dozen more tablets in caves in the 1950s.

Creation
From the various interviews of natives, the possible source and reason for the tablets was uncovered. Along with carved tablets, the founders brought around six hundred texts, written on a paper made of banana leaves. These texts were an archive of the history of the people, but as the leaves started to deteriorate, the archive was threatened. King Hotu Matua ordered the contents to be copied onto tablets made of toromiro wood.

There was a particular group that was given this task. They were the tangata rongorongo, and were selected high officials from each clan. They lived in their own special dwellings and their sole job was to teach how to read and write the glyphs to others. They would conduct lessons under a banana tree, with their students seated around them in a circle. Through singing and reciting the stories of the text, the students learned what each character meant in it’s entirety. Each text had a particular melody, so reading the text was very difficult if its particular tune wasn’t known.

As they learned to read the texts, the students would also learn to carve the characters into the branches of banana leaves, using a small shark’s tooth. When they had become proficient in that, they would be allowed to carve into toromiro wood. Toromiro wood was slow growing and in limited supply, however, so other kinds of wood were also used, including driftwood that would wash up on the island shore. Once a tablet had been carved, it was placed into an envelope made of reed leaves, then hung. After that, only teachers or their servants were allowed to touch them.

These texts were an archive of the history of the people, but as the leaves started to deteriorate, the archive was threatened.
**Text**

Even though the natives no longer knew how to translate the texts, they did know how the various tablets were made. The process of cutting grooves into wood is called fluting and the grooves that are cut are called flutes. Scribes used obsidian flakes (pieces of a particular hard rock) or small shark teeth to flute the wood. Most of the glyphs are composed of two parts which are then connected by a fine cut. It is believed that the characters were created by first sketching the design using the obsidian, then a shark tooth would deepen the cuts. That would mean the remaining fine cuts may have been mistakes or some part of the design. Some of the carved tablets seem to have been carved with a steel blade, which makes the authenticity of those tablets questionable, perhaps done by someone trying to mimic or falsify the tablets.

The glyphs are generally categorized as being forms of humans, animals, vegetables or geometric shapes. Those glyphs with “heads” are usually oriented up or facing right. A few are inverted (head down or facing left), but the reason for that is unknown. Some of the heads have markings on the side that might represent eyes or ears. A common glyph is a bird, with many resembling frigatebirds, which happens to be normally associated with Makemake (the creator of humanity, god of fertility and main god of the Tangata manu (birdman cult)).

The direction of the text is also of interest. Normally, text is written in the same direction, vertically or horizontally. The texts of the Rongorongo script is written in alternating directions, starting from the lower left corner. A line is read from left to right, but upon reaching the end, the tablet is then turned upside down, and the next line is then read. The lines above and below the one being read would be upside down. This system is called reverse boustrphedon. The script contains no punctuation or paragraphs.

**Cataloguing**

Perhaps the person most involved in cataloguing and understanding the Rongorongo tablets in the last century was Thomas Barthel. He visited most of the museums which had tablets and made pencil rubbings of them. From this data, he compiled the first collection of the script, and he published this as Grundlagen zur Entzifferung der Osterinselschrift (Basics of Deciphering the Easter Island Writing) in 1958. He was also the first scholar to correctly identify anything in the texts.

Barthel gave each script a single capital letter and a name, like “Tablet G: the Little Tablet of Santiago”. There is no real standard in the names, with some being descriptive while others refer to where they are. Other names include “Crescent Tablet”, “Snuffbox”, “Oar”, “Crescent [piece of] Wood”, “Santiago Staff”, “Worm-eaten Tablet” and “Great Tablet”. There are 26 such tablets that are believed to be authentic, and not created later by others.

He also distinguished the two faces of a tablet with a suffix of r (recto - “front”) or v (verso - “back”). This differs in a few cases for objects that don’t have exactly 2 sides, such as the Santiago Staff, which is a single...
round item, and the Snuff Box, which has six sides.

Each of the texts has between 2 and 2320 glyphs, with some of them compounded, for a total over 15 thousand. Barthel assigned a numerical three-digit code to each glyph or group of similar glyphs which he believed to be allographs (variants of other glyphs). This produced 600 numeric codes. These codes were not simply assigned as the numbers one through six hundred. Each of the three digits represented a certain aspect. For example, the hundreds place (leftmost digit) is a numeral from 0 to 7, and refers to the head or, if there is no head, the overall form of the glyph: 0 and 1 for shapes and inanimate objects, 2 for characters with ears, 3 and 4 for those with open mouths with legs or tails, 5 for other heads that don’t fit the previous groups, 6 for ones with beaks, 7 for non-humans, like fish. The other two digits have similar roles, referring to various common patterns, like the positions of arms or wings. While the assignment of the numbers to different aspects might not be perfect, it remains the only effective system yet proposed to catalogue the glyphs.

Translating

A few people have made attempts at translating the script, but nothing conclusive has been proven.

In Tahiti, Jaussen had found a laborer from Easter Island, Metoro, who claimed to be able to read the tablets. Metoro would take a tablet, rotate it to find it’s beginning, then start chanting what is written. Jaussen made charts for the characters, grouping them by similarity and what he thought they might mean. He based his meanings on what Metoro told him each glyph meant. Metoro also gave him a complete translation of one of the tablets. From this, he was able to produce a translation for others, but the results were so senseless that he even wrote in an introduction to it that “One must resign, there is no sense in it”.

Later study of the translations would provide a reason as to why Jaussen’s translation made no sense. Jaussen had collected the items and the information, but had never truly analyzed what he had. While Metoro had given him a translation of a tablet, Jaussen had not compared that with the meanings of the symbols. They did not match.

William J. Thomson was the paymaster on the USS Mohican. He spent twelve days on Easter Island in December, 1886, and during that time he found a man named Ure Va’e Iko who claimed to understand the texts. He had been the steward of King Nga’ara, the last king who was said to have had knowledge of writing. While Va’e Iko could not himself write, he knew many of the chants. Thomson gave him money and gifts to get him to read photographs of Jaussen’s tablets.

At first, Thomson believed Va’e Iko, but then he began to notice that he would recite the same translation for completely different photographs. Va’e Iko would also often turn the photograph before reading out the same number of glyphs as on the line. It is unclear as to why Va’e Iko was misleading Thomson, but part of the reason may have been that the scripts were considered sacred and thus not to be shared with outsiders. It was apparent, though, that this was not going to produce a true translation.

Katherine Routledge, a British archaeologist and anthropologist, conducted a scientific expedition to Rapa Nui with her husband in 1914. The intent was to catalogue the art, customs, and writings of the island. When they arrived, she interviewed two elderly natives, Kapi-era and Tomenika, who were said to have some knowledge of
the tablets. However, their explanations often contradicted each other.

Kapierer told Routledge that each character had both a literal meaning, like the object it represented, and a sort of “reminding” meaning, referring to something in the mind of the reader. Those meanings would probably have then been passed down orally. That would be similar to someone tying a knot in a string to remind them of something; the knot represents what they should remember, but any other person would see it simply as a knot. Routledge concluded that Rongorongo did not directly represent language, but rather was an idiosyncratic mnemonic device or proto-writing (systems that have many characteristics similar to writing). She figured that the meanings of the characters were redefined by each scribe of a text, so that the text could only then be read by someone with specific knowledge of that text.

There are a few barriers to providing an accurate translation, even if Rongorongo is a true writing system. There are so few remaining texts that making any valid pattern matching impossible. There are no illustrations or other means to guess the context of the text. If Rongorongo was related to the old Rapa Nui language, that has since become so mixed with Tahitian that it would likely not match the written text anymore.

Many other translation attempts have been made, most being largely unlikely. Australian pediatrician Alan Carroll published a translation in 1892 that was based on an idea of the texts being written by an extinct “Long-Ear” population of Easter Island and represent some mixture of Quechua and other languages of Peru and Mesoamerica. However, he did not publish any methods of analysis or meaning for the glyphs to prove the translation.

Hungarian Vilmos Hevesy published an article in 1932, claiming that Rongorongo and the Indus Valley script were related because they had some similarities. However, since both scripts are undeciphered, were found on different sides of the world (the Indus Valley being in the region of Afghanistan), and have their origins an estimated 4000 years apart, this connection is very unlikely.

Independent linguist Steven Fischer announced in 1995 that he had “cracked the Rongorongo code”. He noted that the text of the Santiago Staff was different from the others, in that it had “punctuation” in the form of vertical lines in many place. He also interpreted a particular glyph as a phallic symbol, which he translated as “copulated”. This results in his translation containing several references to animals and objects copulating with each other, such as “fish copulated with the sun”, which many scholars have disregarded as just silly. Fischer also claims to have deciphered the Phaistos Disc, but that too is disregarded as valid because, in both cases, too many assumptions are made that only relate to a small volume of the known text.

**Conclusion**

From what was learned from the natives of Easter Island as well as linguistic analysis, the Rongorongo script is most likely not a true writing system or language. If so, then the meaning and purpose of the texts and the objects they were written on will never be discovered. We can be sure, however, that people will continue to have their own ideas on what they mean.
Otto Dempwolff was a medical officer whose travels put him into contact with the people of the Polynesian islands. When retired from being a doctor, he actively studied the languages, and in doing so, produced a body of work that is still being used today.
German linguist and anthropologist Otto Dempwolff started as a medical man and soldier, but later found a path to studying languages, and he became famous for his research into Austronesian languages.

His Life
Otto Henry Louis August Dempwolff was born on May 25, 1871, in Pillau, Province of Prussia, as the first of two children. He graduated from the Luisen-Gymnasium in Memel in 1888 then went on to study medicine at various universities, including Berlin, Königsberg, Tübingen, Marburg and Leipzig. He received his doctorate from Berlin in 1892 then took his final exams the next year in Tübingen.

Dempwolff completed his military service in Munich, spending the last months of it as a doctor in Tilsit, Hamburg. After that, he applied for a job in tropical medicine at the New Guinea Company, but was turned down because he was too young. He was advised by them to gain more experience, so he served for two trips to South America as a ship’s doctor, and when he returned, he was given a contract with the company, where he worked from 1895 to 1897. After leaving them, he made another two trips to South America, again as a ship’s doctor.

Dempwolff served as a medical officer in the imperial protection force of the German Southwest and East Africa from 1898 to 1911. During that time, he was part of a two-year expedition for malaria research with Robert Koch in German New Guinea from 1901 to 1903. However, he fell ill with malaria a few times, and finally resigned from the force in 1911. During his travels, he worked with the Melanesian languages of the Pacific as well as Sandawe in Africa. He also examined the extinction of some of the nations on the islands.

Dempwolff worked for a few months as a doctor in the Colonial Office in London and it was here that he met Carl Meinhof, a German linguist, and the two began a lifelong friendship. It may have been that meeting and friendship that first got him really interested in linguistics. He began studying at the Hamburg Colonial Institute, which is now the University of Hamburg, in 1911.

At the end of 1913, Dempwolff traveled for the third time to New Guinea, but this time as a private individual for his own language studies. However, when the first World War hit the region, he interned in Australia before being deported back to Germany, where he spent the rest of the war as a military doctor in Saarbrücken and Silesia.

In 1919, the University of Hamburg was founded officially by a formal decree of parliament, and it was the first university in Germany with a true democratic foundation. In its first years, Austronesian and African studies were part of a common curriculum. It was then that Dempwolff started working in the Department of African and South Seas languages there,

This was the first published comprehensive theory about how many of the languages spoken on the islands of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean could be traced back to one original proto-language.

under his friend Professor Meinhof. He worked a little with the African languages, but he was mostly involved with the Melanesian and Austronesian languages, and in 1920, he wrote his habilitation thesis (the highest academic qualification a scholar can achieve on his own pursuit) on Indonesian lip sounds, Die Lautentsprechungen der indonesischen Lippenlaute in einigen anderen austronesischen Sprachen.

In 1931, on his 60th birthday, Dempwolff received an honorary doctorate from the University of Hamburg and became head of the newly created Seminar für Indonesische und SüdseeSprachen (Institute of Indonesian and Pacific Languages), which is still active today, focusing on the whole of Austronesia, including not just Indonesia, but also Malaysia and the Philippines, Madagascar and the South Pacific. Dempwolff died in Hamburg in 1938 at the age of 67.

His Work
Among Dempwolff’s achievements is his three-volume work phonology of Austronesian, Vergleichende Lautlehre des austronesischen Wortschatzes (Comparative phonology of Austronesian vocabulary)
published between 1934 and 1938. This was the first published comprehensive theory about how many of the languages spoken on the islands of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean could be traced back to one original proto-language.

The work he devoted the most time to before his death was a grammatical description of Jabêm, *Grammatik der Jabêm-Sprache auf Neuguinea* (Jabem-language grammar of New Guinea), published after his death in 1939. Jabêm is an Austronesian language which was adopted by the German Lutheran mission church in what is now Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea, and it was at their request that Dempwolff wrote the grammar. He made sure that his grammatical description was understandable to the lay person, especially since he considered Jabêm to be the most difficult Melanesian language he had ever encountered. This work was very well done, and is still greatly used today.

**PARTIAL LIST OF WORKS**

(1916) *Die Sandawe, Linguistisches und ethnographisches Material aus Deutsch Ostafrika, Abhandlungen des Hamburger Kolonialinstituts.* (The Sandawe, linguistic and ethnographic material from German East Africa, treatises the Hamburg Colonial Institute.)

(1920) *Die Lautentsprechungen der indonesischen Lippenlaute in einigen anderen austronesischen Sprachen, Habilitationsschrift.* (The sound correspondences of the Indonesian lip sounds in some other Languages, habilitation.)

(1934) *Vergleichende Lautlehre des austronesischen Wortschatzes, Band 1: Induktiver Aufbau einer indonesischen Ursprache.* (Comparative phonology of Austronesian vocabulary, Volume 1: Inductive construction of a Indonesian protolanguage.)


(1939) *Grammatik der Jabêm-Sprache auf Neuguinea.* (Jabem-language grammar of New Guinea)
Warning: This review does give away the whole story, but the story is not hard to guess from the title and first 10 minutes of the film.

The movie Whale Rider, based upon a book of the same name, focuses on the culture of the Maori people of New Zealand. The main character is Paikea, a 12-year old girl. Paikea is the name of a great chief who rode on top of a whale and bringing his people from Hawaiki. He is the one the chief line is directly descended from.

This Paikea, however, was born as a paternal twin, but her brother died in childbirth, along with her mother. She is the granddaughter of the tribe’s chief, Koro, and her brother would have become the new chief. Since Paikea is a girl, she cannot take on that role, which upsets Koro greatly. When Paikea is born, Koro blames Paikea’s father, Porourangi, for this, and so Porourangi leaves the tribe, letting Koro and his wife, Nanny Flowers, raise Paikea.

While Koro does come to care about Paikea, he can’t truly accept her and even blames her for the tribe being “in dark times”. Paikea constantly tries to please him by becoming well versed in the traditions and rituals of her people, but he ignores her achievements. In order to find a new chief, Koro starts a school to teach the boys that are of the proper age to become the new leader. He bans Paikea from it, but she still manages to learn from them. When Koro starts teaching them the ways of the taiaha, the traditional fighting stick, she turns to her uncle Rawiri to train her. Koro eventually finds out, after Paikea defeats one of the boys, Hemi, in a taiaha fight, and in his anger, tells Paikea that she has broken the line of chiefs.

This pattern continues to be repeated throughout the film, with Paikea trying to prove herself as a leader while Koro continues to ban her from doing so while himself falling further into despair and bitterness. When all of the boys fail the last test of recovering the rei puta, a whale tooth worn around Koro’s neck, when he throws it into the ocean, Koro takes to his bed, shutting out everyone completely.

The movie plot is very simple to follow, and most people can already guess the ending, especially from the title. You know that eventually Paikea will ride a whale and become the new chief, thus proving to Koro that women can be leaders too. This is the uplifting lesson that most people take away from the movie. I think the movie is more interesting because of the look at the Maori culture.

First, we see the tribe as rather modern people. They live in normal houses, drive cars, etc., and are not, as often displayed to tourists, as
quaint grass skirt wearing primitives. In fact, Porourangi is traveling Europe as an artist. In the end, we do see them performing a traditional dance, but is part of a celebration.

While they are modern, they still have a sense of their culture and traditions, which is very good in this world where so many people are losing theirs. A number of times, Paikea recites chants in Māori, as does Nanny Flowers. Before he left for Europe, Porourangi was building a waka, which is a large canoe for many people. This one was 60 feet in length, and Paikea often sits in it at night to look out over the ocean.

The climax of the movie involves several whales beaching themselves by Paikea’s house. The entire tribe comes to try to save the whales, staying up all night pouring ocean water from buckets on them until the tide can come back in. This shows that the people of the tribe still connect with their heritage and nature. Koro finds the largest one, the leader, which is supposedly the one that the legendary Paikea rode upon. Koro explains to the others that if they can get that whale into the water, the others will follow, so every attempts to do just that as the tide comes in. All help except Paikea, because Koro has forbidden her to touch it, telling her she has done enough damage already. They fail to move it, and as they leave it to get some rest before trying again, Paikea walks unseen to it, climbs on it, and rides it into the ocean, thus saving it and all the other whales, although she almost drowns in the process. It is this action, along with recovering Koro’s whale tooth from where he threw it, which finally convinces Koro that he has been wrong.

While I thought the movie was well done, and I did understand the point about women can be leaders as well as we can’t force people to be what they aren’t (nor deny what they are), I have to confess I was a bit confused and disappointed by the ending.

First of all, while Koro finally saw that he had been wrong, he only comes to accept Paikea when she fulfills his wishes. This is a man that has forsaken both his sons, the local boys, and Paikea because they didn’t match up to what he wanted. He doesn’t seem to change any of that, instead only accepting Paikea when she proves she is a leader. To me, it wasn’t that he had learned a lesson, but rather, he had been given what he wanted after he behaved badly. It felt to me like a child who wants a toy and when told no, gets angry, throws a tantrum, and shuts out everyone until he gets the toy, at which point, he is all happy again.

Second of all, the main thrust of Koro’s need for the leader seemed to be because the community was falling apart and they were “in dark times”. We get a few glimpses of this, like in seeing how Hemi’s father acts with some friends. However, the closing scene shows Paikea’s father has returned, people launching the waka and rowing out into ocean, and other members of the community performing a traditional dance. All this because they have declared Paikea the leader? To me, it makes a bad commentary on the people, for it would seem they are unable to deal with anything unless they have an official leader.

Lastly, I was confused about Koro’s role in all of this. According to his claims about the family line of chiefs, it would seem he was the chief of the tribe. He was chief when Paikea was born, but we never see him in that role. He is never shown to be leading anything. Since his grandson, had he lived, would not have been able to become chief for many more years, Koro should have still been leading the tribe, and thus any decline would be his fault, not his son’s nor Paikea’s. He speaks so much about what is needed to be a leader, but never shows those traits in himself. Perhaps that is how his character was supposed to be, but that just made the ending, with him getting what he wants, seem even worse to me. It teaches me that you can be irresponsible and nasty to everyone and be rewarded in the end.

Despite my feelings about the ending and possible confusion over the what Koro is really doing, the movie is very enjoyable to watch and does include plenty of Māori culture and language. I would be interested in hearing what others think about the movie’s depiction of the Māori culture, especially those that have first hand knowledge. PT
A young woman dances on the Tuvalu stage at the 2011 Pasifika festival, Auckland, New Zealand.
Every year in March, New Zealand holds the Pasifika Festival in its largest city, Auckland. Popularly called ‘Pasifika’, it is the largest event of its kind in the world, with its theme of the Pacific Islands, and it draws in over 225 thousand visitors every year.

History
The roots of this festival probably go back to the 1980s. During that time, Tala Cleverley, the first Pacific person to be elected to a New Zealand local government jurisdiction, was on the Wellington City Council. As part of the city’s long-running Summer City program, she initiated and developed a Pacific festival to be part of the celebration. She got the Pacific churches and other various groups involved, to make sure the rest of the community was tied in. By 1982, a variety of festivals had begun, giving people a chance to display their cultures. These festivals continued until around 1990 and consisted largely of entertainment programs, food, information about the cultures, and art areas. However, they also began to bring in Western practices as well and began decreasing in popularity. Soon, there were almost no public festivals of Pacific cultures.

Birth
The Pasifika Festival came into existence in 1992 when the then Auckland City Council and the South Pacific Island Nations Development Association wanted to bring the Pacific Island communities closer together again by celebrating the richness and variety of their cultures, traditions and lifestyles. A Pacific Island fashion show and theatre performances were incorporated into it in 1993, and over 20,000 people attended it in only the festival’s second year. This festival continued to grow over the years, as did the number of people attending it. Between 1995 and 2000, an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 people attended Pasifika each year.

A “village” concept was introduced in 1998 as a way of further showing each Pacific island’s diversity. The festival is split up into “villages” of individual island communities, representing the ten islands of Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Tahiti, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Aotearoa (the Māori name for New Zealand).

Celebrations
Most of the Pasifika events take place in Western Springs Stadium and start with concerts on a Friday evening. Many musical acts that perform are top-name Polynesian artists. The concert is free, and lasts for a few hours.

On Saturday, thousands of people crowd the stadium again to enjoy the numerous shows by the various villages, as well as the craft shows. They sample the huge variety of Polynesian food as
Celebrations - Pasifika Festival

wel in this day long celebration. It now involves multiple stages, sports, and over 300 stalls for food and games.

The Pasifika Festival itself is just 2 days, but the entire month of March is full of related events and activities. Some of the events that happen during the rest of the March, as part of the Pasifika Festival idea, include sporting events, sculpture exhibitions, film viewings, various workshops, kid’s activities and much more.

The years have marked a number of important milestones for the festival. A record number of people attended the festival in 2001, which won the festival the Creative New Zealand’s Creative Places Award. Between 2002 and 2004, the number of community stallholders exceeded 300 for the first time and it is estimated that over one million dollars was spent during the 2002 festival.

In 2005, the inaugural Pacific Music Awards were introduced at the Air New Zealand Opening Night Concert, and these continued on as a stand-alone celebration of Pacific musical talent. Another award was won on the festival’s 15th anniversary in 2007 with the Best Established Event award from NZAEP (New Zealand Association of Event Professionals). It highlighted the efforts of past and present project managers, along with the the team of community workers and volunteers. In 2010, a six-day program was begun as part of the months activities. This included a number of ticketed events at other locations, including “Po”, a tribal pop opera by pop artist Mika.

Beyond Pasifika
Just as the original festivals of the 1980s inspired the Pasifika Festival, so it too has inspired other festivals. In 2001, the Christchurch’s Pacific Underground established the Pacific Arts Festival. It is a day for the family, with a format similar to Pasifika. Three years after that, Tai Tokerau Pasifika became the first Pacific festival in the Northland region.

The Pacific in the Park festival began in West Auckland in 2005. It is also family-oriented and was, oddly enough, developed from a road safety campaign created by local policeman Faga Siaki. It has an afternoon and evening of mainly modern entertainment in which a number of social agencies attend and engage the Pacific communities.

In 2006, two more festivals were held for the first time. One was a second festival in the Northland area, in Kaitaia, and the other was the Auckland’s North Shore Pasefika Festival. Both of these events have a specific sports focus, promoting team competition and healthy lifestyles. Two more festivals were also begun in 2009: Hamilton’s NESian Festival and Rotorua’s Mini Pasifika Festival. These will run biannually along with the city’s Globalfest.

Learning More
If you wish to learn more about the annual Pasifika Festival, there are a number of sites online that will give you details on dates of it and surrounding events, as well as where is best to stay in Auckland for the event. This celebration goes far in helping to not only showcase the cultures of the islands, but also help revive and maintain their history and traditions. We hope the continue for many more years to come.  

PT
Below are other pictures from various parts of the festival activities. Thanks to Yortw and kylepost photography for these wonderful pictures!

Woman at her stall during the festival

Food stall with various foods and drinks for sale

Art for sale at the Pasifika Festival

Young dancers practicing

Women dancing in traditional costume

Stall displaying various traditional Tapa cloths for sale
Language and culture are always intertwined. We gain some knowledge of a culture when we learn its language, and when we learn about a culture, we have to incorporate the language.

Sometimes, the two become even more closely linked. That is the case the Raga language, the Avoiuli writing system, and sand drawing, in which a tradition helped give birth to a new writing system for a language.

Vanuatu

In the South Pacific Ocean is the island nation of Vanuatu. It is an archipelago, or group of islands, which was first inhabited by Melanesian people. The first Europeans arrived there in 1605 in the form of a Spanish expedition, led by a Portuguese navigator named Fernades de Queiros. They claimed the islands for Spain and named the island they landed on Espiritu Santo, or “Holy Spirit”. No more Europeans returned until 1768, when Louis Antoine de Bougainville, a French admiral and explorer, rediscovered the islands. Several years later, in 1774, Captain Cook named the islands “New Hebrides”.

The United Kingdom and France both claimed parts of the archipelago in the 1880s, and for many years, the island was managed by a British-French Condominium, a unique form of government, with separate governmental systems. This was a disaster, with a duplication of laws, police forces, prisons, currencies, education and health systems. Under this rule, the native Melanesians were banned from becoming citizens of either power, becoming officially stateless.

Thankfully, in the 1970s, an independence movement arose, and the Republic of Vanuatu was founded in 1980. The new name was derived from the word vanua (“land” or “home”) and the word tu (“stand”), reflecting its new independence.

Raga

Although among the islands of Vanuatu the official languages are Bislama, English and French, the language of Raga is also widely in use. Sometimes known as Hano, Raga had an estimated 6,500 speakers (as of 2000), which makes it the seventh largest of Vanuatu’s hundred or more languages, as well as Pentecost Island’s second largest. It is an Austronesian language and has borrowed many words from Bislama, although there is a movement to replace those with new Raga words.

Raga spread to the other is-
lands as people emigrated from Pentecost, sometimes creating new dialects of the language. However, it is now relatively homogenous, with the last distinctive dialect, Nggasai, becoming extinct when its last native speaker died in 1999. In general, Raga is considered an easy language to learn, and it is known as a second language by many speakers of other Vanuatu languages. While a few grammatical sketches, vocabulary lists and short papers have been published on Raga, there is no thorough description of the language.

Sand Drawing

Sand has long been a medium of art and communication for thousands of years in many parts of the world. Tibetan monks create mandalas with colored powder, and these are used to teach. Native Americans use naturally colored sand to make paintings on the grounds of their sacred lodges. Indigenous Australian Aborigines have used sand paintings for both story telling and recording history.

In Vanuatu, another form of sand drawing exists as part of the culture. Known also as san-dooing in Bislama, the sand drawing of Vanuatu is a ritual tradition, even recognized by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) as a “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”.

These drawings are created in the most basic method of using a single finger to trace a continuous line in sand or wet clay.

The patterns are composed of graceful curves and are normally symmetrical. Not merely artistic, these drawings are also a means of communication among over 80 different languages in the region. They act as mnemonic devices (learning techniques that aid in information retention) to record and teach rituals, mythology, histories, and more. Most of these are very intricate, with many meanings, and can often be read in many ways. Masters of this tradition must be able to not only create them but also interpret them for others. It is probably more accurate to view this as a form of writing, rather than art.

Sadly, this tradition, like many old cultural practices, is losing its importance, with many of the drawings being used just as graphics in advertising or as tourist displays. These beautiful symbols of Vanuatu identity are often shown as a form of decorative folklore, and if sand drawings become only viewed on an artistic level, they will lose the tradition’s deeper symbolic significance and social function. A “National Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Sand Drawing” has been created by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, with the help of the Save Sand Drawings Action Committee and UNESCO to help keep this tradition alive.

Avoiuli

Despite this danger of lost meaning, one aspect of these sand drawings has actually evolved into another form. Over a period of 14 years, Chief Viraleo Boborevanu developed a writing system based on the designs in traditional sand drawings. It was intended as an alternative to the Latin alphabet, containing equivalent characters for the letters A through Z, numbers and a few other symbols. It was named Avoiuli, from the Raga words avoi (“talk about”) and uli (“draw” or “paint”). Avoiuli is used mainly for writing Raga, but can also be used for writing English, Apma, and Bislama.

Like the sand drawings, the letters of Avoiuli are drawn using a single stroke, and these letters can be written either right-to-left or left-to-right. Furthermore, each word can be written using a single continuous stroke.

Avoiuli is taught at a school in Lavatmanggemu in northeastern Pentecost, and scholars will often pay large school fees to learn it. It is also used for record keeping in the Tangbunia indigenous bank, which deals with many traditional forms of wealth, like shells, mats and boar tusks.

It is not uncommon for languages to have new writing systems created for them, but it is rare for those writing systems to come from a cultural practice. Do you know of similar occurrences in other languages? If so, please tell us about it.
Are you dreaming of a bungalow in Tahiti?

Do you wish to meet the friendliest people on earth in Fiji?

Are you drawn to the sights and smells of a traditional Hawaiian luau?
Islands

For centuries, the islands of the South Pacific have been the destination for tropical beauty and romantic getaways.

What are you waiting for? The Pacific Islands are waiting to show you what a true paradise is!
The Malayo-Polynesian languages are a subgroup of the Austronesian languages and are spoken on the island nations of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean. Most of these languages belong to smaller groups of indigenous people who have suffered from European colonization, often driving them to the edge of extinction. We are going to look at the history and situation of three of them: Rapa Nui, Chamorro and Rotuman.

Rapa Nui
Rapa Nui, also called Pascuan, is an Eastern Polynesian language. It is spoken by the Rapa Nui people living in Chile and on the island of Rapa Nui (also called Easter Island) which is a special territory of it. It is unknown how many people currently speak Rapa Nui, but the estimate is under 3000, with most of those speaking Rapa Nui as a minor language, the dominant language of the region being Spanish. Easter Island is one of the most remote inhabited islands in the world, and the Rapa Nui language is isolated from the other Eastern Polynesian languages.

Polynesian people settled on Easter Island some time between from 300 to 1200 CE. They became overpopulated and used up most of the islands natural resources. When European explorers arrived on the island in 1722, the population had gone from a civilization of 15000 to one of just 3000. Diseases brought by the Europeans also aided in reducing the population even further.

The name “Easter Island” was given to it by the Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen, the island’s first recorded European visitor. He found it on Easter Sunday, so named it Paasch-Eyland, which was Dutch for “Easter Island”. The official name of the island is Isla de Pascua, which also means “Easter Island”. The Polynesian name for it, Rapa Nui, means “Big Rapa”, and was given to it during slave raids of the 1860s because of its topographic similarity to the island of Rapa in the Bass Islands of the Austral Islands group.

Spanish explorer Felipe González de Ahedo traveled to the island in 1770 and claimed it for Spain. Much of Rapa Nui vocabulary is taken from Tahitian, mixing it with older forms of the language. When Captain James Cook visited the island four years later, he had a Tahitian interpreter with him. The interpreter recognized some Polynesian words, but was unable to converse with the islanders. Many of the words, such as the numbers from one to ten, don’t seem to have any
relation to any other known language.

In the 1860s, the Peruvians needed more people for doing labor and so they started raiding island for free labor in the forms of slaves. Easter Island became a target. Eight Peruvian ships landed there in 1862 and captured around 1000 Easter Islanders, including the king, his son, and the ritual priests. Over the the years, hundreds more were taken. Most of those captured did not survive long in Peru.

When the Bishop of Tahiti finally protested this activity, he had the surviving Rapa Nui gathered and sent them back to their island. On the way, the ship broke out in smallpox, and only 15 natives made it back to the island. They carried the sickness with them, however, and a smallpox epidemic nearly wiped out the remaining island population. Continued contact with outsiders caused the people and language even further decline, as Rapa Nui became diluted by the local Tahitian pidgin.

Easter Island was annexed by Chile in 1888 by Policarpo Toro, a Chilean naval officer, under the Tratado de Anexión de la isla ("Treaty of Annexation of the Island"). The validity of this treaty is still contested by some Rapa Nui natives. The surviving Rapa Nui people were confined to Hanga Roa, the capital of the island, until the 1960s, when the island was reopened in its entirety and the natives were given Chilean citizenship.

Father Sebastian Englert, a German missionary who lived on Easter Island between 1935 and 1969, published a partial Rapa Nui–Spanish dictionary in 1948, attempting to save what he could of the old language. It contained many typographical mistakes but still contained a large amount of material, recording not only the language but also some of the oral traditions and conversations.

Today, Spanish is the most widely spoken language on Easter Island and the primary language of education and administration. Rapa Nui is being influenced still, slowly shifting to a more Spanish sentence structure. With so few native speakers left and the current speakers mainly knowing it as a secondary language, it is unknown how much longer Rapa Nui will continue to exist.

Chamorro

Chamorro is a Malayo-Polynesian language spoken by the native Chamorro people of the Mariana Islands, which include Guam. Chamorro people also live in several United States states including California, Hawaií, Nevada, Texas and Washington. According to the 2000 Census, approximately 65,000 people of Chamorro ancestry live on Guam, 19,000 in the Northern Marianas, and another 93,000 live outside the Mariana Islands.

They carried the sickness with them, however, and a smallpox epidemic nearly wiped out the remaining island population.

The Chamorro people came from Southeast Asia around 2000 BC and are most closely related to other Austronesian natives to the west in the Philippines and Taiwan. They were first encountered by explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Later Spanish explorers named the inhabitants of the islands...
“Chamurres”, which was derived from a local term for “upper caste”, but this was eventually converted to “Chamorros” from an old Spanish term for “bald”, referring, perhaps, to the native males habit of shaving their heads. This last part is hard to confirm, as various visitors reported different hairstyles for the natives.

During its time as a Spanish colony, the Chamorro population was greatly reduced by the disease the Europeans brought with them. The Spanish also introduced many changes in the society, killing many Chamorro men and relocating most of the remaining population others to Guam. There, they lived in several parishes to prevent rebellion. An estimated 100,000 Chamorro natives that had lived on the islands before Europeans were reduced to under 10,000 by 1800. In the parishes, the Spanish worked to covert the natives to Catholicism. The Chamorro were given Spanish surnames. Since Guam was a Spanish colony for over 300 years, many Chamorro words are derived from Spanish. The traditional Chamorro number system was replaced by Spanish numbers. In 1898, the United States captured the island during the Spanish-American War. This did not end trouble for the Chamorro people, however. When at last their oppressive polices were removed, the damage to the language and people had already been done.

Guam, the language suffered suppression when the U.S. Government banned it completely from schools in 1922. All Chamorro dictionaries were collected and burned. This continued during the Japanese occupation of the area during World War II and when it was returned to the US after the war. Only English was allowed to be taught in the schools, and students who spoke their native tongue were punished.

When at last their oppressive polices were removed, the damage to the language and people had already been done. New generations had children raise in families in which only the oldest members were fluent, making it difficult for the children to learn the language. English eventually replaced Chamorro as the common language. More and more Chamorros, especially youth, are also relocating to the US mainland, and that makes preserving the Chamorro identity even more difficult.

There is still hope for the language, though. In the Northern Mariana Islands, young Chamorros still speak the language fluently, and it is still common among Chamorro households. There has also been a growing interest in reviving the language, and all public schools on both Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands are now required, by law, to teach the Chamorro language as part of their standard curriculum. Furthermore, because the Marianas are a part of the United States, the Chamorro people now enjoy greater economic opportunities than many other Micronesian peoples.

On Guam, a Chamorro rights movement has developed since the United States regained control of the island. Leaders of the movement are seeking to return the ancestral lands to the
Chamorro people. It is impossible to tell, however, if these efforts will be enough to save the Chamorro identity and language.

**Rotuman**

Rotuman, also called Rotunan, is a Malayo-Polynesian language spoken by the native people of the island Rotuma, which is part of the South Pacific Islands group. Rotuma is a Fijian dependency, and many Rotumans live on Fiji as well. There are an estimated 2000 Rotumans, according to the 2007 census, but it is unknown how many of those are native or second language speakers of Rotuman. The island has long been a cultural melting pot of the Micronesian, Melanesian and Polynesian groups, and so the indigenous Rotuman share many of the same cultural traits as its neighbors.

The first inhabitants of the island were probably the ancient seafaring people, the Lapita, some 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. After them, waves of Micronesian would have migrated to the island. The Polynesians would have been the last to come to the island, which gives it a similar but distinct language and cultural heritage from any of its ancestors.

The first recorded European contact with Rotuma was in 1791. British Captain Edward Edwards and the crew of HMS Pandora landed on the island while searching for sailors who had disappeared following the Mutiny on the Bounty. In the mid-nineteenth century, Rotuma became a safe haven for deserting sailors. Some of them married local women, contributing their genes to the already highly mixed pool.

A United States exploring expedition arrived on Rotuma in 1840. Wesleyan missionaries from Tonga came to the island in 1842, and they were followed by Catholic Marists in 1847. Conflicts between the groups broke out and the local chiefs finally asked Britain to annex the island in order to put an end to the fighting, which Britain did in 1881. It became part of the United Kingdom a few years after Fiji became a colony and was put under Fiji’s control. The British granted Fiji independence in 1970, and Rotuma remained part of Fiji.

The mix of peoples and cultures over the millennia makes it difficult to properly categorise the people. While they physically most resemble the Polynesian people of Samoa and Tonga, the Rotuman musical style of chanting is similar to traditional Tahitian or Maori styles. The language itself is distinctive from the neighboring Polynesian neighbors and is more closely similar to the Melanesian languages of Fiji.

The language is even more interesting to linguists because it uses metathesis, in which it swaps the the final vowel in a word with the consonant before it. This results in a vowel system that employs umlauts, vowel shortening or extending and diphthongisation (when a single vowel sound shifts to a two-vowel vocalization).

The Rotumans managed to escape much of the damage normally brought when a native population meets Europeans, so the language has not been as oppressed. However, it is still considered vulnerable, due to the newer generations adopting English or Fijian as their primary language.
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Maui is a demi god. The Maui story probably contains a larger number of unique and ancient myths than that of any other legendary character in the mythology of any nation. The Maui legends form one of the strongest links in the mythological chain of evidence which binds the scattered inhabitants of the Pacific into one nation.

"Akalana was the man; Hina-a-ke-ahi was the wife; Maui First was born; Then Maui-uaena; Maui Kūkū was born; Then Maui of the malo."
--Queen Liliuokalani’s Family Chant.

Four brothers, each bearing the name of Maui, belong to Hawaiian legend. They accomplished little as a family, except on special occasions when the youngest of the household awakened his brothers by some unexpected trick which drew them into unwonted action. The legends of Hawaii, Tonga, Tahiti, New Zealand and the Hervey group make this youngest Maui “the discoverer of fire” or “the fisherman who pulls up islands” or “the man endowed with magic,” or “Maui with spirit power.” The legends vary somewhat, of course, but not as much as might be expected when the thousands of miles between various groups of islands are taken into consideration.

Maui was one of the Polynesian demi-gods. His parents belonged to the family of supernatural beings. He himself was possessed of supernatural powers and was supposed to make use of all manner of enchantments. In New Zealand antiquity a Maui was said to have assisted other gods in the creation of man. Nevertheless Maui was very human. He lived in thatched houses, had wives and children, and was scolded by the women for not properly supporting his household.

The time of his sojourn among men is very indefinite. In Hawaiian genealogies Maui and his brothers were placed among the descendants of Ulu and “the sons of Kii,” and Maui was one of the ancestors of Kamehameha, the first king of the united Hawaiian Islands. This would place him in the seventh or eighth century of the Christian Era. But it is more probable that Maui belongs to the mistland of time. His mischievous pranks with the various gods would make him another Mercury living in any age from the creation to the beginning of the Christian era.

The Hervey Island legends state that Maui’s father was “the supporter of the heavens” and his mother “the guardian of the road to the invisible world.” In the Hawaiian chant, Akalana was the name of his father. In other groups this was the name by which his mother was known. Kanaloa, the god, is sometimes known as the father of Maui. In Hawaii Hina was his mother. Elsewhere Ina, or Hina, was the grandmother, from whom he secured fire.

The Hervey Island legends say that four mighty ones lived in the old world from which their ancestors came. This old world bore the name Ava-iki, which is the same as Hawa-ii, or Hawaii. The four gods were Maulike, Ra, Ru, and Bua-Taranga.

It is interesting to trace the connection of these four names with Polynesian mythology. Maulike is the same as the demi-god of New Zealand, Mafuike. On other islands the name is spelled Maulika, Mafuika, Mafuia, Mafuike, and Mahuika. Ra, the sun god of Egypt, is the same as Ra in New Zealand and La (sun) in Hawaii. Ru, the supporter of the heavens, is probably the Ku of Hawaii, and the Tu of New Zealand and other islands, one of the greatest of the gods worshiped by the ancient Hawaiians. The fourth mighty one from
Ava-ika was a woman, Bua-taranga, who guarded the path to the underworld. Talanga in Samoa, and Akalana in Hawaii were the same as Taranga. Pua-kalana (the Kalana flower) would probably be the same in Hawaiian as Bua-taranga in the language of the Society Islands.

Ru, the supporter of the Heavens, married Bua-taranga, the guardian of the lower world. Their one child was Maui. The legends of Raro-Tonga state that Maui’s father and mother were the children of Tangaroa (Kanaloa in Hawaiian), the great god worshiped throughout Polynesia. There were three Maui brothers and one sister, Ina-ika (Ina, the fish).

The New Zealand legends relate the incidents of the babyhood of Maui.

Maui was prematurely born, and his mother, not caring to be troubled with him, cut off a lock of her hair, tied it around him and cast him into the sea. His mother called the children and found a strange child, who proved that he was her son, and was taken in as one of the family. Some of the brothers were jealous, but the eldest addressed the others as follows:

“No, let him be our dear brother. In the days of peace remember the proverb, ‘When you are on friendly terms, settle your disputes in a friendly way; when you are at war, you must redress your injuries by violence.’ It is better for us, brothers, to be kind to other people. These are the ways by which men gain influence—by laboring for abundance of food to feed others, by collecting property to give to others, and by similar means by which you promote the good of others.”

Thus, according to the New Zealand story related by Sir George Grey, Maui was received in his home.

Maui’s home was placed by some of the Hawaiian myths at Kauiki, a foothill of the great extinct crater Haleakala, on the Island of Maui. It was here he lived when the sky was raised to its present position. Here was located the famous fort around which many battles were fought during the years immediately preceding the coming of Captain Cook. This fort was held by warriors of the Island of Hawaii a number of years. It was from this home that Maui was supposed to have journeyed when he climbed Mt. Haleakala to ensnare the sun.

And yet most of the Hawaiian legends place Maui’s home by the rugged black lava beds of the Wailuku river near Hilo on the island Hawaii. Here he lived when he found the way to make fire by rubbing sticks together, and when he killed Kuna, the great eel, and performed other feats of valor. He was supposed to cultivate the land on the north side of the river. His mother, usually known as Hina, had her home in a lava cave under the beautiful Rainbow Falls, one of the fine scenic attractions of Hilo. An ancient demigod, wishing to destroy this home, threw a great mass of lava across the stream below the falls. The rising water was fast filling the cave.

Hina called loudly to her powerful son Maui. He came quickly and found that a large and strong ridge of lava lay across the stream. One end rested against a small hill. Maui struck the rock on the other side of the hill and thus broke a new pathway for the river. The water swiftly flowed away and the cave remained as the home of the Maui family.

According to the King Kalakaua family legend, translated by Queen Liliuokalani, Maui and his brothers also made this place their home. Here he aroused the anger of two uncles, his mother’s brothers, who were called “Tall Post” and “Short Post,” because they guarded the entrance to a cave in which the Maui family probably had its home.

“They fought hard with Maui, and were thrown, and red water flowed freely from Maui’s forehead. This was the first shower by Maui.” Perhaps some family discipline followed this knocking down of door posts, for it is said:

Rugged Lava of Wailuku River
“They fetched the sacred Awa bush; Then came the second shower by Maui; The third shower was when the elbow of Awa was broken; The fourth shower came with the sacred bamboo.”

Maui’s mother, so says a New Zealand legend, had her home in the under-world as well as with her children. Maui determined to find the hidden dwelling place. His mother would meet the children in the evening and lie down to sleep with them and then disappear with the first appearance of dawn. Maui remained awake one night, and when all were asleep, arose quietly and stopped up every crevice by which a ray of light could enter. The morning came and the sun mounted up—far up in the sky. At last his mother leaped up and tore away the things which shut out the light.

“Oh, dear; oh, dear! She saw the sun high in the heavens; so she hurried away, crying at the thought of having been so badly treated by her own children.”

Maui watched her as she pulled up a tuft of grass and disappeared in the earth, pulling the grass back to its place.

Thus Maui found the path to the under-world. Soon he transformed himself into a pigeon and flew down, through the cave, until he saw a party of people under a sacred tree, like those growing in the ancient first Hawaii. He flew to the tree and threw down berries upon the people. They threw back stones. At last he permitted a stone from his father to strike him, and he fell to the ground. “They ran to catch him, but lo! the pigeon had turned into a man.”

Then his father “took him to the water to be baptized” (possibly a modern addition to the legend). Prayers were offered and ceremonies passed through. But the prayers were incomplete and Maui’s father knew that the gods would be angry and cause Maui’s death, and all because in the hurried baptism a part of the prayers had been left unsaid. Then Maui returned to the upper world and lived again with his brothers.

Maui commenced his mischievous life early, for Hervey Islanders say that one day the children were playing a game dearly loved by Polynesians—hide-and-seek. Here a sister enters into the game and hides little Maui under a pile of dry sticks. His brothers could not find him, and the sister told them where to look. The sticks were carefully handled, but the child could not be found. He had shrunk himself so small that he was like an insect under some sticks and leaves. Thus early he began to use enchantments.

Maui’s home, at the best, was only a sorry affair. Gods and demigods lived in caves and small grass houses. The thatch rapidly rotted and required continual renewal. In a very short time the heavy rains beat through the decaying roof. The home was without windows or doors, save as low openings in the ends or sides allowed entrance to those willing to crawl through. Off on one side would be the rude shelter, in the shadow of which Hina pounded the bark of certain trees into wood pulp and then into strips of thin, soft wood-paper, which bore the name of “Tapacloth.” This cloth Hina prepared for the clothing of Maui and his brothers. Tapacloth was often treated to a coat of cocoa-nut, or candle-nut oil, making it somewhat waterproof and also more durable.

Here Maui lived on edible roots and fruits and raw fish, knowing little about cooked food, for the art of fire making was not yet known. In later years Maui was supposed to live on the eastern end of the island Maui, and also in another home on the large island Hawaii, on which he discovered how to make fire by rubbing dry sticks together.

Maui was the Polynesian Mercury. As a little fellow he was endowed with peculiar powers, permitting him to become invisible or to change his human form into that of an animal. He was ready to take anything from any one by craft or force. Nevertheless, like the thefts of Mercury, his pranks usually benefited mankind.

It is a little curious that around the different homes of Maui, there is so little record of temples and priests and altars. He lived too far back for priestly customs. His story is the rude, mythical survival of the days when of church and civil government there was none and worship of the gods was practically unknown, but every man was a law unto himself, and also to the other man, and quick retaliation followed any injury received. PT
Word on the Streets

Malay Masters

The streets of Parleremo are named after famous writers for the language of each quarter. This is where we take a quick look at why they are famous.
Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir was a Malayan writer of Indian origin. The term Munshi means “teacher” or “educator”, which is how his fans and followers thought of him. He had a very strict Muslim upbringing, and he was a language teacher and interpreter who was proficient in Arabic, English, Hindustani, Tamil and Malay. His works and contributions to literature earned him the title “The Father of Modern Malay Literature”.

Abdullah was born in Malacca in 1797. When he was six, he had a severe attack of dysentery and was sick most of the time. While his mother took great care of him, he was also taken care of by various individuals, as the custom of the Malay community of that period believed that any child with poor immunity to diseases should be cared for by those not his or her biological parents.

Young Abdullah was unable to read the Qur’an. While other children chanted their verses from it, he would trace out the written Arabic characters with his pen. His strict father became furious at his son’s inabilities and sent him to the Kampong Pali Koran School when he was only seven years old. His father made sure Abdullah did not neglect his Qur’an studies and made him practice writing very often, severely punishing him for any mistakes, until he did the lessons perfectly. Part of his studies included writing the complete Qur’an, and translating Arabic text into Malay.

When he was eleven, Abdullah began earning money by writing Qur’anic texts, and when he was 13, he was teaching religion to Muslim soldiers who were stationed at Malaccan Fort. It was there that he first was given the title “Munshi” by the soldiers he taught. He continued with his Malay studies while also learning Hindustani, then went on to study in Malacca and followed his father’s path as a translator and teacher.

In 1810, Sir Stamford Raffles, a British statesman, arrived in Malacca on the orders of Lord Minto, Governor-General of India. He hired Abdullah, who was just 15, as an interpreter to communicate with the native rulers in their language. Abdullah kept a diary of his time working with Raffles, which eventually became part of Hikayat Abdullah (Abdullah’s Story), and is the only eye-witness record of preparations for the British military expedition against the Dutch and French in Java, Indonesia in 1811, although he did not take part in the expedition himself because his mother refused to let him go. Hikayat Abdullah is considered to be an autobiography of Abdullah and was his major literary work, being completed in 1845 and first published in 1849. It was one of the first Malay literary works to be published commercially.

Abdullah was the first Malay author to write in the colloquial language and not the traditional Malay literary style, which were often fantasies and legends. His writing was filled with realism and modern, using many Malay idioms and proverbs. For this reason, he is regarded by many to be the first Malayan journalist. His works were an inspiration to future generations of writers and was an early stage of the transition from the classical, flowery prose of Malay literature to its more modern form.

Abdullah’s other works include Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan (The Tale of Abdullah’s Voyage to Kelantan), which describes his experiences on a trip from Singapore to Kelantan in 1837, and Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah (The Tale of Abdullah’s Voyage to Mecca), which was published posthumously, since Abdullah died in Jeddah in 1854 at the age of 58, before reaching Mecca.

Bibliography
• 1838 Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan (The Tale of Abdullah's Voyage to Kelantan)
• 1849 Hikayat Abdullah (Abdullah's Story)
• 1858 Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Mekah (The Tale of Abdullah's Voyage to Mecca)
Dato' Haji Shahnon bin Ahmad was born in Sik, Kedah, in 1933. He is a Malaysian author, former Member of Parliament, and a National Laureate. He has written novels, satires and short stories in Malay. He won the title of Pejuang Sastera (Champion of Literature) in 1976, then the Anugerah Sastera Negara (National Laureate Award) in 1982. He even has the honorary title of Dato, which is roughly equivalent to a British knighthood.

Shahnon was born in the village of Banggul Derdap, which is located in Sik in the Malaysian state of Kedah, in 1933. He went to an English secondary school in Alor Setar until 1953, then taught English in Kedah and Trengaanu. He spent a year serving as an army officer, then taught Malay literature and language from 1960 to 1963 in Kedah. He went to Australia in 1968 to study and work in Canberra at the Australian National University there, then graduated with a degree in Asian Studies in 1971.

After returning to Malaysia in 1972, Shahnon was given a position on the staff of Universiti Sains Malaysia (University of Science, Malaysia) in Penang, where he started studying modern Malay poetry. He went on to get his Master of Arts degree from there 1975, then stayed on to teach literature and serve as the dean of the School of Humanities.

Shahnon wrote several novels from 1965 to 1978, most of them dealing with the social changes occurring in his country. Rentong (Rope of Ash), published in 1965, was about a village headman named Pak Senik who tried to make the villagers plant two crops of rice a year. Shahnon liked to play with the titles of his books. For example, his political novels Menteri (1967) and Perdana (1969), when combined to form Perdana Menteri, or “Prime Minister”.

During the 1970s, Shahnon joined the Islamic fundamentalist movement called Darul Arqam, which practiced a very strict adherence to an Islamic code. He began calling for Malay writers to develop an authentic Islamic literature in Malay. However, by the late 1980s, he had given it up, expressing his disappointment with religious leaders who exploit their followers, as he believed was happening with Darul Arqam. He wrote some satirical novels covering this, including Tok Guru (His Teacher).

From 1985 to 1996, Shahnon was the head of the Islamic Center of Malaysian Science University. During this time, he wrote a few books, but his most notable one was Shit @ Puki Mak @ PM, published in 1999. It was a controversial political satire, making allegorical references to the ruling coalition government and others, comparing them to feces in the large intestine of a person. There were some attempts by the government to ban this book and to strip Shahnon of his literary title and awards. He did finally resign from his teaching position at the university.

Shahnon’s novel Ranjau Sepanjang Jalan (No Harvest but a Thorn, 1996), brought him international attention, and it has been translated into many other languages, including English, French, Russian, Dutch and Japanese. It has also been adapted into a film called Rice People. It depicted the hardships of a struggling farming family and their belief in the supernatural. Srengenge (The Sun, 1973) won him the Hadiah Sastera (Prize for Literary Fighters) in Malaysia with its strong religious theme.

**Partial Bibliography**
- 1964 Anjing-anjing (The Dogs)
- 1965 Debumerah (Red Dust)
- 1965 Terdedah (Exposed)
- 1965 Rentong (Rope of Ash)
- 1966 Ranjau Sepanjang Jalan (No Harvest but a Thorn)
- 1967 Protes (Protest)
- 1967 Menteri (Minister)
- 1969 Perdana (Prime)
- 1973 Srengenge (The Sun)
- 1974 Sampah (Garbage)
- 1977 Kemelut (Crisis)
- 1977 Selasai sudah
- 1978 Seluang menolak Baung
- 1978 Penglibatan dalam pulsi (Involvement in Poetry)
- 1979 Gubahan (Arrangement)
- 1981 Kesusasteraan dan etika Islam (Literature and Islamic Ethics)
- 1985 Al-syiqaq
Usman Awang was a Malaysian author, poet, and playwright, often labeled as the best poet in the Malay language. Writing since 1955, he produced around 200 poems, most of them being romantic and beautiful.

Usman was born in 1929 to a poor family in the small fishing village of Kuala Sedili in Johor, Malaysia. He had only a primary school education at the Malay School Kuala Sedili and worked on a farm. When World War II started, he was forced into slave labor under Japanese occupancy. When the war was over, he held jobs as an office boy, a proof reader and a policeman before becoming a journalist for Utusan Melayu. He was among the people that went on strike to protest the government’s interference with the newspaper after Malaysia gained independence from Britain. When the government planned to amend the Constitution in 1967, we was also part of those protests, fearing that Malay would lose its position as the national language.

His poetry rose out of his social activism, as a means of awakening people to the dangers of oppression by a government. He wrote under many pen names, including Tongkat Warrant (which he used when he worked as a police officer), Adi Jaya, Amir, Atma Jaya and Rose Murni.

The Reformasi movement in Malaysia was begun supporters of Anwar Ibrahim after he was fired from his position as Deputy Prime Minister in 1998. He was jailed in 1998 on the charges of corruption and sodomy, which he claimed he was innocent of. Usman was a believer in Anwar’s innocence and dedicated two poems to him in his anthology Dari Derita Bangsa (From the People’s Anguish).

Usman won many awards, including the Southeast Asian Writer Award in 1982 and the National Literature Award in 1983. He died in November, 2001, after a number of illnesses, at the age of 72.

Partial Bibliography
• 2006 Tulang-Tulang Berserakan (Scattered Bones)
• 2007 Turunnya Sebuah Bendera (A Revelation of the Flag)
• 2009 Jiwa Hamba (Enslaved Soul)
• 2009 Sahabatku; Puisi-puisi 5 Bahasa (Companions; 5 English poems)
• 2005 Tonil purbawara
• 2006 Perjalananku sejauh ini: sebuah autobiografi (Far Wanderings: An Autobiography)
• 2006 Setitis embun semarak api (Dew Drop Flame)
• 2007 Mahabbah
• 2008 Weltanschauung: Suatu Perjalanan Kreatif (Philosophy of Life: A Creative Journey)

Coming in June
• Get wrapped up in the mystery of the Liber Linteus
• Defend yourself with Pencak Silat
• Learn about some endangered Chibchan languages
• Celebrate the sun during Inti Raymi
This former capital city was founded around 1820 by European traders and settlers, after which it became an important port and trading post. It was the first permanent European settlement in the Pacific islands, and attracted coconut and cotton planters as well as merchants who set up shops, hotels and bars. It had a population mainly of traders, shipwrights, and vagabonds, businessmen and missionaries. The town reached a population of over 800 within fifty years. It was annexed to a new nation state in 1871, and became the first of many things for that state, such as having the first bank, school, post office, private club, town hall and hospital. The first newspaper of this nation state was established here and is still in operation today. The city has the oldest hotel still operating in the South Pacific, dating back to the 1860s. The oldest Masonic lodge in the South Pacific is also here.

When the nation state of it was annexed by the British in 1874, the city became the capital and remained so until 1877, when the administration center was moved. This was done mainly because of concerns that the 600-meter high cliffs around the city gave it no space for growth.

The city was a port for ships and boats crossing the Pacific until the 1950s. Without the traffic, the city faced economic extinction. It was saved when, in 1964, the Pacific Fishing Company (PAFCO) was founded by a Japanese firm which specialized in freezing and shipping canned tuna to markets in Europe and Canada. A cannery was opened on the island in 1976, and it is the largest private employer on the island.

Now, the city has a population of over one thousand, with another three thousand living in the outlying areas. It is the economic center and the largest of 24 settlements on its island. The city’s community centre has a public library, kindergarten, museum, crafts centre and meeting hall. This centre was formerly a store which was built in 1978 by the Morris Hedstrom & Company trading company. Nearby is a royal wharf, which is now used mostly by local boats. The city has been seeking recognition from UNESCO as a World Heritage for decades.

Can you name this city and country?

Last month’s answer: Trabzon, Turkey
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Revisited - Legends of Maui - Maui Snaring the Sun

[Editor’s note: This article is a reprint from “Legends of Ma-Ui, a Demi God of Polynesia and of his Mother Hina” by W. D. Westervelt. It was published in 1910.]

Maui is a demi god. The Maui story probably contains a larger number of unique and ancient myths than that of any other legendary character in the mythology of any nation. The Maui legends form one of the strongest links in the mythological chain of evidence which binds the scattered inhabitants of the Pacific into one nation.

“Maui became restless and fought the sun
With a noose that he laid.
And winter won the sun,
And summer was won by Maui.”
–Queen Liliuokalani’s family chant.

A very unique legend is found among the widely-scattered Polynesians. The story of Maui’s “Snaring the Sun” was told among the Maoris of New Zealand, the Kanakas of the Hervey and Society Islands, and the ancient natives of Hawaii. The Samoans tell the same story without mentioning the name of Maui. They say that the snare was cast by a child of the sun itself.

The Polynesian stories of the origin of the sun are worthy of note before the legend of the change from short to long days is given.

The Tongan Islanders, according to W. W. Gill, tell the story of the origin of the sun and moon. They say that Vatea (Wakea) and their ancestor Tongaiti quarreled concerning a child--each claiming it as his own. In the struggle the child was cut in two. Vatea squeezed and rolled the part he secured into a ball and threw it away, far up into the heavens, where it became the sun. It shone brightly as it rolled along the heavens, and sank down to Avaiki (Hawaii), the nether world. But the ball came back again and once more rolled across the sky. Tongaiti had let half of the child fall on the ground and lie there, until made envious by the beautiful ball Vatea made.

At last he took the flesh which lay on the ground and made it into a ball. As the sun sank he threw his ball up into the darkness, and it rolled along the heavens, but the blood had drained out of the flesh while it lay upon the ground, therefore it could not become so red and burning as the sun, and had not life to move so swiftly. It was as white as a dead body, because its blood was all gone; and it could not make the darkness flee away as the sun had done. Thus day and night and the sun and moon always remain with the earth.

The legends of the Society Islands say that a demon in the west became angry with the sun and in his rage ate it up, causing night. In the same way a demon from the east would devour the moon, but for some reason these angry ones could not destroy their captives and were compelled to open their mouths and let the bright balls come forth once more. In some places a sacrifice of some one of distinction was needed to placate the wrath of the devourers and free the balls of light in times of eclipse.

The moon, pale and dead in appearance, moved slowly; while the sun, full of life and strength, moved quickly. Thus days were very short and nights were very long. Mankind suffered from the fierceness of the heat of the sun and also from its prolonged absence. Day and night were alike a burden to men. The darkness was so great and lasted so long that fruits would not ripen.

After Maui had succeeded in throwing the heavens into their place, and fastening them so that they could not fall, he learned that he had opened a way for the sun-god to come up from the lower world and rapidly run across the blue vault. This
made two troubles for men—the heat of the sun was very great and the journey too quickly over. Maui planned to capture the sun and punish him for thinking so little about the welfare of mankind.

As Rev. A. O. Forbes, a missionary among the Hawaiians, relates, Maui’s mother was troubled very much by the heedless haste of the sun. She had many kapa-cloths to make, for this was the only kind of clothing known in Hawaii, except sometimes a woven mat or a long grass fringe worn as a skirt. This native cloth was made by pounding the fine bark of certain trees with wooden mallets until the fibres were beaten and ground into a wood pulp. Then she pounded the pulp into thin sheets from which the best sleeping mats and clothes could be fashioned. These kapa cloths had to be thoroughly dried, but the days were so short that by the time she had spread out the kapa the sun had heedlessly rushed across the sky and gone down into the under-world, and all the cloth had to be gathered up again and cared for until another day should come. There were other troubles. “The food could not be prepared and cooked in one day. Even an incantation to the gods could not be chanted through ere they were overtaken by darkness.”

This was very discouraging and caused great suffering, as well as much unnecessary trouble and labor. Many complaints were made against the thoughtless sun.

Maui pitied his mother and determined to make the sun go slower that the days might be long enough to satisfy the needs of men. Therefore, he went over to the northwest of the island on which he lived. This was Mt. Iao, an extinct volcano, in which lies one of the most beautiful and picturesque valleys of the Hawaiian Islands. He climbed the ridges until he could see the course of the sun as it passed over the island. He saw that the sun came up the eastern side of Mt. Haleakala. He crossed over the plain between the two mountains and climbed to the top of Mt. Haleakala. There he watched the burning sun as it came up from Koolau and passed directly over the top of the mountain. The summit of Haleakala is a great extinct crater twenty miles in circumference, and nearly twenty-five hundred feet in depth. There are two tremendous gaps or chasms in the side of the crater wall, through which in days gone by the massive bowl poured forth its flowing lava. One of these was the Koolau, or eastern gap, in which Maui probably planned to catch the sun.

Mt. Hale-a-ka-la of the Hawaiian Islands means House-of-the-sun. “La,” or “Ra,” is the name of the sun throughout parts of Polynesia. Ra was the sun-god of ancient Egypt. Thus the antiquities of Polynesia and Egypt touch each other, and today no man knows the full reason thereof.

The Hawaiian legend says Maui was taunted by a man who ridiculed the idea that he could snare the sun, saying, “You will never catch the sun. You are only an idle nobody.”

Maui replied, “When I conquer my enemy and my desire is attained, I will be your death.”

After studying the path of the sun, Maui returned to his mother and told her that he would go and cut off the legs of the sun so that he could not run so fast.

His mother said: “Are you strong enough for this work?” He said, “Yes.” Then she gave him fifteen strands of well-twisted fiber and told him to go to his grandmother, who lived in the great crater of Haleakala, for the rest of the things in his conflict with the sun. She said: “You must climb the mountain to the place where a large wiliwili tree is standing. There you will find the place where the sun stops to eat cooked bananas prepared by your grandmother. Stay there until a rooster crows three times; then watch your grandmother go out to make a fire and put on food. You had better take her bananas. She will look for them and find you and ask who you are. Tell her you belong to Hina.”

When she had taught him all these things, he went up the mountain to Kaupo to the place Hina had directed. There was a large wiliwili tree. Here he waited for the rooster to crow. The name of that rooster was Kalauhele-moa. When the rooster had crowed three times, the grandmother came out with a bunch of bananas to cook for the sun. She took off the upper
part of the bunch and laid it down. Maui immediately snatched it away. In a moment she turned to pick it up, but could not find it. She was angry and cried out: “Where are the bananas of the sun?” Then she took off another part of the bunch, and Maui stole that. Thus he did until all the bunch had been taken away. She was almost blind and could not detect him by sight, so she sniffed all around her until she detected the smell of a man. She asked: “Who are you? To whom do you belong?” Maui replied: “I belong to Hina.” “Why have you come?” Maui told her, “I have come to kill the sun. He goes so fast that he never dries the tapa Hina has beaten out.”

The old woman gave a magic stone for a battle axe and one more rope. She taught him how to catch the sun, saying: “Make a place to hide here by this large wiliwili tree. When the first leg of the sun comes up, catch it with your first rope, and so on until you have used all your ropes. Fasten them to the tree, then take the stone axe to strike the body of the sun.”

Maui dug a hole among the roots of the tree and concealed himself. Soon the first ray of light—the first leg of the sun—came up along the mountain side. Maui threw his rope and caught it. One by one the legs of the sun came over the edge of the crater’s rim and were caught. Only one long leg was still hanging down the side of the mountain. It was hard for the sun to move that leg. It shook and trembled and tried hard to come up. At last it crept over the edge and was caught by Maui with the rope given by his grandmother.

When the sun saw that his sixteen long legs were held fast in the ropes, he began to go back down the mountain side into the sea. Then Maui tied the ropes fast to the tree and pulled until the body of the sun came up again. Brave Maui caught his magic stone club or axe, and began to strike and wound the sun, until he cried: “Give me my life.” Maui said: “If you live, you may be a traitor. Perhaps I had better kill you.” But the sun begged for life. After they had conversed a while, they agreed that there should be a regular motion in the journey of the sun. There should be longer days, and yet half the time he might go quickly as in the winter time, but the other half he must move slowly as in summer. Thus men dwelling on the earth should be blessed.

Another legend says that he made a lasso and climbed to the summit of Mt. Haleakala. He made ready his lasso, so that when the sun came up the mountain side and rose above him he could cast the noose and catch the sun, but he only snared one of the sun’s larger rays and broke it off. Again and again he threw the lasso until he had broken off all the strong rays of the sun.

Then he shouted exultantly, “Thou art my captive; I will kill thee for going so swiftly.”

Then the sun said, “Let me live and thou shalt see me go more slowly hereafter. Behold, hast thou not broken off all my strong legs and left me only the weak ones?”

So the agreement was made, and Maui permitted the sun to pursue his course, and from that day he went more slowly. Maui returned from his conflict with the sun and sought for Moemoe, the man who had ridiculed him. Maui chased this man around the island from one side to the other until they had passed through Lahaina (one of the first mission stations in 1828). There on the seashore near the large black rock of the legend of Maui lifting the sky he found Moemoe. Then they left the seashore and the contest raged up hill and down until Maui slew the man and “changed the body into a long rock, which is there to this day, by the side of the road going past Black Rock.”

Before the battle with the sun occurred Maui went down into the underworld, according to the New Zealand tradition, and remained a long time with his relatives. In some way he learned that there was an enchanted jawbone in the possession of some one of his ancestors, so he waited and waited, hoping that at last he might discover it.

After a time he noticed that presents of food were being sent away to some person whom he had not met.
One day he asked the messengers, “Who is it you are taking that present of food to?”

The people answered, “It is for Muri, your ancestress.”

Then he asked for the food, saying, “I will carry it to her myself.”

But he took the food away and hid it. “And this he did for many days,” and the presents failed to reach the old woman.

By and by she suspected mischief, for it did not seem as if her friends would neglect her so long a time, so she thought she would catch the tricky one and eat him. She depended upon her sense of smell to detect the one who had troubled her. As Sir George Grey tells the story: “When Maui came along the path carrying the present of food, the old chiefess sniffed and sniffed until she was sure that she smelt some one coming. She was very much exasperated, and her stomach began to distend itself that she might be ready to devour this one when he came near.

Then she turned toward the south and sniffed and not a scent of anything reached her. Then she turned to the north, and to the east, but could not detect the odor of a human being. She made one more trial and turned toward the west. Ah! then came the scent of a man to her plainly and she called out, ‘I know, from the smell wafted to me by the breeze, that somebody is close to me.’

Maui made known his presence and the old woman knew that he was a descendant of hers, and her stomach began immediately to shrink and contract itself again.

Then she asked, “Art thou Maui?”

He answered, “Even so,” and told her that he wanted “the jaw-bone by which great enchantments could be wrought.”

Then Muri, the old chiefess, gave him the magic bone and he returned to his brothers, who were still living on the earth.

Then Maui said: “Let us now catch the sun in a noose that we may compel him to move more slowly in order that mankind may have long days to labor in and procure subsistence for themselves.”

They replied, “No man can approach it on account of the fierceness of the heat.”

According to the Society Island legend, his mother advised him to have nothing to do with the sun, who was a divine living creature, “in form like a man, possessed of fearful energy,” shaking his golden locks both morning and evening in the eyes of men. Many persons had tried to regulate the movements of the sun, but had failed completely.

But Maui encouraged his mother and his brothers by asking them to remember his power to protect himself by the use of enchantments.

The Hawaiian legend says that Maui himself gathered coconut fibre in great quantity and manufactured it into strong ropes. But the legends of other islands say that he had the aid of his brothers, and while working learned many useful lessons. While winding and twisting they discovered how to make square ropes and flat ropes as well as the ordinary round rope. In the Society Islands, it is said, Maui and his brothers made six strong ropes of great length. These he called aeiariki (royal nooses).

The New Zealand legend says that when Maui and his brothers had finished making all the ropes required they took provisions and other things needed and journeyed toward the east to find the place where the sun should rise. Maui carried with him the magic jaw-bone which he had secured from Muri, his ancestress, in the under-world.

They traveled all night and concealed themselves by day so that the sun should not see them and become too suspicious and watchful. In this way they journeyed, until “at length they had gone very far to the eastward and had come to the very edge of the place out of which the sun rises. There they set to work and built on each side a long, high wall of clay, with huts of boughs of trees at each end to hide themselves in.”

Here they laid a large noose made from their ropes and Maui concealed himself on one side of this place along which the sun must come, while his brothers hid on the other side.

Maui seized his magic enchanted jaw-bone as the weapon with which to fight the sun, and ordered his brothers to pull hard on the noose and not to be...
frightened or moved to set the sun free.

“Now the sun was rising up out of his place like a fire spreading far and wide over the mountains and forests.

He rises up.

His head passes through the noose.

The ropes are pulled tight.

Then the monster began to struggle and roll himself about, while the snare strapped back-wards and forwards as he struggled. Ah! was not he held fast in the ropes of his enemies.

Then forth rushed that bold hero Maui with his enchanted weapon. The sun screamed aloud and roared. Maui struck him fiercely with many blows. They held him for a long time. At last they let him go, and then weak from wounds the sun crept very slowly and feebly along his course.”

In this way the days were made longer so that men could perform their daily tasks and fruits and food plants could have time to grow.

The legend of the Hervé group of islands says that Maui made six snares and placed them at intervals along the path over which the sun must pass. The sun in the form of a man climbed up from Avaiki (Hawaiki). Maui pulled the first noose, but it slipped down the rising sun until it caught and was pulled tight around his feet.

Maui ran quickly to pull the ropes of the second snare, but that also slipped down, down, until it was tightened around the knees. Then Maui hastened to the third snare, while the sun was trying to rush along on his journey. The third snare caught around the hips. The fourth snare fastened itself around the sun. The fifth slipped under the arms, and yet the sun sped along as if but little inconvenienced by Maui’s efforts.

Then Maui caught the last noose and threw it around the neck of the sun, and fastened the rope to a spur of rock. The sun struggled until nearly strangled to death and then gave up, promising Maui that he would go as slowly as was desired. Maui left the snares fastened to the sun to keep him in constant fear.”

“These ropes may still be seen hanging from the sun at dawn and stretching into the skies when he descends into the ocean at night. By the assistance of these ropes he is gently let down into Avaiki in the evening, and also raised up out of shadow-land in the morning.”

Another legend from the Society Islands is related by Mr. Gill:

Maui tried many snares before he could catch the sun. The sun was the Hercules, or the Samson, of the heavens. He broke the strong cords of coconut fibre which Maui made and placed around the opening by which the sun climbed out from the under-world. Maui made stronger ropes, but still the sun broke them every one.

Then Maui thought of his sister’s hair, the sister Inaika, whom he cruelly treated in later years. Her hair was long and beautiful. He cut off some of it and made a strong rope. With this he lassoed or rather snared the sun, and caught him around the throat. The sun quickly promised to be more thoughtful of the needs of men and go at a more reasonable pace across the sky.

A story from the American Indians is told in Hawaii’s Young People, which is very similar to the Polynesian legends.

An Indian boy became very angry with the sun for getting so warm and making his clothes shrink with the heat. He told his sister to make a snare. The girl took sinews from a large deer, but they shriveled under the heat. She took her own long hair and made snares, but they were burned in a moment. Then she tried the fibres of various plants and was successful. Her brother took the fibre cord and drew it through his lips. It stretched and became a strong red cord. He pulled and it became very long. He went to the place of sunrise, fixed his snare, and caught the sun. When the sun had been sufficiently punished, the animals of the earth studied the problem of setting the sun free. At last a mouse as large as a mountain ran and gnawed the red cord. It broke and the sun moved on, but the poor mouse had been burned and shriveled into the small mouse of the present day.

A Samoan legend says that a woman living for a time with the sun bore a child who had the name “Child of the Sun.” She wanted gifts for the child’s marriage, so she took a long vine, climbed a tree, made the vine into a noose, lassoed the sun, and made him give her a basket of blessings.

In Fiji, the natives tie the grasses growing on a hilltop over which they are passing, when traveling from place to place. They do this to make a snare to catch the sun if he should try to go down before they reach the end of their day’s journey.

This legend is a misty memory of some time when the Polynesian people were in contact with the short days of the extreme north or south. It is a very remarkable exposition of a fact of nature perpetuated many centuries in lands absolutely free from such natural phenomena. PT
The Parleremo 2013 Calendar is now available online! This beautiful calendar is full of images from countries around the world along with descriptions of their languages.

The countries include Malta, Finland, India, Latvia, Lao and the languages include Amharic, Xhosa, Kannada, Pashto and Panjabi.

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Letter From the Editor
Writer: Erik Zidowecki
Images:
Petey: Traditional dancer in Ubud

Rongorongo - Island Chants
Writer: Lucille Martin
Images:
Rivi: Outer slope of the Rano Raraku volcano (title)
christopherhu: closeup Rongorongo tablet
Robert Nyman: Easter Island beach
David Berkowitz: Anakena beach and moai
Carlos Reusser Monsalvez: Rongorongo tablet shaped like fish
Petey: Barthel’s tracing of rongorongo tablet G; Mid section of the Santiago Staff; Side of rongorongo Tablet F; Barthel’s tracing of rongorongo Tablet F; Barthel’s tracing of rongorongo text I
Sources:
• "Thomas Barthel" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Barthel>
• "Easter Island and Its Mysteries" CHAUVET <http://www.chauvet-translation.com/talking.htm>
• "Rongorongo" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rongorongo>
• "Rongorongo script" Omniglot <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/rongorongo.htm>
• "Rongorongo" novatravels 350 <http://www.novatravels.350.com/chile/EasterIsland/Rongorongo.htm>

Otto Dempwolff - Islands of Language
Writer: Sofia Ozols
Images:
Taro Taylor: Sun, Sea, Sand And Volcano (title)
Irmgard Dutte: Otto_Dempwolff
Merlin Senger: Main building of the University of Hamburg
Petey: Carl Meinohf
Sources:
• "85 Years of Southeast Asian Studies in Hamburg" IIAS Online <http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/16/regions/sea3.html>
• "Otto Dempwolff (1871-1938), Sprachwissenschaftler" www.dempwolff.de <http://www.dempwolff.de/>

At The Cinema - Whale Rider
Writer: Erik Zidowecki
Sources:
• "Whale Rider" IMDB (Internet Movie Database) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0298228/>
• "Whale Rider" From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whale_Rider>
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Celebrations - Pasifika Festival
Writer: Sonja Krüger
Images:
Avenue: Young woman dances on the Tuvalu stage
Yortw: Hanging Merchandise; Kiribati Banner; Maori Carvings; Some dancers waiting to perform; Stall Staff; Food Stall; Art for Sale; Young Dancers; Tapa Cloths for Sale
kylepost photography: [eternal vision] Some of the dancers during the festival; [dancing women] Women dancing in traditional costume
Sources:
• "History of Pasifika" Pasifika Festival <http://www.aucklandnz.com/pasifika/history-of-pasifika>
• "Pasifika Festival" happywink.org <http://www.happywink.org/pasifika-festival.html>
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• "Pasifika Festival" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasifika_Festival>

Special Feature - Avoiuli
Writer: Erik Zidowecki
Images:
Phillip Capper: Port Vila (title)
Andrew Gray: Nakamal in Vanwoki village
PhillipC: Image of sand drawing from Vanuatu
Tabisini: Carved stone at Lavatmanggemu
Petey: Map of Vanuatu
Sources:
• "Raga" Omniglot <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/raga.htm>
• "Raga (Hano) language" The Languages of Pentecost Island <http://www.pentecostisland.net/languages/raga/index.htm>
• "Raga language" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raga_language>
Languages in Peril - The Island Invasion
Writer: Lucille Martin
Images:
Mbmerino: Ahu Tahai sunset (title)
Lu offences: Tamure Dancers, Easter Island
Marilyn Sourgose: Kutturan Chamorro Performers
Rivi: Panorama of Anakena, Easter Island
Petey: Chamorro people in 1915; Mofmanu Beach, Rotuma; Council of Chiefs of Rotuma, 1927
Sources:
• "Easter Island" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter_Island>
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• "Rotuma" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotuma>

Revisited - Maui’s Home
Writer: W. D. Westervelt
Images:
James Gay Sawkins: Lahaina, West Maui
Petey: Clouds over Maui (title), Rugged Lava of Wailuku River
Sources:
• "Maui’s Home" Legends of Maui—a demi god of Polynesia, and of his mother Hina W. D. Westervelt, Honolulu: The Hawaiian Gazette Co., Ltd. 1910

Word on the Streets - Malay Masters
Writer: Sofia Ozols
Images:
Petey: Pangkor Beach
Sources:
• "Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_bin_Abdul_Kadir>
• "Shahnon Ahmad" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahnon_Ahmad>
• "Usman Awang" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usman_Awang>

Where Are You?
Writer: Sonja Krüger
Images:
Merbabu: Mystery picture

Revisited - Maui Snaring the Sun
Writer: W. D. Westervelt
Images:
Petey: Sunset in Tahiti (title); Iao Mountain From the Sea; Maui snaring the sun; Hale-a-ka-la Crater. Where the Sun Was Caught
Sources:
• "Maui Snaring the Sun" Legends of Ma-ui—a demi god of Polynesia, and of his mother Hina W. D. Westervelt, Honolulu: The Hawaiian Gazette Co., Ltd. 1910

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