

UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

TRADITIONAL MONEY BANKS IN VANUATU

Project Survey Report

By Kirk Huffman



Traditional Money Banks in Vanuatu

Project Survey Report

OR “A status report on the production and use of traditional wealth items in northern Vanuatu”

OR “The argument for revitalising Vanuatu’s traditional economy”

Written by Kirk Huffman



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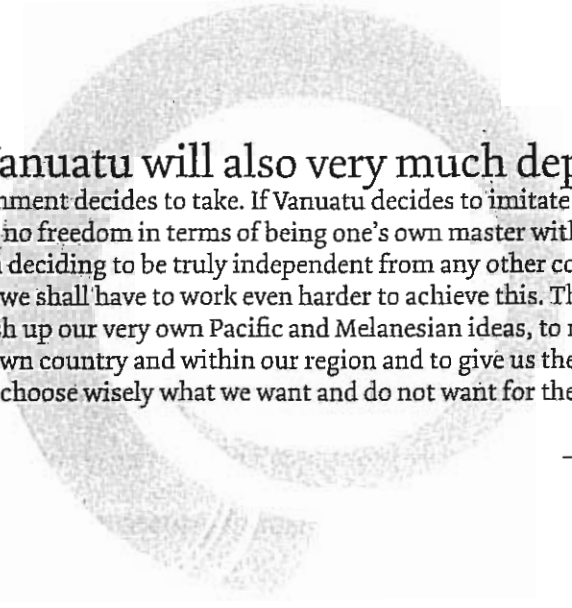
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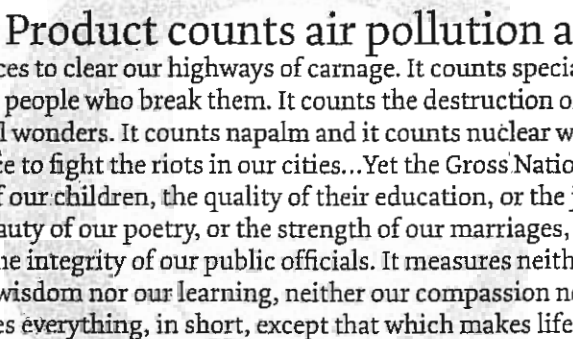
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“ The future of Vanuatu will also very much depend on what approach the Government decides to take. If Vanuatu decides to imitate other countries of the world, there can be no freedom in terms of being one’s own master with one’s own individual identity. But in deciding to be truly independent from any other country, whether within the region or afar, we shall have to work even harder to achieve this. The main effort will then be to really polish up our very own Pacific and Melanesian ideas, to make them the basis of unity in our own country and within our region and to give us the necessary strength and direction to choose wisely what we want and do not want for the future.”

—Walter Hayde Lini, 1980¹



“ Gross National Product counts air pollution and cigarette advertising and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks on our doors and the jails for the people who break them. It counts the destruction of the redwoods and the loss of our natural wonders. It counts napalm and it counts nuclear warheads and armored cars for the police to fight the riots in our cities...Yet the Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry, or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debates or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.”

—Robert Kennedy on GNP, in his opening speech on the first day of his campaign for the US Presidency in 1968²

¹ in *Vanuatu: Twenti wan tingting long team blong independents*, Insitute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, p.291.

² Quoted in Caulfield, C., *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations*, New York, 1996.

DEDICATION

The author would like to dedicate this report to the spirit and memory of Tannie Fraser, Women's Cultural Centre Fieldworker for Uripiv Island, northeast Malakula, who passed away during the time of this project study and to that of Chief Kubu Kevin of Hog Harbour, Santo, Cultural Centre Fieldworker, who passed away on 16th December 2004. ○

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FOREWORD ONE

From the Malvatumauro

THE DISCOVERY OF THIS GROUP OF ISLANDS KNOWN today as Vanuatu by the European explorers in the eighteenth century set into motion a dramatic process of change that was fuelled by the attraction of an easy life made possible through the introduced economic system. This modern economic system lured the inhabitants into its sphere of activity where its paper and metal currency is the accepted medium of exchange.

In 1980 when the country gained its political independence, the new government declared that economic self-reliance was to be achieved within ten years. Immediately national programs were drawn up engaging the whole government machinery to bring this about. By 1990 this had not yet materialised and today the nation is hardly closer to achieving it. The question uppermost in our minds today is “Why?”

There are numerous reasons, but one of the underlying factors is that in pursuing this goal the government had failed to take on board, also, the traditional component of economic life as understood and practiced by the people living in the islands. Drawing up of programs of economic development, largely devoid of traditional elements, resulted in the chief and his people being offered minimal participation in the economic life of the nation.

After twenty four years of independence, economic prosperity and self-sufficiency, as postulated by the original leaders, is still beyond our grasp. It is now time to seriously consider the potential that elements of our traditional economic systems possess and how these could be assimilated into our economic programs and utilised, not only for economic growth, but also to bring about a balanced life that is cherished by everyone.

Pigs, mats, shell money, kava and other items may not be valued or acknowledged outside of Vanuatu but they are highly valued internally. They provide security, establish

harmonious relationships, appease hostilities, facilitate reconciliations and are key components in numerous ceremonies and rituals which attract a host of visitors to the country every year.

They provide the base for rural economic activities that calls for national consideration and policy attention. To ignore this would be to bypass an opportunity which, if heeded, would bring about a life of self-sufficiency to the majority of the population. ○

VIRA TUBE SELWYN GARU
MALVATUMAURI NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHIEFS
FEBRUARY 2005

FOREWORD TWO

From the Vanuatu Credit Union League

IT IS INDEED AN HONOR FOR ME ON BEHALF OF THE Vanuatu Credit Union League, as a collaborating agency with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre in coordinating and implementing this project “Traditional Money Banks in Vanuatu”, to share the preface to this important survey on the status of traditional wealth items in Vanuatu.

The publication covers the findings of the survey team headed by our good friend, Honorary Curator of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Research Associate of the Australian Museum and Honorary Associate of the Macleay Museum of the University of Sydney, Kirk Huffman (an anthropologist with more than 18 years of personal experience of Vanuatu cultures). Other team members are my colleagues Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Selwyn Garu, the Secretary to the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs and Reggie Kaimbang, the manager of the project.

The report documents the findings of the survey carried out on tusker pigs in south west Malakula, red mats and pigs on North Pentecost and shell money in the Banks Islands and the circulation of these items in the traditional societies of the central to northern parts of Vanuatu. It has also identified core issues and opportunities, forming the basis for possible new strategies for reviving and sustaining the use of these items and their associated cultural values into the future.

Locally, the cultural safety net for the future survival of our communities is at risk. Our lands are continually being sold or leased out for capitalistic investment interests, threatening our food security and our dependence on the environment and nature. The continuous threat to and destruction of the harmonized web of associations of our people with nature and their cultural environment is mounting.

We are also continually faced with the challenge of creating opportunities for income generation through micro

enterprises, especially in the rural areas where the majority of our people live. Can the use of micro finance assist with the overall aims of poverty alleviation and nation building?

The Vanuatu Credit Union League (VCUL) is proud to be a collaborator in this project for the reviving, safeguarding and preservation of the cultural heritage of Vanuatu while at the same time seeking opportunities for income generation. The VCUL supports any local and national initiatives encouraging the revitalisation of traditional economies and moving forward with appropriate adaptations into the modern cash economy.

These challenges create new opportunities for us to be able to rethink our existence and stimulate our hopes for a better tomorrow for our children. Our living societies are the evidence that solutions were found as well as lived for many generations past until today.

Where could culture, commerce and micro finance be best harmonized into a model for long lasting balanced benefits for the people of Vanuatu? The VCUL believes that where there is a will, there is a way. We can optimistically say, with the lessons of yesterday, that we can do better tomorrow.

May I ask you, the reader, to rekindle a passion for our unique cultural values and be a part of the effort for safeguarding, preserving and promoting these values and practices of our living cultures and traditions, as you take the time to read the invaluable insights of this publication. ☺

NOE SAKSAK ATUTUR
MANAGING DIRECTOR
VANUATU CREDIT UNION LEAGUE

FOREWORD THREE

From the Vanuatu Cultural Centre

THIS PUBLICATION IS AIMED PRINCIPALLY AT ni-Vanuatu leaders and policy makers in national and provincial government, the private sector and non-government organizations. It is an advocacy document aimed at raising awareness, provoking thinking and discussion and challenging our nation's leaders to re-think the basis of sustainable development in this country.

The organizations that have sponsored this report, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, the Vanuatu Credit Union League and the Malvatumauri, have all been increasingly disturbed and discouraged by relentless policies, led primarily by the national government (encouraged and/or coerced by its bilateral and multilateral partners and supported also by many NGOs) to promote the capitalist cash-based economy (and its associated culture and values) at the direct expense of our existing, still-predominant traditional economy (and its associated culture and values). Not only is this foolish, considering that most countries in the world have already been down this path and we can all see the real poverty it can bring, but it is also an extremely inefficient strategy for national development (even from a neo-liberal economic viewpoint).

Consider the following questions:

- Where does the main economic (material) sustenance of the vast majority of ni-Vanuatu come from?
- What system of production meets the daily needs of this vast majority?
- In what sector (traditional or “Western”) do the ni-Vanuatu majority have the requisite skills?
- In what sector can the ni-Vanuatu majority fully realize their “natural” potential, a potential that arises from the values and psyche inherent in their culture handed down by their ancestors?

In short, where does the comparative advantage of ni-Vanuatu and this nation lie?

The answer is that it is not in the cash-based economy, where the majority of ni-Vanuatu will continue to need “technical advice”, classroom-based education and ongoing “training” and still rarely be able to compete on an equal footing with almost any other nationality domestically let alone abroad. Rather, ni-Vanuatu are only “naturally” expert in fields relating to the customary use of resources to meet life's needs and the allocation of these resources in a manner that enhances social harmony and the well being of all members of society (and not just *some* members, as is the case with the capitalist economic model). It would seem obvious, therefore, and “efficient” in terms of allocating and using resources and capacities already at hand as a basis for development, to focus on strengthening the traditional economy so that it can continue to satisfy most needs of the majority while also finding ways to develop its application to satisfying other non-traditional basic needs (in particular, access to health and education services).

It should also be obvious that, after 25 years of political independence, economically Vanuatu is more dependent and less self reliant than ever. The ‘Western’ consumerist ethic has been instilled in us from the first years of our education, where we learnt the skills necessary to get paid cash for doing a job but nothing about the traditional life skills which made our ancestors self reliant. Our valuing of goods that only money can buy – which necessarily are imported – continues to be fostered by the pro-monetarisation policies of the Government, which seem to offer lip service to customary and community values while steadily eroding them in practice. Now, in this Silver Jubilee year of national independence, Vanuatu has a choice to make: will we remember and return to the vision for this nation proclaimed by founders of our independence, expressed so eloquently by the late Father Walter Hadye Lini in the opening pages of this book? Or will we continue down the

road of “development” traveled by so many other countries before us, towards a future of mortgages, perimeter fences and processed food? I hope that this book can provide us with information that can help us to make the right choice.

In conclusion I would like to thank UNESCO (the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) and the Japanese Government’s “Japanese Funds-In-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” for providing the financial support for this project, including the writing of this report. Thank you especially to Kirk Huffman, Honorary Curator of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, for doing what no one else could have done so well: writing such a knowledgeable report on our traditional economy as it was and is now, situating this economy in a global and world history context and presenting the argument for its revitalization so passionately. *Tankyu tumas long yufala evriwan.* ○

RALPH REGENVANU
DIRECTOR, VANUATU NATIONAL CULTURAL COUNCIL/
VANUATU CULTURAL CENTRE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY REPORT

October 2004¹

THIS SURVEY REPORT HAS BEEN PRODUCED AS PART OF the “Traditional Money Banks in Vanuatu” project sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Japanese Funds-In-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The report fulfils the requirement of part one (“Survey and identify the communities where demand for traditional banks are likely to have most beneficial effect”) of phase one of the project (“Preliminary survey and strategy development”) and meets two of the stated objectives of the project: objective 1 (“Survey the production processes and banking mechanisms for tusked pigs in Vanuatu”) and objective 4 (“Raise awareness of the significance of traditional monies and the need to preserve and continue to transmit the intangible knowledge relating to skills and techniques for the production of these monies”).

The survey was undertaken in the months of August and September 2004 in the following islands:

- *North Pentecost*: Arongbwaratu, Atabulu, Atanbwalo, Lavatu, Lolong and Nazareth villages;
- *Southern Malakula*: Labo, Lawa, Lo’ormbap, Lorlow, Lowoivenevet and Wintua villages in the Southwest Bay area;
- *Malo*: Avunatare village;
- *Banks Islands*: Ngerennigman, Totoglag and Wovet villages on Motalava island, Nitvono village on Rah island and Sola on Vanua Lava island;
- *Maewo*: Asanvari, Betarara, Kerepei, Nasawa and Rongonawo villages;
- *Efate*: Port Vila town.

The survey was undertaken by Kirk Huffman (Southern Malakula, North Pentecost, Maewo and Port Vila), Reggie Kaimbang (North Pentecost, Malo, the Banks Islands and Port Vila) and Selwyn Garu (North Pentecost, Maewo and Port Vila).

The communities identified for future activities in the subsequent phases of the project are:

- *North Pentecost*: All villages, but with initial focus on those in Ahivo district (under the Herenhala Chiefs Council), Hurilau district (under the Vatutogo Chiefs Council) and Lavatmangemu village in Aligo district (the headquarters of the Turaga movement);
- *Southern Malakula*: Labo, Lawa, Lo’ormbap, Lorlow, Lowoivenevet and Wintua villages in the Southwest Bay area; Yumoran village on Tomman island; and Luwanari Bay village.
- *Malo*: Avunatare vilage and selected interior villages of West Malo;
- *Banks Islands*: Ngerennigman, Totoglag and Wovet villages on Motalava island, Nitvono village on Rah island; Lehali and Lehalarup villages on Ureparapara island; and Sola on Vanua Lava island;
- *Efate*: Port Vila town.

Issues identified

1. Traditional wealth items are still being produced and used in many of the areas identified in this survey. North Pentecost is the area in which the use of traditional

¹ Superseded by Action Plan of the Workshop to Recognise and Promote the Traditional Economy as the Basis for Achieving National Self-reliance, Uripiv Island, March 2005.

wealth items is strongest and where they have been integrated most successfully into the modern economy. There is a strong desire among communities in the Banks Islands and South Malakula that the production and use of their differing traditional wealth items should be revitalized. Malo is the last remaining area where significant numbers of the most highly valued traditional wealth item – intersex (hermaphrodite) pigs – are still being raised, and these pigs are much sought after in other areas (for example, North Pentecost). The project needs to target the revitalization of the production of traditional wealth items in all these areas as each area has a comparative advantage in producing items that other areas need.

2. This project should not target only tusked pigs, but also woven and dyed money mats and shell money and beads. Tusked pigs are the major traditional wealth item in all areas, with mats being of lesser value. Intersex (hermaphrodite) pigs on Malo and North Pentecost deserve particular attention.
3. All traditional wealth items also have extremely important intangible aspects. They link individuals and communities and cultural areas and islands and have an essential spiritual component. The safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage is dependent upon the continuing use of these traditional wealth items. The revitalization of the intangible cultural heritage will require a concurrent revitalization of the production, promotion and use of these items.
4. Economic concepts of loan, credit, investment, interest and compound interest do exist in traditional cultures of this area, as do concepts of banking. However, the depository or “bank” is not a social institution as such but rather individuals and relationships. In the Banks Islands, however, shell money is often “banked” by being hidden in secret caches.
5. Sound management strategies for banking and investment also exist within the cultures. However, there is a need to find a balanced way to integrate the use of traditional wealth items into the modern cash-based economy and this will require enhancement of and some changes to traditional management regimes.
6. A mechanism needs to be identified to facilitate the sale or exchange of traditional wealth items for cash, in order to more sustainably integrate cash into the traditional economy. This aspect will be the key to ensuring the sustainable revitalization of the production and use of traditional wealth items and the revitalization of the associated intangible cultural heritage in these areas.

Recommendations

P I G S

1. The pure-blooded traditional varieties of pigs are becoming endangered by the introduction of imported pigs. These traditional varieties need to be preserved and promoted (ie, especially bred). Activities to achieve this objective should utilise traditional knowledge but also be undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Livestock. All varieties and all areas with significant pure-blooded pig populations should be targeted, including the *Kapia* hairless pigs on Tanna.
2. Special attention needs to be paid to the preservation and promotion of *Naravwe* pigs. A project utilizing both traditional knowledge and scientific expertise (the latter provided by James McIntyre of the Southwest Pacific Research Foundation in Florida, USA) should be undertaken to identify strategies to facilitate the enhanced production/breeding of these special pigs, focusing on the remaining significant populations on Malo and North Pentecost.

M A T S

3. A survey to assess the status of the of red dye plant on the islands of Ambae, Pentecost and Maewo needs to be undertaken urgently, in collaboration with the Environment Unit. Particular emphasis should be given to developing strategies for re-establishing viable stocks of the plant on Ambae.
4. The traditional exchange of white and red mats between North and Central Pentecost needs to be supported. Central Pentecost has a traditional comparative advantage in dyeing red mats, including dyeing mats from and for people of North Pentecost, and this expertise should be supported and ongoing exchange/trade facilitated.
5. The oral lore/knowledge concerning the traditional origins of the red mat dye needs to be urgently recorded from the last remaining speakers of the Sowa language in central Pentecost. This documentation can be undertaken by the men and women Cultural Centre fieldworkers for North and Central Pentecost.
6. The production and use of the woven pandanus mats necessary for many of the womens rituals in southern and north Malakula needs to be revitalized. A documentation and revitalization project should be undertaken with women in both these areas to achieve this.

SHELL MONEY

7. A survey should be done to see if extensive stocks of the *som* shell still exist. If they do, production could be restarted by descendants of the Ro/Rowa people, who now live mainly in the villages of Lehali and Lehalarup on Ureparapara and also by populations on Mota Lava, Rah and other islands in the Banks Group. A revitalization project should be undertaken for this purpose.
8. The production and use of shell beads (*homu*) in North Pentecost needs to be revitalized. A strategy of benefit to both the use of *homu* in North Pentecost and the production of *som* in the Banks Islands would be to revive trade of shell beads from production centres in the Banks Islands to North Pentecost (probably in exchange for pigs).

INFRASTRUCTURAL MEASURES & RESOURCES

9. The Malvatumauri National Councils of Chiefs needs to provide leadership in creating policies to require that (a) ONLY traditional wealth items (and NOT cash) are to be used in meeting social obligations such as marriage and death and also in the payment of fines imposed by customary courts (b) the correct types and amounts of pigs (with the correct tusk curvature) and the correct types and amounts of mats are to be used in grade taking ceremonies and other rituals, and (c) individuals can only gain status in the graded system and receive the corresponding customary titles if the correct types and amounts of traditional wealth items are used to do so. These national policies should then be reinforced by supporting policies created by chief's councils at provincial, island, area and village levels.
10. The Ministry of Education should adopt a policy allowing the payment of school fees (fully or in part) with traditional wealth items. A study should be undertaken to develop a strategy to facilitate the development of this policy.
11. The Ministry of Health should adopt a policy allowing the payment of medical fees (fully or in part) with traditional wealth items. A study should be undertaken to develop a strategy to facilitate the development of this policy.
12. The Vanuatu Credit Union League needs to re-open a branch in North Pentecost and open new branches in Southwest Bay, the Banks Islands and in Avunatare on Malo. These branches will be required to serve as facilities for the exchange of cash for traditional wealth items. The Credit Union League and the Cultural Centre in collaboration with other partners (see Annex 1) need to develop a strategy and facilities to sell traditional wealth items for cash in Port Vila, Luganville, etc.
13. Existing women's marketing cooperatives need to be assisted and also integrated into the strategies cited in point (12) above.
14. Herenhala Chief's Council, Vatutogo Chief's Council, Turaga and the Gaiware Bulvanua Cultural Centre should be the principal partner agencies in the implementation of future project activities in North Pentecost. These activities, however, should target all districts and chief's councils in North Pentecost.
15. Due to the absence of strong chief's councils or other such institutions in southern Malakula, the principal project partners in this region should be the existing Cultural Centre Fieldworkers and others identified by them. These Fieldworkers are:
 - CHIEF ALBEN REUBEN (Ninde-speaker) at Lawa village;
 - CHIEF MATTHIAS BATICK (Ninde-speaker) at Lorlow village;
 - GEORGE THOMPSON (Chief Sarawoh) of Alo/Wintua village (although he is not a Fieldworker);
 - CHIEF AIAR RANTES (Nati-speaker) at Wintua and Lo'orbap for the Wilemp area and for traditional links with Botgate-speakers in the interior;
 - LONGDAL NOBEL MASINGYAU (Nahai-speaker) at Luwannari Bay for the Hurtes area and the Nahai-speaking peoples from the mainland;
 - CHIEF LONGLEL TOM and brother CHIEF TOM AIMANGIL of Yumoran on Tomman island for that island (although they are not Fieldworkers);
 - JAMES TESLO up in the southern Malakula interior mountains at Lowoivenevet for the Botgate-speaking peoples of the interior. ○

EKSEKUTIF SAMARI BLONG SEVEI RIPOT

Oktoba 2004[†]

RIPOT IA I KAMAOT OLSEM PAT BLONG PROJEK WE OLI stap singaotem “Traditional Money Banks in Vanuatu”. Ol bigfala sponsa blong projek ia i gat UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) mo Gavman blong Japan (Japanese Funds-In-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage). Ripot ia i kamaot long wan sevei o wokbaot raon long ol aelan blong yumi we ol man blong projek ia i bin mekem long en blong yia 2004. Sevei ia hemi fes pat blong projek ia, we bae i ron kasem 2 yia evriwan. Bigfala tingting bihaen long sevei ia hemi blong faenem ol komuniti long Vanuatu we bae oli save benefit moa long wan projek olsem blong leftemap fasen blong yusum kastom mane. Projek i bin mekem sevei ia folem 2 bigfala tingting blong projek. Tufala bigfala tingting ia i olsem:

1. Blong luksave ol fasen we yumi gat blong mekem ol kastom mane (olsem pig we i gat tut, red mat mo shel mane) mo tu ol fasen we yumi gat blong severn o holem taet ol kastom mane ia;
2. Blong leftemap tingting blong ol man ples blong luksave fasen blong mekem mo yusum kastom mane olsem wan impoten kastom fasen blong yumi, mo semtaem blong traem faenem rod blong save gohed blong yusum ol kastom mane ia mo pasem ol save blong hem i go long ol pikinini blong oli save yusum ol fasen ia tu.

Sevei o wokbaot we ol man blong projek i bin mekem i bin gohed long manis blong Ogis mo Septemba 2004 long olgeta aelan ia:

- *Long Not Pentikos (Penama Provins)* – long ol vilej blong Aronbwaratu, Atabulu, Atanbwalo, Lavatu, Lolong mo Nazareth;

- *Long saot Malakula (Malampa Provins)* – long ol vilej blong Labo, Lawa, Lo'ormbap, Lorlow, Lowoivenevet mo Wintua long Saot West Bei eria;
- *Long Malo (Sanma Provins)* – long Avunatari vilij long wes Malo;
- *Long Bankis (Torba Provins)* – long ol vilej blong Ngerennigman, Totolag mo Wovet long aelan blong Motalava, long Nitvono vilij long aelan blong Rah mo long Sola long aelan blong Vanua Lava;
- *Long Maewo (Penama Provins)* – long ol vilej blong Asanvari, Betarara, Kerepei, Nasawa mo Rongonawo; mo
- *Long Port Vila town.*

Ol man we oli bin mekem sevei ia i gat Mr. Kirk Huffman (blong Amerika), we i bin mekem sevei long saot Malakula, Not Pentikos, Maewo mo Port Vila; Mr. Reggie Kaimbang (blong Ambrym), we i bin mekem sevei long Not Pentikos, Maewo, Malo, long Bankis mo long Port Vila; mo Mr. Selwyn Garu (blong Pentikos), we i bin mekem sevei long Not Pentikos, Maewo mo Port Vila.

Ol defren komuniti we sevei i faenem se bae projek i save wok wetem olgeta i gat:

- *Long Not Pentikos (Penama Provins):* Evri vilej, be fes wok bae i stap long Ahivo distrik (anda long Herenhala Kaonsel blong ol Jif), Hurilau distrik (anda long Vatutogo Kaonsel blong ol Jif) mo Lavatmangemu vilej long Aligo distrik (we hemi hedkota blong Turaga kastom muvmen);
- *Long saot Malakula (Malampa Provins):* Ol vilej blong Labo,

[†] Aksen Plan blong Woksop blong Luksave mo Leftemap Kastom Ekonomi olsem Stampa blong Kasem Nasional Self-reliens (long Uripiv aelan, Maj 2005) oli takem ples blong ol rekomendesen ia.

Lawa, Lo'ormbap, Lorlow, Lowoivenevet mo Wintua long eria blong Saot Wes Bei; Yumoran vilej long Toman aelan; mo Luwanari Bei long saot olgeta;

- *Long wes Malo (Sanma Provins):* Avunatari mo sam narafala vilej antap long bus (olsem Vatuemba vilij);
- *Long Bankis (Torba Provins):* Ol vilej blong Ngerennigman, Totolag mo Wovet long aelan blong Motalava; Nitvono vilej long aelan blong Rah; ol vilej blong Lehali mo Lehalarup long aelan blong Urereparapara; mo Sola long aelan blong Vanua Lava;
- *Long Port Vila* long aelan blong Efate (Shefa Provins).

Ol samting (ol isiu) we sevei i bin faenem

1. Ol pipol oli stap mekem mo yusum yet ol kastom mane long fulap blong ol eria we sevei i bin pas long olgeta. Ples we kastom blong mekem mo yusum kastom mane i moa strong hemi long Not Pentikos. Long Not Pentikos oli stap yusum kastom mane semtaem wetem vatu blong pem ol samting. Ol komuniti long Bankis mo long Saot Malakula i gat strong tingting mo bigfala intres blong leftemap bakegen ol kastom fasen blong olgeta blong mekem mo yusum kastom mane. Aelan blong Malo hemi las ples we i gat yet fulap naravwe pig (haf-man, haf-woman), we hemi kastom mane we valiu blong hem i bitim ol narafala kaen mane, mo ol man long ol narafala ples (olsem Not Pentikos) i stap wantem kasem oltaem. Projek bambae i mas leftemap mo promotem fasen blong mekem kastom mane long olgeta defren ples ia, from wan-wan blong olgeta i gat save blong mekem ol kaen kastom mane we ol narafala ples i nidim.
2. Projek bambae i lukluk long ol kaen kastom mane ia: pig we i gat tut, ol red mat mo ol waet mat, mo shel mane (Som) mo shel breslet. Kaen mane we i gat moa valiu long evri ples hemi pig we i gat tut; afta long pig hem mat. Projek bae i mas lukluk gud long ol Naravwe pig blong Malo mo Not Pentikos from oli gat hae valiu mo oli nomo fulap olsem bifo.
3. Fasen blong mekem mo yusum kastom mane hemi wan fasen we i stap leftemap tu ol narafala fasen blong kastom. Hemi luksave mo soem rispekt long ol bubu we oli lus finis, mo hemi mekem rod we i joenem ol wan-wan man, ol komuniti mo ol bigfala eria mo ol aelan. Blong holem taet ol gud-gudfala kastom fasen blong yumi, yumi mas holem taet fasen blong yusum kastom mane. Blong leftemap bakegen kastom yumi mas leftemap bakegen ol defren fasen blong yusum kastom mane insaed long laef blong ol pipol.
4. Ol stamba tingting long saed blong "bank" olsem fasen blong mekem wan loan, blong gat kaon mo blong putum intres long wan loan oli stap finis long kastom. Fasen blong gat "bank" blong sevem o holem taet mane tu hemi stap finis long kastom. Be long kastom, "bank" hemi no wan ofis be hemi ol wan-wan man wetem ol rod (rilesensip) we i joenem olgeta. Long ol aelan blong Bankis nomo, ol man i stap sevem mane tru long fasen blong haedem ol shel mane long sikret ples.
5. Ol gudfala fasen blong lukatoem gud mane mo mekem se hemi gru (fasen blong invest) i stap finis long kastom. Be i gat nid blong faenem wan stret rod blong save yusum ol kastom mane semtaem wetem vatu long laef blong tedei. Blong faenem rod ia bambae i gat nid blong jenisim smol ol kastom fasen ia.
6. Yumi nid blong faenem wan rod blong save salem o sipos no eksjenjem ol kastom mane blong kasem vatu. Sipos yumi faenem rod ia, bambae yumi save faenem stret rod blong save yusum ol kastom mane semtaem wetem vatu long laef blong tedei. Hemia bambae i save leftemap bakegen fasen blong yusum kastom mane mo tu bae i leftemap kastom evriwan.

Ol rekomendesen

LONG SAED BLONG OL PIG

1. Stret kaen pig blong yumi long Vanuatu i stap lus naoia from pig blong waet man i stap kam antap. Yumi nid blong holem taet mo leftemap bakegen namba blong ol stret kaen pig blong Vanuatu. Blong mekem samting ia, yumi mas yusum kastom save semtaem wetem save blong waet man (we Dipatmen blong Agrikalja mo Laefstok i save givim). Yumi mas luksave mo promotem evri kaen stret pig blong Vanuatu, hemia i kavremap tu *Kapia* blong aelan blong Tanna (we i nogat gras long bodi blong hem).
2. Yumi nid blong luk spesli long saed blong holem taet mo leftemap ol *Naravwe* pig. Blong mekem samting ia, yumi mas yusum kastom save semtaem wetem save blong waet man, we wan man nem blong hem James McIntyre (blong South West Pacific Research Foundation long Florida, USA) i save givim, blong faenem ol rod blong mekem se namba blong ol spesel pig ia i kam antap. Bambae yumi nid blong leftemap fastaem namba blong ol *Naravwe* pig long Malo mo Not Pentikos, from ol eria ia nao i gat sam populesen blong ol pig ia i stap yet.

LONG SAED BLONG OL MAT

3. I mas gat wan sevei wok kwiktaem blong lukluk long

rop we oli stap yusum blong mekem mat i red long hem (we oli singaotem long lanwis *Laba o Labwe o Langwe o Lambu*). Sevei ia hemi blong faenemaot hamas namba blong ol rop ia i stap yet mo blong faenem wan rod blong save mekem se rop ia i gru gud bakegen (namba blong hem i kam antap) long aelan blong Ambae. Sevei ia bae i mas gohed long ol aelan blong Ambae, Pentikos mo Maewo, mo Envaeronmen Unit nao i mas givhan long hem.

4. I mas gat sapot long kastom fasen blong eksjenj long waet mo red mat bitwin long Not mo Sentrol Pentikos. Long taem bifo kasem naoia, olgeta blong Not i stap sendem ol waet mat blong olgeta i go long Sentrol blong olgeta i mekem i kam red afta sendem i kam bak, mo yumi mas sapotem kastom fasen ia blong i mas gohed oltaem.
5. Yumi mas rikodem kwiktaem ol kastom save mo storian long saed blong stamba (origin) blong rop we oli stap mekem mat i red long hem long ol las man we i stap toktok long lanwis blong Sowa long Sentrol Pentecost, from olgeta nao oli ol las man blong save storian ia. Ol man mo woman filwoka blong Not mo Sentrol Pentikos oli save mekem wok ia.
6. I nid blong leftemap bakegen fasen blong mekem mo yusum ol mat long ol kastom seremoni blong ol woman long Malakula. Bae i nid blong gat wan projek blong rikodem mo leftemap ol kastom fasen ia wetem ol woman long saot mo not Malakula.

LONG SAED BLONG SHEL MANE

7. I mas gat wan sevei woki gohed blong luk sipos stok blong ol spesel shel blong mekem *Som* (shel mane) i fulap yet o nogat. Sipos i gat yet, ol laen blong ol man blong Rowa (Ro) – we oli stap naoia long ol vilej blong Lehali mo Lehalarap long Ureparapara – mo tu olgeta long Motalava, Rah mo ol narafala aelan blong Bankis, oli save stat blong mekem *Som* bakegen. Bae i nid blong gat wan projek long Bankis blong leftemap fasen ia blong mekem *Som*.
8. I gat nid blong leftemap bakegen fasen blong mekem mo yusum ol shel breslet (*Homu*) long Not Pentikos. Wan rod blong leftemap fasen blong yusum *Homu* long Not Pentikos mo *Som* long Bankis hemi blong leftemap bakegen kastom tred blong ol shel bid long Bankis i kam long Not Pentikos (mo pig i go bak long Bankis).

SAM ROD BLONG AJIVIM OL TINGTING IA (OL POLISI MO OL RISOS)

9. Malvatumauri Nasonal Kaonsel blong ol jif hemi nid blong soemaot rod blong folem long evri jif blong Vanuatu wetem ol polisi long nasonal level long ol saed ia:
 - ol man i mas yusum ol stret kastom mane nomo (olsem mat mo pig) blong pem ol faen we kot i givim o blong givim long ol famli long saed blong mared mo ded mo long eni narafala kastom rod, BE I NO VATU;
 - blong mekem eni peimen long kastom (olsem blong tekem wan step o blong stretem wan raorao o blong mared o narafala samting) ol man i mas givim stret peimen folem kastom – hemia long saed blong kaen kastom mane we bae hemi yusum mo tu stret namba blong ol defren kastom mane ia (pig i mas gat stret saes blong tut, mat i mas stret kaen mo namba, mo samting olsem);
 - Wan-wan man o woman bae i save karem wan niufala kastom rang mo taetol nomo sipos hemi mekem stret peimen folem kastom long stret kastom mane blong rang o taetol ia.

Taem ol polisi ia long nasonal level i kamaot finis, ol kaonsel blong jif long level blong provins, aelan, eria mo vilej i mas mekem ol polisi o bae-lo blong olgeta blong sapotem ol nasonal polisi ia.

10. Ministri blong Edukesen i shud mekem wan polisi blong letem se ol pipol i save pem skul fi blong ol pikinini blong olgeta wetem kastom mane (ful wan o sipos no haf-haf wetem vatu). I mas gat wan spesel stadi blong faenem stret rod blong save mekem polisi ia i kam tru.
11. Ministri blong Helt i shud mekem wan polisi blong letem se ol pipol i save pem ol fi blong klinik o dispenseri wetem kastom mane (ful wan o sipos no haf-haf wetem vatu). I mas gat wan spesel stadi blong faenem stret rod blong save mekem polisi ia i kam tru.
12. Vanuatu Credit Union League (VCUL) i nid blong openem bakegen branj blong hem long Not Pentikos, mo i nid blong openem ol niu branj long Saot Wes Bei, long Bankis mo long Avunatari long Malo. Ol branj ia nao bae oli save wok blong eksjenjem vatu blong ol kastom mane. VCUL wetem Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (VKS) wetem ol narafala organaesesen i nid blong faenem rod mo mekem ol ofis blong save salem ol kastom mane long Port Vila mo Luganville mo ovasi.
13. I nid blong sapotem ol koopretif blong ol woman we

oli stap finis blong oli save joen insaed long ol tingting blong eksjenjem kastom mane wetem watu (poen namba 12 antap).

14. Ol Kaonsel blong ol jif blong Herenhala mo Vatutogo, Turaga kastom muvmen mo Gaiware Bulvanua Kaljoral Senta oli shud kam olsem ol mein organaesesen we projek i wok wetem olgeta long Not Pentecost. Be ol program we oli mekem oli mas mekem wetem evri distrik mo kaonsel blong ol jif long Not Pentikos.
15. From i nogat ol strong kaonsel blong jif o narafala organaesesen long saot wes eria blong Malakula, ol mein organaesesen we projek i shud wok wetem olgeta hemi ol filwoka blong Kaljoral Senta mo ol narafala man we oli jusum. Ol filwoka ia I gat:
 - JIF ALBEN RUBEN (Ninde lanwis) long Lawa vilej;
 - JIF MATHIAS BATICK (Ninde lanwis) long Lorlow vilej;
 - GEORGE THOMPSON (Jif Sarawoh) blong Alo/Wintua vilej (nomata hemi no filwoka);
 - JIF AIAR RANTES (Nati lanwis) long Wintua mo Lo'ormbab blong Wilem eria we oli gat kastom rod wetem olgeta blong Botgate lanwis long medel bus;
 - LONGDAL NOBEL MASINGYAU (Nahai lanwis) long Luwannari Bei blong Hurtes eria mo olgeta blong Nahai lanwis long big aelan;
 - JIF LONGLEL TOM mo brata blong hem JIF TOM AIMANGIL blong Yumoran long Tomman aelan (nomata oli no filwoka)
 - JAMES TESLO blong medel bus blong saot Malakula blong olgeta blong Botgate lanwis long medel bus. ○

ACTION PLAN OF THE WORKSHOP TO RECOGNISE AND PROMOTE THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY AS THE BASIS FOR ACHIEVING NATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE

14th-18th March 2005, Uripiv island, Malakula[†]

PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED CHIEFS and other community leaders from 6 Provinces, officers of Provincial Governments and different Government departments, officers of statutory bodies and representatives of some NGOs.

This strategy is comprised of the recommendations that the workshop proposed as the means of achieving the objective of promoting the traditional economy as the basis for achieving national self reliance.

Strategy

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The production and use of traditional wealth items and customary resources always happens at the level of the household, the nakamal, the nasara and the village. The production and use of these resources occurs for communal benefit and never for the benefit of individuals. A community always consists of men, women and children.
2. The production and use of traditional wealth items and customary resources must be done in the proper customary way (stret kastom fasen). This includes the respect for traditional rights and copyrights over these processes.
3. This strategy will be primarily implemented by chiefs through the structure of the Malvatumauri (nakamal - ward/sub-area - area - island - national) and also through the Provincial Governments (area - Province).
4. There is an urgent need to establish and strengthen the chiefs' structure and also to train chiefs to work effectively within this structure. In this regard, this strategy looks forward to the implementation of the new

Malvatumauri project "Vanuatu Chiefs' Skills Building Pilot Training".

5. Chiefs must be represented at every level of governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEVEL OF THE NAKAMAL, THE VILLAGE, THE WARD/SUB-AREA AND THE AREA

1. Do not sell or lease land.
2. Raise the awareness of the community about its own customs and culture.
3. Each chiefs' council to identify its customary resource people (eg, fieldworkers).
4. The community to promote the teaching of custom in the home and the nakamal.
5. Feed more pigs and chickens, make more gardens, plant more yams and taro, plant fruit and nut trees, plant trees to make canoes, plant trees to make tamtams (breadfruit on Ambrym, boga on Pentecost), plant more pandanas, plant more labwe (especially on Ambae).
6. The School Committee to:
 - i. promote the use of traditional wealth items and customary resources to pay school fees;
 - ii. teach custom in the classroom.
7. RTCs to teach custom, especially the making of gardens and craft skills.

[†] Supersedes Recommendations from the October 2004 Executive Summary (page 11 of this Survey Report).

8. The Health Committee to:
 - i. promote the use of traditional wealth items and customary resources to pay medical and consultation fees;
 - ii. promote the use of traditional medicines and healing practices.
9. Establish savings clubs at village level and credit unions at ward/sub-area level.
10. Establish and strengthen producer and marketing cooperatives (and especially womens' cooperatives) at ward/sub-area level.
11. Credit unions and cooperatives to have only one joint management committee.
12. Women marrying into another language group to learn the language of their husband's community (to teach their children that language).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEVEL OF THE PROVINCES

All Provinces

1. The Malvatumauri and Provincial Governments to rationalise and merge their respective structures.
2. Each Province and Municipality to provide an office for the chiefs' council at the level of the ward/sub-area, area and Province or town.
3. Develop trade and trade agreements between Provinces.

TORBA Province

1. Establish pig banks on the islands of Gaua and Vanualava.
2. Promote the revitalisation of the production of custom mats.
3. Make Rowa (Reef Island) a protected area and undertake a survey of the island to:
 - i. record all important traditional places;
 - ii. assess how to maintain the stock of som shells still on the reef.
4. Hold a workshop to bring together the clans originating from Rowa now living in the different islands of the Banks group, and also the clans from Ureparapara, Vanualava and Motalava who still produce som shell money, to discuss how to revitalise the production and use of shell money.

SANMA Province

1. Promote the production of naravwe pigs on Malo island.
2. Promote the revitalisation of the production of custom mats (with the SANMA Rural Womens Council).
3. Establish a credit union in Avunatari village.
4. Raise the awareness of communities about the importance of preserving remaining bush areas on Santo to preserve important customary resources.

PENAMA Province

1. Undertake research on the lapwe (red dye) plant on Ambae to determine why its stocks are declining and how to re-establish viable stocks of the plant on the island.
2. The Turaga movement to continue to promote the pig's tusk as a local currency.

MALAMPA Province

1. Establish a pig bank in south-west Malakula.
2. Promote the revitalisation of the production of custom mats in every area of Malakula (with womens groups).

SHEFA Province

1. Promote the revitalisation of the production of mats towards establishing a mat bank in Vila in 2006.
2. Promote the revitalisation of the production of yams towards establishing a yam bank in Epi in 2007.
3. Promote the revitalisation of the production of pigs towards establishing a pig bank in Siviri in 2008 (which would also be a tourist attraction).
4. Undertake more research on the different kinds of traditional wealth items in the Province.
5. Establish a directory of traditional healers.
6. Establish savings clubs and credit unions following the clan system.

TAFEA Province

1. Assist the clan of the kapia pig to promote its production in Tanna.

2. Undertake more research on the different kinds of traditional wealth items in the Province.

of Industry to find markets for Vanuatu handicrafts both domestically and overseas.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL

1. The Malvatumauri to:
 - i. remove the 80,000 vatu brideprice policy;
 - ii. institute a new policy banning the use of vatu in any customary payment or exchange (any such payment or exchange to be made in traditional wealth items only.
 - iii. apply this new policy to marriages, acquisitions of rank or title, deaths and any other custom ceremonies. Each area council of chiefs to then set the correct amount of traditional wealth items and other customary resources to be used in each ceremony for their own area under this new policy.
2. The Ministry of Education to promote a policy of paying school fees with traditional wealth items and customary resources.
3. The Ministry of Health to:
 - i. promote a policy of paying medical and consultation fees with traditional wealth items and customary resources;
 - ii. promote the use of traditional medicines and healing practices.
4. The Judicial Services Commission to promote a policy of paying court fines in traditional wealth items.
5. The Ministry of Education to urgently develop and implement the "Rethinking Vanuatu education" initiative to make culture a principal component of the national curriculum.
6. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Livestock to protect, preserve and promote our customary resources, especially the different kinds of native pigs.
7. The Ministry of Internal Affairs to revisit the recommendations of the Decentralisation Review Commission with a view to improving and re-instituting the old system of Local Government Councils.
8. The Ministry of Lands to change the law(s) relating to leasehold land to require chiefs' councils to also approve the granting of a lease.
9. The Department of the Cooperatives and the Department

10. The Vanuatu Cooperative Federation to:
 - i. start to operate ships again to the islands of every Province;
 - ii. allocate funds for the purchase of traditional wealth items and customary resources in rural areas.
11. The USP (Emalus Campus) to promote the use of traditional wealth items and customary resources to pay its fees.
12. The Government to declare 2007 the year of customary wealth (kastom mane). ○

AKSEN PLAN BLONG WOKSOP BLONG LUKSAVE MO LEFTEMAP KASTOM EKONOMI OLSEM STAMPA BLONG KASEM NASONAL SELF-RELIENS

14-18 Maj 2005, Uripiv aelan, Malakula[†]

WOKSHOP IA HEMI BIN TEKEM TUGETA OL JIF MO OL narafala komuniti lidas long 6 Provins, ol ofisa blong ol Provinsel Gavman mo ol defren Gavman dipatmen, ol ofisa blong sam statutory bodi mo representativ blong sam NGO.

Aksen plan o strateji ia hemi tekem tugeta ol rekomendesen we wokshop i proposem blong save ajivim tingting blong leftemap kastom fasen mo kastom ekonomi olsem stampa blong save kasem nasonal self reliens.

Strateji/Aksen Plan

OL STAMPA TINGTING

1. Prodaksen mo yus blong kastom mane mo kastom risos i kamaot oltaem long ol wan-wan haoshol, nakamal, nasara mo vilej. Prodaksen mo yus blong ol risos ia oltaem hemi blong ol komuniti ia be i no blong wan-wan man. Komuniti oltaem i gat insaed long hem ol man, ol woman mo ol pikinini.
 2. Prodaksen mo yus blong kastom mane mo risos i mas folem stret kastom fasen blong hem oltaem (olsem blong respektem kastom raet mo kopiraet).
 3. Strateji ia bae i wok tru long ol jif tru long strakja blong Malvatumauri (nakamal - ward/sab-eria - eria - aelan - nasonal) mo tu strakja blong Provins (eria - Provins).
 4. I gat bigfala nid blong stanemap mo strengthenem strakja blong ol jif mo tu blong trenem ol jif blong wok insaed long strakja ia. Wetem tingting ia, Strateji ia i putum bigfala hop long hem blong niufala projek blong Malvatumauri we nem blong hem "Vanuatu Chiefs' Skills Building Pilot Training".
 5. Jif i mas gat voes insaed long evri level blong gavenens.
- Ol rekomendesen i go long level blong nakamal, vilej, ward/sab-eria mo eria:
 1. No salem o lisim graon.
 2. Leftemap tingting (aweanes) blong komuniti long ol kastom blong hem.
 3. Wan wan Kaonsel blong Jif blong aedentifaem ol kastom risos pipol blong hem (olsem ol filwoka).
 4. Komuniti blong promotem tijing blong kastom long hom mo long nakamal.
 5. Fidim moa pig mo faol, mekem moa garen, planem moa yam mo taro, planem ol tri we i gat kakae blong olgeta, planem ol tri blong mekem kenu, planem ol tri blong mekem tamtam (bredfrut long Ambrym, boga long Pentikos), planem moa pandanas, planem moa labwe (long Ambae).
 6. Skul komiti blong:
 - i. promotem yus blong kastom mane mo risos blong pem skul fi;
 - ii. tijim kastom long klasrum.
 7. Ol RTC blong tijim kastom, spesli long saed blong planem garen mo ol "craft skills" (fasen blong wokem kastom haos, kenu, tamtam, mat, basket, etc).
 8. Helt komiti blong:
 - i. promotem yus blong kastom mane mo risos blong pem medikol mo konsaltesen fi;
 - ii. promotem yus blong kastom meresin.
 9. Setemap ol savings klab long vilej level mo ol kredit

[†] Aksen Plan ia hemi i tekem ples blong ol Rekomendesen blong Eksekutiv Samari long Oktoba 2004 (long pej namba 14 blong Sevei Ripot ia).

yunion long ward/sab-eria level.

10. Setemap mo strengthenem ol produsa mo marketing koperativ (mo spesli ol koperativ blong ol woman) long ward/sab-eria level.
11. Kredit yunion mo koperativ blong gat wan manejmen komiti nomo.
12. Ol woman we i mared i kam long narafala lanwis grup blong lanem lanwis blong ples we oli stap long hem.

OL REKOMENDESEN I GO LONG LEVEL BLONG OL PROVINS

Evri Provins

1. Malvatumauri mo ol Provins blong stretem mo maredem strakja blong olgeta.
2. Ol Provins mo ol Munisipaliti blong provaedem ofis blong jif long level blong ward/sab-eria, eria mo Provins o taon.
3. Dvelopem tred wetem ol tred agrimen bitwin ol Provins.

TORBA Provins

1. Setemap wan pig bank long aelan blong Gaua mo wan long Vanualava.
2. Promotem bakegen prodaksen blong ol kastom mat.
3. Mekem se Rowa (Rif Aelan) i kam wan protekted eria mo mekem wan sevei long aelan ia blong:
 - i. makem gud ol impoten kastom ples blong hem;
 - ii. lukluk hao blong holem taet stok blong som shel we i stap yet long rif.
4. Holem wan wokshop blong tekem tugeta ol laen blong Rowa we i stap liv long ol defren aelan blong Bankis, wetem tu ol laen blong ol aelan blong Ureparapara, Vanualava mo Motalava we oli stap mekem som shel mane, blong tokbaot hao blong promotem bakagen prodaksen mo yus blong shel mane.

SANMA Provins

1. Promotem prodaksen blong naravwe pig long Malo aelan.
2. Promotem prodaksen blong ol kastom mat (wetem SANMA Rurol Womens Kaonsel).
3. Setemap wan kredit yunion long Avunatari vilej.

4. Leftemap aweanes blong ol komuniti blong save priservem sam bush eria blong holem taet ol kastom bush risos.

PENAMA Provins

1. Mekem risej long rop ia lapwe long Ambae blong luksave from wanem hemi stap go daon mo blong mekem se i gud bakagen raon long aelan ia.
2. Turaga muvmen blong gohed blong promotem tut blong pig olsem wan kaen mane.

MALAMPA Provins

1. Setemap wan pig bank long saot-wes Malakula.
2. Promotem prodaksen blong ol kastom mat long evri eria blong Malakula (wetem ol womans grup).

SHEFA Provins

1. Promotem prodaksen blong mat blong setemap wan mat bank long Vila long 2006.
2. Promotem prodaksen blong yam blong setemap wan yam bank long Epi long 2007.
3. Promotem prodaksen blong pig blong setemap wan pig bank long Siviri long 2008 (we semtaem bae hemi pulum turis).
4. Mekem moa risej long ol defren kaen kastom mane blong Provins.
5. Setemap wan daerektri blong ol kastom dokta (“healers”).
6. Setemap ol savings klab wetem kredit yunion folem klan sistem.

TAFEA Provins

1. Givhan long traeb blong kapia pig blong promotem prodaksen blong pig ia insaed long Tanna aelan.
2. Mekem moa risej long ol defren kaen kastom mane blong Provins.

OL REKOMENDESEN I GO LONG NASIONAL LEVEL

1. Malvatumauri blong:
 - i. karemaot polisi blong 80,000 vatu braed-praes;

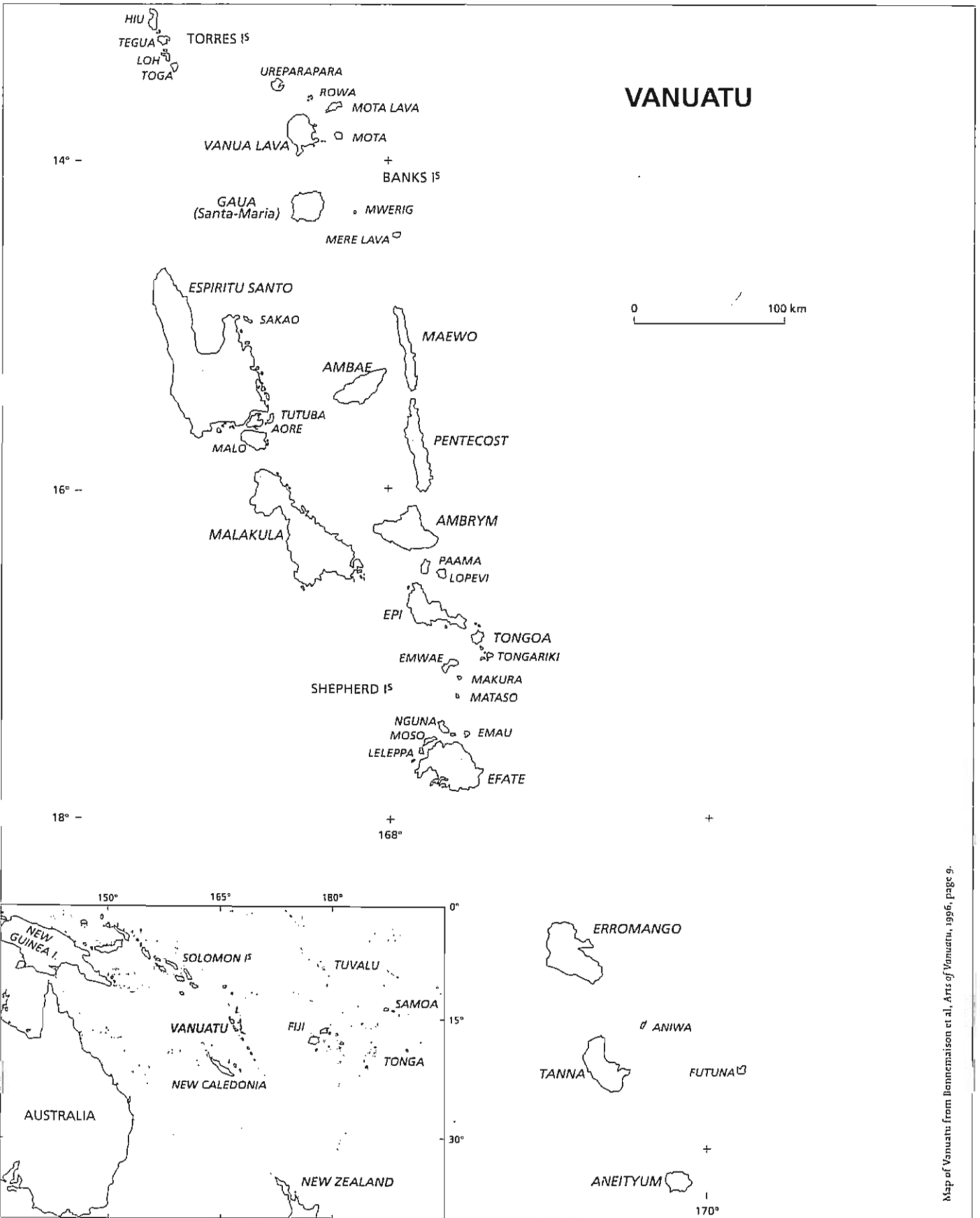
- ii. putum wan niufala polisi se bambae hemi tabu blong yusum watu long eni kastom peimen o eksjenj (bambae eni peimen o eksjenj blong stap long kastom mane nomo);
 - iii. niufala polisi ia bae i aplae long mared, karem step o taetol, ded, mo eni narafala kastom seremoni. Bambae ol wan-wan eria kaonsel blong jif i jas putum stret kastom peimen blong ol wan-wan seremoni ia long eria blong olgeta folem niufala polisi ia.
2. Ministri blong Edukesen blong promotem polisi blong save pem skul fi wetem kastom mane.
 3. Ministri blong Helt blong:
 - i. promotem polisi blong save pem medikol mo konsaltesen fi wetem kastom mane;
 - ii. promotem yus blong kastom meresin.
 4. Judicial Services Commission blong promotem wan polisi blong pem ol kot faen long kastom mane.
 5. Ministri blong Edukesen blong divelopem kwiktaem program blong “Rethinking Vanuatu education” blong mekem se kastom i kam olsem stampa blong nasional kerikulum.
 6. Ministri blong Agrikalja, Forestri, Fisheris mo Laevstok blong protektem, priservem mo promotem ol nativ kastom risoses blong yumi, spesli ol defren kaen nativ pig blong yumi.
 7. Ministri blong Intenol Afeas blong lukluk bak long ol rekomendesen blong Decentralisation Review Commission mo lukluk blong karembak mo mekem i moa gud sistem blong Lokol Gavman Kaonsel bakegen.
 8. Ministri blong Lan blong jenisim loa blong lis blong ol jif kaonsel blong apruvum lis, i no lanona nomo.
 9. Dipatmen blong Koperativ mo Dipatmen blong Industri blong faenem ol market blong ol handikraf long Vanuatu mo ovasi.
 10. Vanuatu Cooperative Federation blong:
 - i. stat blong operetem ol ship bakegen long ol aelan blong evri Provins;
 - ii. aloketem fand blong pem ol kastom mane long ol rurol eria.
 11. USP (Emalus Campus) blong promotem yus blong kastom mane mo risos blong pem fi blong hem.
 12. Gavman blong mekem se 2007 i kam yia blong kastom mane long Vanuatu. ○

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Map of Vanuatu from Bennemaison et al., Arts of Vanuatu, 1996, page 9.

Part 1:

KASTOM WEALTH, RICHES AND ECONOMICS IN VANUATU

A traditional 'stock exchange'

IT WAS JANUARY 1986 AND NEARLY 800 PEOPLE WERE packed onto the megalithic dancing ground of Norohure on the small island of Vao, off northeast Malakula. It was the culminating day of the intensive five days of ceremonies for the *Maki-Ru* graded rituals organized by old Tain Mal (a title indicating links with north Ambrym) of Singon, who had been planning this ceremony 'since the Americans left Santo', over 40 years before. Nearly 200 male pigs were displayed on the *netsara* (dancing ground), half on the upper side, half on the lower. Named women of status, their faces painted with fine intricate red ochre designs, some wearing a few remaining stings of (*na*) *Sum* (beaded shell money worn as decoration), had previously dispatched their pigs in a ceremony on the lower side of the dancing ground. In earlier stages giant yams had changed hands. At one point on a previous day, one individual had danced onto the *netsara* carrying possibly the last remaining Vao *Mangau*, the smoked, rare and valuable, red-dyed and tassled plaited pandanus form of mat money which gains its value from its use as a burial wrapping for important deceased men and its subsequent re-use as sacred currency.

A few old men wore *na'mBan*, the beaded armbands indicating high social status in the men's graded rituals, and although most of these were made with 19th century European trade beads, one was the rare original type with dark beads made of coconut shell wood and shining white beads of shell (the latter, in other areas, representing another form of currency). At the climax of the ritual, the male tusker pigs with the better tusks of various growth stages were aligned on the upper side of the *netsara*. Then the leaf entrance coverings of the 10 small huts, each with a central carved ancestral spirit post on its upper side facing the public, were removed to reveal inside each one a tusker pig of at least the stage *Merer-pakeah*, a full-circle tusker. A last and central hut was finally opened, and inside was the living wealth 'star' of the ritual, an extremely rare *Liv-til-til* (tusker pig with three tusks, two on one side, one on the other).

Audience and ritual participants admired in stunned silence: most had never seen one of these latter pigs, only heard stories about them. Old Tain Mal had kept his acquisition of this pig a well-kept secret: several years of delicate negotiations had enabled him to acquire it (for the equivalent of 80,000 vatu) on the island of Malo, from where he secretly brought it to Vao. The required pigs were dispatched, to be carried off by those for whom they were destined, and other live ones given out in the same way. Tain Mal took the status title *Melteg Mütmut* (to put it bluntly, 'Melteg until one stinks/rots away', which is about as permanent a status title as one can get). There were still rituals to complete over time after these, a main one being the return of the jaws of the dispatched tusker pigs within one moon for display in a specially constructed shelved thatched lean-to on the sacred upper side of the dancing ground.

A Western-trained economist reading the description of this event might ask what it has to do with wealth, riches and economics, as to many such economists it looks like an incredible waste of energy and resources. What those unfamiliar with Vanuatu's complex traditions would not know is that aspects of the above ritual (which is used just as an example) and its lengthy preparations over many years involve not only deep spirituality but also traditional currencies/monies of differing types, as well as traditional concepts of trade, investment, debt, loan and credit, interest and compound interest, banking and many other economic aspects that are supposedly only found in modern Western monetary systems. In fact the traditional wealth systems with these above attributes (and associated ritual and cultural activities, both material and intangible) – found particularly in many of the cultures of northern Vanuatu – are probably a lot older, and infinitely more complex, than the present modern Western system (although, for example, a banking system had been developed by early Phoenician traders in the Mediterranean). They are also much better suited to the lives, aspirations and general well-being of the majority of ni-Vanuatu. It could be said, therefore, that their continuation and enhancement (to complement the

modern cash-based economy) offers the best option for the sustainable development of the country.

The genesis of the “Traditional Money Banks in Vanuatu” project

THIS BELIEF IS THE RAISON D'ÊTRE FOR THE CURRENT initiative, a joint Vanuatu Cultural Centre/Vanuatu Credit Union League/UNESCO project entitled ‘Traditional Money Banks in Vanuatu’, which is being kindly funded by the Japanese government’s “Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage”. This project has had a long gestation period, but its original stimulus came not from the modern world but almost literally from the Spirits of the Ancestors of one of the most isolated areas of Vanuatu, the mountainous interior of southern Malakula, the country’s second largest island. From the 20th to the 29th of June 1990, the annual meeting in the national capital of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre’s Fieldworkers, coming from the outer islands of the country, had discussed the topic ‘Ples blong Pig long Kastom Laef blong Vanuatu’ (‘The position of pigs in the traditional life of Vanuatu’).¹ In 1992, the Cultural Centre Fieldworker for the Botgate-speaking populations (the famous Small Nambas peoples) in the mountains of southern Malakula, James Teslo, arrived at that year’s meeting in the capital with a request for assistance to start what later became nicknamed a ‘Pig Bank’. Aspects of the 1990 workshop discussions had initiated intense debate back in his area: the last major group of Botgate-speakers had converted to Christianity in 1989, but this did not mean that they gave up their cultural identity. They moved nearer to the coast and, theoretically, closer to the possibility of a partly modern cash economy. Conversion to Christianity meant that many gave up the using of male tusker pigs, the major traditional form of currency (but currency with a sacred glow). However, payments were still needed for the essential rituals of life: male initiation, marriage, status change and death, and the Laws of the Ancestors stipulated that tusker pigs remain the main form of payment, total payment in modern cash (even if it was available) was not acceptable. James was concerned that without a concerted effort to raise tusker pigs, the essential life rituals would collapse and they would lose their cultural identity.

Various unsuccessful attempts were made to find assistance for James’ ‘Pig Bank’. Out of this grew, however,

the realization of the need for similar assistance of a wider kind throughout many areas of the country. This was spurred on by the work of anthropologist Tim Curtis, who worked in the Nahai-speaking area of southern coastal Malakula between 1995 and 1997, and the growing realization by Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, of the close link between the safeguarding of the largely intangible cultural heritage of the country and the availability of the traditional wealth items that were required for almost every important ceremony and ritual. The Southeast Asian financial crisis of 1997 made Noe Saksak, Director of the Vanuatu Credit Union League, realize that if the Vanuatu population came one day to rely too much on modern cash and the modern world economy then it too could suffer in the same way that millions of Southeast Asians did (and do). Vanuatu was, and is, in the lucky situation where the majority of its population is still effectively largely self-sufficient, but unless something is done, this fortuitous situation may not last forever. Therefore this project was developed and went through years of hard work to find support and sponsorship. It is what the country needs and what many ni-Vanuatu have had at the back of their mind for years. If something like this is not done, then the country could face a gradually deteriorating future at the mercy of modern economics, globalization and the uncertainties of a fluctuating modern international financial situation where events on the other side of the world could impinge upon the well-being of ni-Vanuatu in general. Moreover, full entry into the modern money economy implies trade, and Vanuatu has very little to actually trade with to the outside world. Recent past experience indicates that countries with few primary resources find themselves forced to offer labour (and modern business usually goes to where labour is the cheapest, and that is definitely not Vanuatu). ‘If we are not careful, we might just end up where we are headed’, one could say, or, to put it more strongly, ‘Modern money may not be the answer, it may be part of the problem’.

Vanuatu society: An historical background

THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU (THE ‘LAND THAT STANDS Up/Exists’), formerly the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides, is a Y-shaped archipelago in the southwestern Pacific stretching approximately 1450 km from the island of Hiu in the Torres group in the north to

¹ The level of interest was such that the meeting could easily have continued for a month if enough funding had been available. Besides the cultural and ritual value and use of pigs was also discussed the function of pigs as a form of traditional money. It should here be noted that the financial stimulus that began what later became the eminently successful Vanuatu Cultural Centre Fieldworkers network was a small grant in 1976 from UNESCO and the South Pacific Commission to start an Oral Traditions Collecting Programme. Since 1981 the Australian government, through various agencies, has kindly funded the essential annual meetings of this ever-growing group, which for many years now has become part of the accepted social fabric of the nation.

the uninhabited islands of Umwai Nyang and Umwai Upne (Matthew and Hunter islands) in the south. Total land area is approximately 12,337 square kilometers consisting of 83 inhabited islands and over 200 uninhabited small islets or rocky outcrops. Situated at the juncture of two tectonic plates, the archipelago experiences frequent earth tremors and earthquakes and widespread volcanic (terrestrial and submarine) activity, which means that the total land area above sea level can fluctuate regularly in a minor way as small islets rise, sink, or move, or larger islands tilt. Climate ranges from tropical in the north to sub-tropical in the south. The dry season is generally May to September, the 'Wet' from October to April (with cyclones possible usually from December through to early March), although regularly irregular changes in the Pacific El Nino/La Nina current can modify this to a greater or lesser extent. Land, reefs and sea are rich and fertile and there are no poisonous spiders or snakes (except for a shy sea snake which cannot open its mouth widely), although there are a few plants to beware of.

Total human population at the last census (November 1999) was counted as 186,678, almost wholly of indigenous Melanesian ni-Vanuatu origin (ni-Vanuatu being the term for a person from Vanuatu), although it is of course possible, in a country with great geographical diversity and some extremely remote areas, that this is an 'accurate approximate figure'. Over 78% of that population is rural, only 22% living in the two urban centres of Port Vila (the capital) and the only other town, Luganville (Santo Town). Average life expectancy was estimated at 67.3 years. Annual population growth rate is estimated at around 2.6%, which would give a population figure of around 212,200 at the time this report is being written (October 2004) assuming the growth rate remains the same. GNP/GDP (Gross National Product/Gross Domestic Product) in the late 1990s was estimated at around the equivalent of US \$1300 per capita per year (the GNP/GDP per capita for the US itself in 1997 was US \$30,200). It is an extremely 'young' country, with about 41.5% of the population aged less than 15 years.

Modern economists looking at such rapid population growth might say that this is too high, that the country cannot sustain such expansion. Policy makers in the first post-independence governments, however, saw this rapid growth as re-dressing a population vacuum – pre-European-contact population estimates for the islands by historians and archaeologists range from around 500,000 to 1,500,000 (a reasonable 'guesstimate' being 6-800,000). Readers should, moreover, bear in mind the important fact that at that time this massive population was completely self-sufficient, with no modern money, no poverty, traditional systems of governance, leadership, trade, agricultural surpluses for ritual, ancient medicines and healing systems, complex and profound religious systems, art, music, oratory, dance, love, laughter, jealousy, warfare, respect and periodic disruptions within an incredibly complex

series of cultures geared to ideally finding peace, harmony and balance amongst innumerable different worlds. In fact they had just about everything the modern world thinks it has or strives for – and in a situation where the rich land bequeathed them by their ancestors enabled them to spend as much as half or more of their time devoted to cultural and ritual activities.

It is still not indisputably known when the first humans arrived in these islands. The earliest archaeological dates found so far for human habitation hover around 3200 years BP (Before Present) from a series of archaeological sites containing pottery and other artifacts representing what has become known as the Lapita Cultural Complex (to date the earliest culture to be identified in the region to the east of the Solomon Islands). The bones of pigs, dogs and fowl are found linked with some of these sites. Archaeologists tend to think these remains represent the first inhabitants, although it is not completely impossible that there were earlier populations (the northern Solomon Islands, for instance, was settled by 28,000 BP). Whatever the full story is on first settlement, it is obvious that the ancestors of the present day inhabitants arrived an extremely long time ago and brought with them languages and cultures that they further elaborated in their new homes. They probably arrived periodically over many centuries, from differing areas in the northwest into differing areas within the archipelago. Others probably came later by swing-back voyages from the east.

Certain cultures today believe they have existed here since time began, some descended from living stones, some from forces of spirit or fire or nature, from trees, from holes in the ground, from air, land or sea worlds, or created by named Gods/Creator Heroes and some claim descent from ancestral dallying with winged women from the Sky World. The list is almost endless, and visible verifications of many of these stories are pointed out in still-existing land, shore, and reef features. Many of these stories, classed as 'myths and legends' by outsiders, have as much spiritual validity as many of the founding stories of the world's great religions and should be respected in the same way: they are not necessarily incompatible with archaeological science, they are often ancient histories told and retold through the mists of time that need access to special cultural and spiritual codes to be able to properly understand them.

European 'discoverers' who left a written record – de Quiros in 1606, Bougainville in 1768 and Captain Cook in 1774 – came late and briefly to these islands, but the densely inhabited areas and societies they glimpsed would be recognizable by ni-Vanuatu from those particular islands today. Although population now is much less, the differing costumes and ways of life they described are still familiar. The series of major shocks of contact with the outside White Man's world began in 1825 with the discovery of sandalwood on the island of Erromango, then came the whalers, the missionaries, the traders, the 'Blackbirders',

alcohol, firearms, disease, depopulation and decay. With no resistance to even the common cold, introduced European diseases – influenza, measles, smallpox, dysentery, whooping cough and more – decimated the population. Unfamiliar with these illnesses, many ni-Vanuatu assumed they were caused by ‘sorcery’, thus unleashing retaliatory ‘sorcery’ against their own people or neighbours in a never-ending increasing spiral of instability whilst many of their worlds crumbled around them. The only white people, in general, who were at all in any way sympathetic to helping them were the missionaries, but even some of these earlier ones were strict to the point of dictatorial – one Presbyterian missionary in 1865 calling in a British warship to shell the peoples on the island of Tanna who had kicked him off, one Catholic missionary calling in a French warship to create similar devastation in southeastern Malakula in 1896.

To top it off, the islands were then eventually blessed with the world’s strangest form of colonial government, British and French joint rule in the form of the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides, from 1906 until 1980. During those strange years ni-Vanuatu actually had no legal status: officially, sort of, they did not exist. Much of the early part of that period was really, colonially, a period of ‘joint neglect’. By the late 1920s the population throughout the islands had plummeted to an all-time low of around only 40,000. The missionaries finally helped to bring peace, although not everyone – even today – has embraced Christianity and traditional beliefs still survive and co-exist with Christianity amongst the majority of the population (a normal situation and one that enriches both traditional and Christian beliefs), and introduced the first types of modern education and modern medicines (but bear in mind that both education and medicines already existed in the traditional societies). Vanuatu should be proud of those 40,000 survivors, for from them has arisen the vibrant

young nation of today, enriched by well over 100 indigenous languages (of the Austronesian family), many with dialects or sub-dialects, and a correspondingly astonishingly complex variety of differing cultures. Vanuatu today is the nation in the world that has the earth’s highest ratio of differing languages and cultures in relation to population size, three times greater than that of Papua New Guinea and, put simply, with the total population of, say, a small English town, possessing twice as many languages and cultures as the whole of Europe.

Overseas readers may find such a situation slightly out of the ordinary, but it is not; it is, in a way, ‘the way the world should be’, and is probably very much the way much of the rest of the world – even Europe – was ages ago. It is normal to grow up with the knowledge that the people the other side of the hill, or on the next near island, have a language or dialect or culture different, or related but differing, from one’s own. Through traditional leadership and guidance and the notion of ‘respect’, it all works out. It was really only

during the period from, say, the 1820s through to the late 1920s/early 1930s that the combined devastating effects of influences originating in the world outside made traditional worlds explode, implode or even disappear. Moreover, it should be born in mind that the numerous ancient cultures had, over many centuries, developed highly sophisticated and complex societies ideally suited to their particular environments and all this before, for example, most of the present-day nations of Europe came into existence.

Almost all the accoutrements of a modern state were all there in each society, albeit in traditional form geared to each culture – governance, religion, politics, leadership, medicine and healing, trade, currencies, investment (both physical and spiritual), credit and loan, copyright, art, music, dance, oratory, historical awareness, environmental awareness, spiritual awareness, the list is endless. In some ways they were more advanced than modern societies. All this was done without the invention of writing, unless one looks upon the complex traditions of labyrinthic ground/sand drawings from the northern islands as a form of writing. Writing, however, was not actually necessary; societies compensating by developing sophisticated training techniques to enable certain individuals to mentally retain amazingly vast amounts of information: modern systems of education erode that and are said by many of the older generation to actually shorten memory. In general, systems of thinking and logic were and are very different from the Western models that are trying to impose themselves: the latter system follows a lineal/linear model, much simpler than the traditional ni-Vanuatu lateral, or ‘spirally circular’ systems, which also may involve complex different brain processes, a different way of using the brain – and no-one can say that it is a wrong way.

Vanuatu: Do western models apply?

THERE HAS BEEN AN UNINTERRUPTED TENDENCY FOR the outside/western representatives to think that Vanuatu needs to be taught and educated ‘how to live’, ‘how to develop’, ‘how to progress’. In actual fact, the process is more logical the other way around: Vanuatu’s numerous cultures do possess thoughts, elements and processes that are relevant to the modern world, which could benefit greatly if only it chose to listen. European environmentalist and cultural ecologist Andrea Pfister (linked with the London-based Conservation Foundation) said in a filmed interview in 1999 after his third visit to the country, and talking about his impressions of Vanuatu: “...they were rich in that they could devote more than half their time to social activities... considering the state of the world at the moment, maybe we have something to learn from that. They are rich in the sense that they can feed themselves, they have fertile land... they have very little of interest to the ‘western economy’ in

the capitalistic sense. There is very little that they can sell: if they enter that 'market', they will not be 'rich' any more... giving them a chance of picking out of the western culture those parts which can help them, not the ones that can raise totally unrealistic expectations (is the answer). ...it is a country which has been 'rich', can be 'rich', but can become very 'poor' if it feels like it".

It is apparent that western concepts of 'riches' and 'poverty' do not necessarily transfer themselves easily to the social and cultural situations in Vanuatu. It is obvious to anyone traveling into the more remote regions of the country that, although there may be very little or almost no modern money in certain areas, the inhabitants are definitely not poor, leading deep, culturally satisfying, rich lives unencumbered by many of the trappings (sometimes classed as 'necessities' by certain modern economists, but in fact often being 'luxuries' that 'westerners' class as 'necessities') of the modern world. One realizes that the only areas of the country where one can see the beginnings of what might be called 'real poverty' (in the western sense) are in the two urban centres, which are in fact just about the only places where there is regular access to modern money but also the only places where one actually needs modern money to survive. Many ni-Vanuatu look upon modern money with a mixture of desire and fear, and this attitude is shared by many other cultures in island Melanesia. Although ni-Vanuatu adopted the use of various forms of modern money from the 19th century onwards (gold sovereigns, English pounds, French francs, 'plantation money', World War II US currency, Australian dollars and now the 'Vatu'), they have in general done so only in a restricted way. This may be because modern money is anonymous, simple, with no deep cultural roots, and disappears quite easily. Traditional forms of wealth and currencies often work in different social spheres, are not anonymous, have deep cultural roots and are better geared to a world where social links, obligations and relationships are more important than individual material riches.

One needs to examine the differing approaches of western economics and its ideas of wealth and poverty with similar traditional ni-Vanuatu concepts to understand why the population in general has appeared to be relatively reluctant to completely embrace the modern western type of market economy, and why it would be a mistake for them to fully do so. As will be seen, many of the determining factors seem to lie with faults or differences within the structures, models and concepts of modern western economics and not with the traditional systems.

Relative economic concepts: Relative notions of wealth and poverty

IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT HERE RIGHT AT THE beginning of this section that we are not here dealing with western economic concepts *versus* traditional ni-Vanuatu ones. Although the Vanuatu systems have been in existence for immeasurably longer than the modern western one, the two systems, or systems of systems, are not completely incompatible: elements of one exist in the other, and vice-versa. There are major basic theoretical – or more properly – spiritual, ethical and moral differences, though, that indicate that the two systems can co-exist if these differences are respected. There are ways, of course, that modern western economic approaches can benefit ni-Vanuatu societies, but there are also ways in which theoretical approaches and values from Vanuatu's own cultures can enrich modern western economic theory.

Let us start with one of the most basic, simple concepts: what constitutes a 'rich' man (or woman) in western economics and what constitutes the same in Vanuatu's cultures? We all know what is considered to make up a rich person in the modern western sense: lots of money, a flash house (or series of houses), a flash car (or series of cars), lots of material belongings, etc, etc.

What constitutes a 'rich' person in traditional Vanuatu cultures? Here we come to a differing series of concepts that vary from culture to culture, but do not vary that much. In Vanuatu a 'rich' person is one who is rich in spirit and in wisdom, one whose *duty* as a rich person is to periodically and perpetually divest oneself of material wealth to the point of bankruptcy to assist others. Without doing that, one cannot be considered 'rich'. By perpetually distributing wealth one becomes poor or bankrupt in material riches, but becomes rich in spirit, and therefore respected as a 'rich' person. It will be immediately obvious to readers that these ideals approach almost exactly the concepts preached by the world's great religions, eg, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism. In Vanuatu, high social status (being traditionally a 'Big' or 'High' Man/Woman), which commands respect, goes hand in hand with this concept of material poverty, of assisting others, of caring for people and the environment: this concept applies especially to hereditary chiefs, to elected chiefs, to chiefs/Big Men/High Men who have achieved their position through ritual investment and is in fact one of the ways to be considered a chief. Unstinting generosity is the mark of leadership, and without it one is likely to be 'dethroned'. Such individuals can become focal points for the inward and outward flow of material and spiritual riches. Aspects of these traditional concepts have also partially spilled over into the political arena since 1980.

In western cultures the ideal of the rich man completely impoverishing himself is a respected one and goes back

to basic religious philosophy: although it is an ideal, it is now never followed in the modern world. In traditionally-oriented societies in Vanuatu, however, it is the norm rather than the exception. The philosophical genius of the human spirit is not restricted to only those societies that had developed systems of writing, but also exists in many traditional non-literate societies, such as those in Vanuatu and, for example, other traditional non-literate societies around the world such as the Kaggaba/ Kogi Indians of northern Colombia and certain Australian aboriginal groups, to name a few examples.

From a traditional Vanuatu viewpoint, many of the 'richest' White Men' (or Asians, or whoever) would actually be classed as 'poor people, but with lots of money': the concept of riches and the perpetual retention of the material aspects of them just don't go together. One of the basic concepts of most forms of material wealth in Vanuatu cultures (be it tusker pigs, money mats, certain types of shell monies, yams, kava roots, or whatever) is perpetual movement, the shifting of these valuables around the system. There are, of course, exceptions, as there always are in Vanuatu, but movement and periodic public display of wealth items are part of the essence of the systems. In most cultures in Vanuatu, the possession of material wealth, and its distribution, must be periodically public; the concept of hoarding it secretly in a bank would, to a certain extent, negate the reason for holding it.

The modern western economic system: A background and a cautionary note

IT MAY SURPRISE NI-VANUATU READERS TO KNOW THAT the modern western economic system that is extending itself around the world is actually a relatively new phenomenon. Of course money, in the form of coins, has been around for thousands of years in certain cultures, but the present system, with banknotes, business ventures, financial and stock exchanges and so on, is really only a couple of centuries old - and the present free market economy much more recent. The modern western economic system owes much (but not all) of its beginnings to a rather charismatic young gambler and 'man about town' (the Bislama translation of that would probably be 'snuka') with a brilliant flare for mathematics, the Scotsman John Law. Escaping from London in 1695 after killing a man in a duel there, he made his home and further fortunes gambling on the European Continent. He was fascinated by the nature and theory of finance and tried to develop a scheme to restore the fortunes of impoverished France under the rule of Louis XIV. Law convinced those in power in Paris that money could be lent in the form of notes (ie, it did not have to be in the form of silver or gold coins), backed by assets, and could repeatedly be lent and re-lent. If everyone had confidence in the system,

then the system would work. He was given the official OK and in 1716 opened the first French bank to issue paper currency (banknotes): this became the Banque Royale in 1718. He started trading companies which became investment opportunities for shareholders and effectively created the world's first stock market boom, and the word 'millionaire' was invented to describe those that made fortunes in the speculation. True to its origins, it was actually a form of gambling, with a slightly more polished appearance.

Like certain economists today, Law believed that the markets should be left to develop freely: "Constraint is contrary to the principles upon which credit must be built", he said, when things were going well. His attitude changed, however, when things started to go sour: "Despotic power, to which we are beholden for it (the system) will also sustain it", he wrote. His financial empire collapsed in 1720 and with it the new French financial system. But basically the market system around the world today has a similar base - investment, credit, speculation, and a search for profits. This is not to say that it is wrong, but it may be of use to know where systems originate - and certain cultures in Vanuatu could be said to be doing the same things, traveling to invest in tusker pigs in an area where they are cheaper than your own area is not that different from speculating on the stock exchange. But at least with the pigs you have them in your hand (or canoe) and if their value suddenly drops for some unknown reason in your area you know that you can sell/exchange them in another area where their value has remained high. On a stock exchange all you may be left with is a valueless piece of paper.

Like the periodically fluctuating values of tusker pigs, the modern economic system - stock markets - has had its ups and downs, with a major 'down' in the USA in the 1870s and another one there in 1929, the latter producing almost a global recession and ripple effects around the world, even impinging upon the expatriate-owned plantation economy in the then New Hebrides. The more integrated the world's economic system becomes, the greater the danger is of a financial hiccup (for that read 'collapse') in one part of the world affecting economies worldwide. If Vanuatu completely loses its traditional economic systems and integrates fully into the modern western economic market system, then an economic collapse on the far side of the world could unfortunately impinge on the well-being of the rural population (ie, the majority). The traditional economy is Vanuatu's blessing and safeguard - all ni-Vanuatu have traditional access to land, and this is an invaluable safety-net in times of crisis. A charming French economist brought in to work in the then Prime Minister's office in 1992 said his mission 'was to drag Vanuatu screaming into the modern world': when his mission ended a few years later he remarked 'Well, we have not been too successful, but that is probably a good thing: people here don't realize how lucky they are, the events of the modern world do not really affect them'. And

long may it remain like that.

The southeast Asian financial crisis of 1997 did not affect the country, but it did make some influential people begin to think what might have happened if the situation had been different (luckily, those wise individuals who developed the Vatu, the nation's national currency since the early 1980s, did their work well and based its value on a mixed basket of well-chosen overseas currencies that have permitted the vatu to remain stable and strong). It seems that the latter crisis had actually been sparked off by strict economic re-adjustment measures dictated by the IMF (International Monetary Fund), and financial crises and social unrest in three South American nations (Ecuador, Argentina and Bolivia) in 2000-2001 also seemed to be linked to re-adjustment measures imposed by either the IMF or the World Bank. These institutions, founded in 1944, have done some sterling work assisting countries around the world, but over the last 20 years or so there seem to have been some policy changes that have meant that sometimes advice given by them 'does not necessarily bring the results desired by the recipient nation'. Some have said that possibly these institutions (and the more newly-created World Trade Organization – WTO) have been pushing a 'one-model-of-economic-development-fits-all' approach that is too closely geared to certain western economic concepts, theories and approaches that do not really take into account the fact that one glove does not necessarily fit all hand sizes.

Certain concerned thinkers began expressing doubts about aspects of the modern system quite early on, even questioning such basic economic measuring concepts as GNP (Gross National Product, now sometimes called GDP, Gross Domestic Product), a term developed in the 1930s by western economists searching for a term for a uniform measurement of national (or per capita) production. The concept of GNP includes all paid services and manufactured goods, but does not distinguish between productive and destructive services (thus, for example, a war may actually be good for GNP as this produces an increase of arms manufacturing jobs, etc). If GNP goes up, that is supposed to be good, if it goes down it is supposed to be bad. Vanuatu's GNP/GDP per capita is one of the lowest in the world, but does this reflect reality?

The public overseas do not seem to question the concept of GNP/GDP and economists continue to measure in it. However, possibly the most profound criticism of the concept (and therefore of much of modern economic approaches to world economy) came from none other than the late Robert Kennedy, former Attorney General of the US (and the brother of the late President Kennedy) in his opening speeches on the first day of his campaign for the US presidency in 1968:

Gross National Product counts air pollution and cigarette advertising and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks on our doors and the jails for the people who break them. It counts the destruction of the redwoods and the loss of our natural wonders. It counts napalm and it counts nuclear warheads and armored cars for the police to fight the riots in our cities... Yet the Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry, or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debates or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile (quoted in Caulfield, C. *Masters of Illusion: The World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* 1996).

Modern neoclassical economic theory and free market ideology, as espoused by major international organizations and banking systems are coming increasingly under criticism from a younger generation of economic thinkers in the western world. "Economics has increasingly become an intellectual game played for its own sake and not for its practical consequences for understanding the economic world. Economists have converted the subject into a sort of social mathematics in which analytical rigor is everything and practical relevance is nothing" (Mark Blaug in *Post-Autistic Economics Network* homepage; <http://www.paecon.net>). "Economics is science in some sense, but is at the same time ideology. Limiting economics to the neoclassical paradigm means imposing a serious ideological limitation. Departments of economics become political propaganda centers" (Peter Soderbaum in *Post-Autistic Economics Network* homepage; www.paecon.net). "Most (economics) courses deal with an 'imaginary world', and have no link whatsoever with concrete problems" (Emmanuelle Benicort in *Post-Autistic Economics Network* homepage; www.paecon.net). However, it is this neoclassical economic approach that is being imposed upon countries in the 'Developing World' by the big international organizations who tell them that this is the only way to go. But is it? One should bear in mind that economic approaches such as Marxism and Capitalism, for example, are essentially theoretical, 'faith-based' systems, basically almost religions, and at the moment the latter is in the control of 'fundamentalists'.

The modern western economic approach, for example, does not take into account the fact that all ni-Vanuatu have access to land and are what these economists might call 'land-owners' (although the traditional systems in Vanuatu are really closer to a more spiritual concept of land custodianship rather than the simpler western concept). What percentage of westerners can say the same of themselves? Very few. In fact it may come as a bit of a shock to most ni-Vanuatu to realize that most White

Men don't actually have any land – and in a sense, might therefore be classed as 'non-persons' or 'driftwood' by many islanders. If Vanuatu does eventually completely follow the modern economic system recommended by certain international overseas organizations, then it will almost inevitably result in the people losing their land and effectively becoming 'driftwood slaves' in their own islands/nation. Modern economic optimization usually requires both a maximization of scale in (eg, agricultural) production and a mobile work force: in many countries overseas the easiest way to obtain both the above has been to find ways of dispossessing people of their land. This potentially disastrous situation should be guarded against at all costs; land is the Mother, and without its possession and protection Vanuatu would become a poor nation in all senses of the term.

This analysis of western economics is extremely relevant for this study as it shows that support, promotion and development of traditional economic systems may in fact be a necessary protection for the future security of ni-Vanuatu (and by extension, other Pacific peoples) and their cultures. If the modern system has in-built structural faults that may not yet be easily apparent, then it is only normal that one should search for a way to balance the uncertainties of modern development with traditional cultural certainties. It is not just wise old chiefs suggesting this, but younger western economists as well: "...We believe that understanding real-world economic phenomena is enormously important to the future well-being of humankind, but that the current narrow, antiquated and naïve approaches to economics and economics teaching make this understanding impossible" (Emmanuelle Benicourt in *Post-Autistic Economics Network* homepage; www.paecon.net). A new movement, called 'Post-Autistic Economics', amongst western economics students (the recent quotes above are from members of that movement) try and reform present modern-day economic theory began in early 2000. They may be the economists of the future. Until that day, it may be best to be interested, but slightly cautious, about economic advice and dictates from the outside world (also bear in mind that the balance of the present world economy is changing: by the year 2050 China will probably be the largest economy, with the US second and India third).

Basically, the present-day modern free market economic system has not really been around long enough to be properly tried and tested for long-term sustainability. Traditional wealth systems in Vanuatu have, and their 'production and valuation centres' are within the country and not based or controlled by inhabitants of another (albeit large) series of islands on the other side of the world. Understand and keep in mind the fact that even if one is living in, say, the mountainous interior of Santo or southern Malakula or in an isolated hamlet in Pentecost, on one's own

land, with a large family, with one's yams, taro, kava, pigs and other traditional wealth items and strongly linked to ones culture, but have almost no modern money, one is not poor: in fact one is probably a lot better off than most of the other inhabitants of the world!

TO END THIS BRIEF LOOK AT MODERN ECONOMIC IDEAS of western origin that have recently spread worldwide, let us quickly look at four related, but different, points that are extremely relevant for this particular project:

- **SELF-SUFFICIENCY.** Let us not forget some of the major themes that fuelled the movement that finally resulted in the independence of Vanuatu in 1980: return of all alienated land to its traditional custodians; retention of indigenous languages and cultures, and *economic self-sufficiency*. This project is a major step towards the fulfillment of particularly the latter goal, and by doing so, reinforces other systems such as traditional leadership and traditional culture.
- **'THE WORK ETHIC'** Modern economic theory assumes that everyone wants to work full-time to earn money: this is actually a cultural concept relevant for some, but not all, societies in the world. Societies of western European origin have this concept (in the US it is sometimes called the 'Protestant Work Ethic'), as do certain Asian societies (unfortunately, the way the 'modern' system has worked out, many of these people – even in Europe or the US – actually have to work full time just to survive, or at least to continue paying off their debts and the interest on their debts). Traditional Vanuatu cultures do *not* have this sort of concept, and most ni-Vanuatu actually *have* more important things to do than to 'work full time like a White Man' – essential activities to do with birth, marriage, status change, cultural alliances, death, and extended family and kinship obligations (and interestingly enough, most of these are the sorts of things that peoples in the 'Most Developed Countries' realize they should really spend more time doing but cannot as they have to work all the time). There is 'work' in their traditional worlds: in the gardens, ritual preparations, ritual obligations, but it is 'work with a cultural and spiritual purpose' and the modern type of work (eg, Monday to Friday in an office, which is upheld often as some ideal) is difficult to find and moreover, time spent on that interferes with the real things of life and therefore can be considered a bit of a handicap.

If one lives in the outer islands and one may actually only need a certain small amount of extra modern money each year to purchase items such as kerosene, bush knives, soap, matches, etc, then one can easily calculate the amount of concentrated work one might have to do to produce the required amount of smoked copra

to obtain that small amount. Therefore if the price of copra goes down, one has to produce a little bit more, but if it goes up one has to produce less, and produce less one does. That is a good intelligent approach to life (although some economists might differ in their opinion on that, some other populations have found their ways around modernization – this approach is, for example, shared by much of the working population of the small island of Eivissa (Ibiza) off the SE coast of Spain, who will work crazily for four months each year during the tourism season, and then take the rest of the year off). Importantly, in Vanuatu, if one does end up fulltime ‘working like a White Man’ (sometimes said as if it really means ‘working like a slave’) and one does make a lot of money, traditional concepts of richness dictate that one has to perpetually give it all away, which sort of defeats the purpose of modern work from the start. This point may be slightly overstated, but it is important.

- ‘THE END OF THE AGE OF OIL’. An easily-available and cheap energy source has fuelled the expansion of the modern world economy over the last century. Oil and its derivatives have facilitated energy production and easy transport and also the manufacture of innumerable materials that are considered by many to be essentials of modern life – from plastic buckets to condoms. We are at the moment on a short-lived ‘global oil plateau’ and by around the year 2015, some analysts say, global oil consumption will gradually increasingly outstrip remaining global oil reserves. This necessitates an urgent search for a mixture of hybrid energy sources for the future. Vanuatu, and other Pacific nations, are, of course, at the far end of the oil supply pipeline and gradually dwindling oil reserves will increasingly be gobbled up by the hungrier, more developed nations. Prices of all modern imports will rise dramatically. The less Vanuatu has to rely on such outside sources of energy, power and materials, the better. As the modern global financial economy is basically oil-based, the more one can develop projects that lead one towards self-sufficiency and minimizing reliance on outside imports, the better.
- ‘A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH: DIABETES’. There is a practical health issue associated with all this. This project aims to support aspects of the traditional life and value systems particularly in the outer islands of Vanuatu. A hopeful, beneficial, side-effect of this project is that it may help to minimize urban drift to the capital. An active, rural, lifestyle, on traditional foods, is a lot healthier than an office job in the capital. A rapidly increasing health risk for ni-Vanuatu is the much feared ‘sik blong suga’, Diabetes Mellitus. Medical studies done in the Pacific have indicated that Melanesians and Polynesians have a high ethnic susceptibility

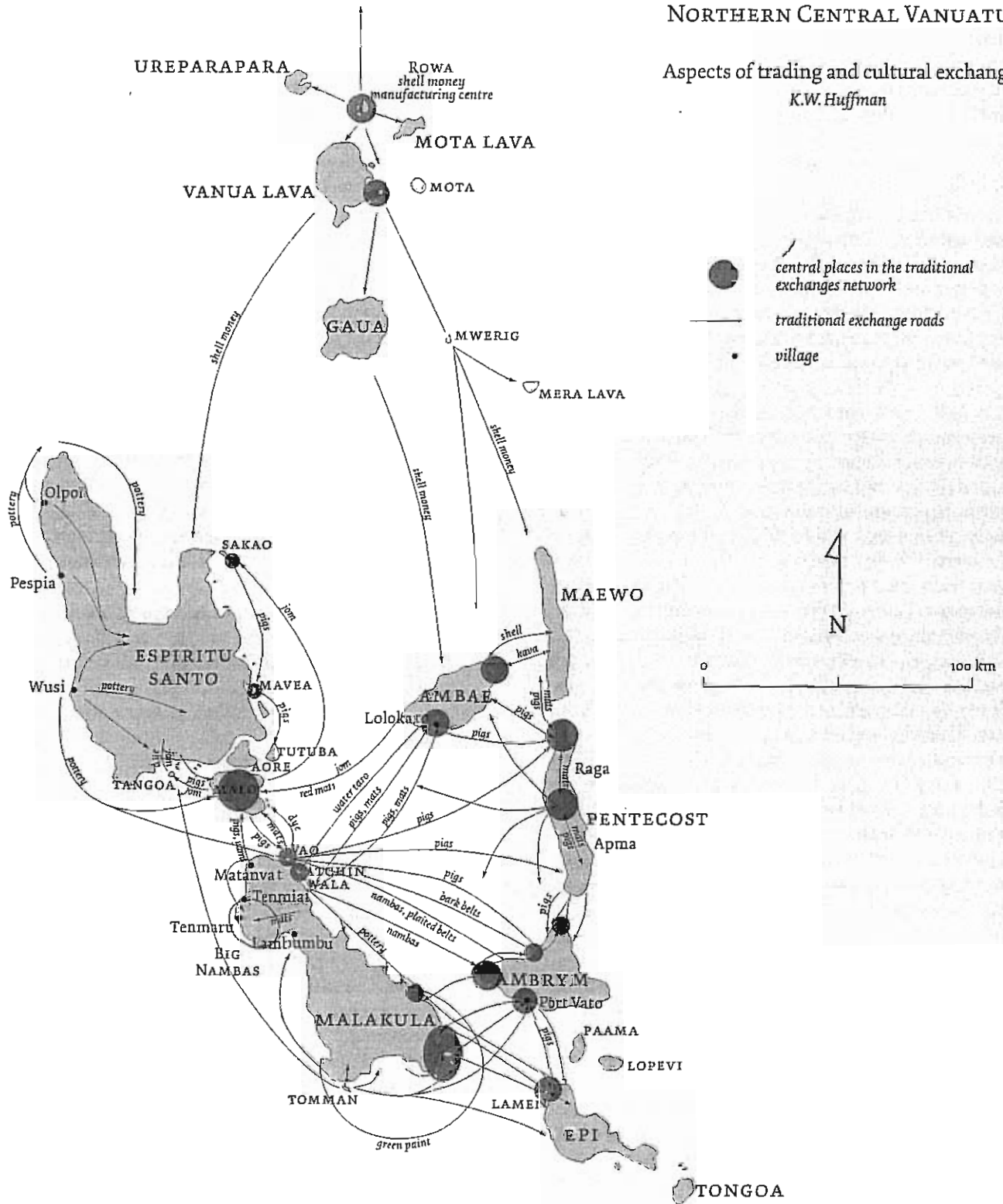
(Polynesians more so than Melanesians) to developing diabetes if they change from a traditional, active, lifestyle with a traditional diet to a western type inactive lifestyle and a western diet. Recent medical studies with rural and urban Melanesians in New Caledonia clearly point this out, and a 1996 medical report concludes “This finding confirms the deleterious effect of western life in the population subject to rapid modernization”.

Sipos yu wantem livem wan gudfala longfala laef, maet i gud blong tingbaot blong lego Vila, go bak long aelan mo leftemap pig, mat, shel mani, yam, kava o wanem we yu gat blong yu save gat wan rij mo langfala laef!

NOW LET US HAVE A LOOK AT TRADITIONAL VANUATU wealth items in general, look in more detail at the traditional situation in some of the northern islands, and then outline the current status of these items in areas of the Banks group, Malo, North Pentecost and southern Malakula, areas where it is recommended that the project provides some assistance. In some parts of the world where the modern western economic model is thought by certain economists to have been most successful, an obsession with money itself as the main aim in life seems to have taken hold, almost a ‘triumph of wealth over wisdom and ethics’ syndrome. Let us hope that this project will provide, for Vanuatu at least, a road towards a ‘triumph of wisdom and ethics over modern money’, or at least a way to find a better balance. ○

NORTHERN CENTRAL VANUATU

Aspects of trading and cultural exchange
K.W. Huffman



Map of Vanuatu after Bouenmaison et al, Arts of Vanuatu, 1996, page 184.



TOP: Tusked Ravwe (Naravwe) intersex pig belonging to Willy Edgar. Atabulu village, North Pentecost. Photo K. Huffman, August-September 2004.
BOTTOM: Rare Tanna Kapia/Kapwia/Kepwia hairless (glabrous) pig, with forehead painted red in recognition of its special status. Southwestern interior of Tanna, September 2004. Photo by and courtesy of Jean-Pierre Rivalain/www.monalisa-prod.com.



TOP: Castrated male tusker pig, North Pentecost. Photo: K. Huffman, Lolong, North Pentecost, August-September 2004.

BOTTOM: Wild pig captured by Iofala James in Malakula bush. Vanuatu wild pigs are descended from domesticated pigs that have 'gone bush'. As with most domesticated animals that have gone wild (eg cattle and horses), the forequarters (shoulders and forelegs) are bigger and more developed than the hindquarters of pure domesticates. Photo by and courtesy of Francis Hickey, Limap, east Malakula, January 2005.



TOP: 'Som' stringed shell money being displayed during 'Tamate Viou' ritual dance from Mota Island, Banks Group. Photo: K. Huffman, August 2002.
 BOTTOM: North Pentecost women wearing money mats during Hava Tapae dance for women's grade taking ceremony. Loltong village, North Pentecost. Photo K. Huffman, August-September 2004.



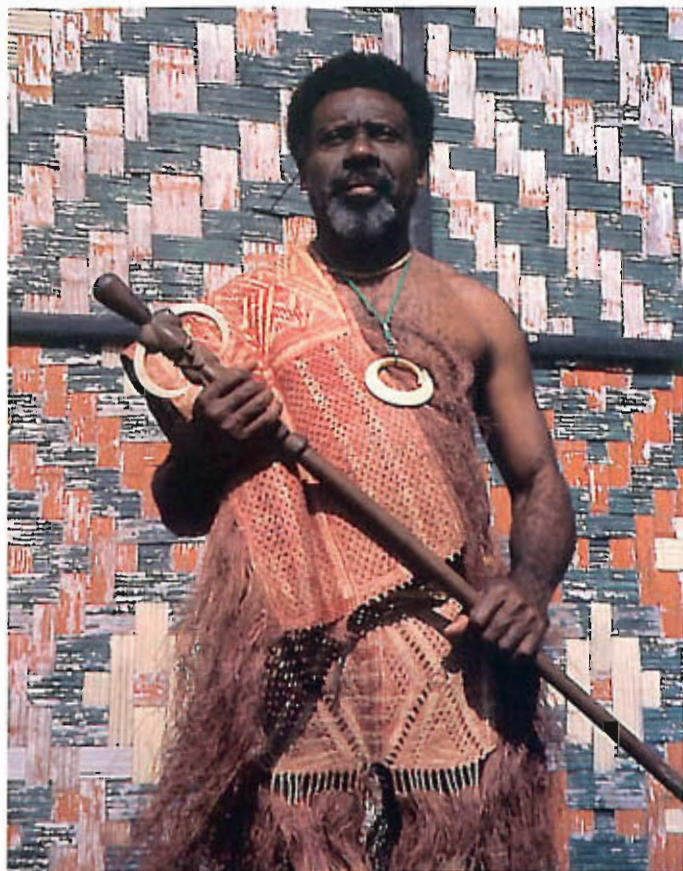
TOP: Large money mats, North Pentecost. Left to right: Bwan Maita (white mat), Bwan Memea (red mat), Bari Memea (small red mats - in right background). Photo K. Huffman, Lavatu village, North Pentecost, August-September 2004.

OPPOSITE, THIS PAGE: Lolowiya Leona sorting the money mats for her Tanbunia. Photo: Y. Carrillo-Huffman, Loltong, North Pentecost, August 2004.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Tusked Spirit Mask in rituals at Melial Duwo. James Teslo in background. Photo: K. Huffman, Lwoivenevet village, south-central Malakula, August-September 2004.







TOP LEFT: Tusked Spirit Mask from the Octopus Nalawan, coastal Ninde-speaking area. Photo K. Huffman, Nemel Logh' bongalo, Lawa, southwest Malakula, August-September 2004. South West Bay, Malakula, Aug-Sep 2004.

TOP RIGHT: Chief Paul Tahi Hubwehubwen Vanua, from North Pentecost, President of the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, wearing pig's tusk, Bari memea money mats and Homu shell bead status necklace, Port Vila, September 2004. Photo: K. Huffman.

OPPOSITE: One of the late chief Vihapat (Virhambat) of Amokh's wives weaving 'nahei parei' head mat. Amokh, Big Nambas area, northwest Malakula. Photo: K. Huffman, October 1985.





TOP: Komanlat'r'nbank'r at home with his favourite tusker pig, Photo: K. Huffman, Lendamboe village, South Central Malakula, November 1985.

OPPOSITE: Weaving of funerary money mat for forthcoming 100-day funerary ritual, South Central Malakula. Photo: K. Huffman, Lendamboe village, South Central Malakula, November 1985.



TOP: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Sato Kilman launching the 'Canoe of Self-Reliance', Uripiv, 18th March 2005.
BOTTOM: Participants at Uripiv workshop, March 2005. Both photographs by Noe Saksak.

Part 2:

TRADITIONAL WEALTH ITEMS OF NORTHERN VANUATU

A rich and vibrant traditional economy

BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE 'WHITE MAN', THE archipelago of Vanuatu was a land of wealth and plenty. It still remains mostly so today, partly because of the intense pride that ni-Vanuatu feel for their cultures and because traditional cultural values have largely maintained themselves in the islands away from the two urban centres. Everyone had (and still has) land and that land was (and still is) rich. Sophisticated traditional agricultural techniques produced enough good food for large populations with enough surplus for regular prestations and ritual feasting. There was (and is), however, always the threat of famine due to cyclone devastation of food resources, plus rarer damage caused by volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis. Most societies compensated by preparing stocks of long-lasting 'famine food' stocks (eg, smoked breadfruit biscuits, which could last several years), but those traditions have now largely fallen into disuse. The majority of the cultures were/are 'land-focused' rather than 'sea-focused', produce from the land being usually (but not always) of greater nutritional and cultural importance than that from the reef and sea. Reflecting this emphasis, coastal villages often face inland rather than seawards.

Blessed with a stunning array of different languages and societies, geographical and cultural differences resulted in certain areas and certain islands often being the focal points for the production of both material and intangible traditional items of wealth. Ni-Vanuatu, like all Melanesians, are inveterate traders, and the sporadic distribution of desired items and themes resulted in the development of sophisticated intra-island and inter-island trading networks that sometimes involved large distances and various middlemen. Such trading was usually in the hands of men (as women were usually forbidden in trading canoes) but often followed routes that had been 'opened' traditionally by the exchange of women. The most widely esteemed, valued and sought-after traditional wealth items, particularly in the northern half of the country, were pigs, plaited and dyed

pandanus mats, and stringed shell beads used as currency and valued decoration.

Intricately linked to these trading systems were also aspects of intangible cultural trade. Northern Vanuatu is home to an ancient and complex series of systems of traditional copyright whereby wealth items can purchase not only certain material benefits, but also spiritual wealth in the form of rights to songs, art ('materialized spirit') forms, ritual and ritual cycles, and so on – which can then be re-sold. It is in this way that many of the major cultural themes have spread throughout the northern islands, by the judicious use of traditional wealth through not just the normal trading/purchasing systems but also through the copyright systems to obtain tangible and intangible cultural benefits. These systems are extremely relevant for Vanuatu today and still exist in modified forms in parts of the northern islands. What must be born in mind, though, is that the living social relationships involved in these transactions are often as important, if not more so, than the items/elements themselves – these are 'living' systems. Traveling for 'Bisnis Pig' ('Pig Business' in Bislama) is still a major preoccupation of certain males on parts of the islands of Pentecost, Ambae, Maewo, Malo, Malakula and Ambrym and we will thus begin our survey of traditional wealth items by looking first at pigs, the most important single element in Vanuatu economics.



PIGS

CERTAIN OVERSEAS READERS UNFAMILIAR WITH THE realities of life in the southwestern Pacific might be slightly puzzled to discover that an animal that is slightly denigrated in certain western cultures and absolutely prohibited in, for example, the religions of Judaism and Islam, should here be considered an item of wealth. In Vanuatu, pigs are not just the major embodiment of traditional wealth, they are also an animal that is respected, valued, admired, well-

fed and cosseted (unlike, say, dogs, who have to scavenge for themselves), groomed, spoken and sung to, and some are even given names and go down in history as elements in story and song. They have a beauty and, in some areas, a soul, and a language all of their own. They are living 'money on legs', with a sacred glow. They are the major sacred sacrificial animal in Vanuatu and their participation in ritual is absolutely essential not just for the Living, but also for the Ancestors, for the continuation of society and culture and for the renewal of local and world order and life itself. In Vanuatu it is only special male pigs and a few rare variations that have this ritual value; female pigs, in general, are not elements in this sacred currency; their role is purely to bear new generations.

Melanesian cultures in general² (except for Kanak cultures in New Caledonia, where pigs did not traditionally exist) place great value on pigs and they feature in much ritual activity throughout this ancient and complex part of the world. It is in Vanuatu, however, that the importance of pigs reaches its highest and most intricately developed level. This is absolutely normal as, apart from man, the pig is the only large mammal that existed in these islands. The distinguished Swiss academic Dr Felix Speiser wrote "Why the pig should be the pre-eminent... animal is plain when we remember that it is the largest land animal in the islands and, next to man, the most valuable" (Speiser, 1991, p. 373, translation from the 1923 German original). As Melanesian languages and cultures constitute nearly 20% of the total languages and cultures of the world, this is obviously not a minority viewpoint. Moreover, taking into account the numerous other cultures of island Southeast Asia and mainland Southeast Asia itself in which pigs are of some importance, one may find that there are more cultures in the world with a respect for pigs than those that do not respect them (and bear in mind that in a 1989 world pig census 1% of the world's pig population was in China, which was then estimated to have 349 million pigs – as compared to 55 million in the US and continental Europe with 185.6 million).

Ni-Vanuatu understand that cultures overseas may place great importance on other animals; cattle, sheep, camels, goats, bear, etc, and that is respected: what ni-Vanuatu expect in return is an understanding from those foreign cultures and religions that in Vanuatu (and Melanesia) pigs are to be respected. It is a bit difficult to respect sheep, for example, in a country where none exist. This advice is also meant for certain fundamentalist Christian missionary organizations who still persist, in Vanuatu, in trying to prohibit their followers from raising or eating pigs: not only do they thus deprive their followers of a much-needed source of protein, but they also, quoting certain passages

from the Bible, try and convince islanders that pigs are 'unclean' in the biblical sense. Not only is this taking elements from a completely foreign culture and trying to impose them on another, but it ignores the fact that in the same way that the world's human population is incredibly diverse, so is the world's pig population. As inhabitants of the Middle East are not closely related to people in Vanuatu, neither are pigs in Vanuatu closely related to those in the Middle East.

These Christian churches have also forgotten the importance of pigs in very early European cultures (before the later arrival of cattle, sheep and goats), have forgotten the important role of pigs in the re-conversion of Spain to Christianity, and have forgotten the statues of Saint Anthony of the Pigs in certain churches in western Europe. Other foreigners may complain that the ritual of pig sacrifice in Vanuatu is cruel. But these same foreigners, back in their homes overseas, may eat pork or pig derivatives purchased in a super-market from supplies provided from massive pig farms where countless thousands of pigs are crammed into inhuman (or in-pig) caged conditions, given food purely for quick fattening, and then 'humanely' killed by an explosive device aimed at the forehead just above and between the eyes. In rural Vanuatu domestic pigs are often well looked after, eat well, have regular contact with humans, and the most common form of ritual dispatch is a quick blow to exactly the spot the pig farms overseas target with their explosive devices (more on this topic below). So it can easily be seen which pigs actually have the better life.

The origin and character of 'traditional' Vanuatu pigs

PIGS HAVE BEEN AROUND IN VANUATU FOR A VERY LONG time, as pig bones associated with Lapita pottery sites from around 3200 years ago testify. Whether these are the earliest pigs in the country and exactly what kinds of pigs they were is still not known. However, it is likely that various types of pigs arrived at differing times in the canoes of the differing ancestral peoples who populated the islands eons ago over an extended period of time. Certain early (and some not so early, one still hears this periodically) travelers, traders, etc, were of the opinion that pigs were introduced to Vanuatu by the 'White Man' (and some even say Captain Cook did it). This is obviously incorrect as cultural practices associated with pigs (and pigs themselves) were noted on Santo by de Quiros in 1606 and by Captain Cook in southeast Malakula and Tanna in 1774 – and these practices are still familiar to inhabitants of those same areas today.

Scientifically, pigs are of the family of the *Suidae*,

² "Melanesia" is a somewhat outdated anthropological term used to refer to the region of the Pacific inhabited by 'dark-skinned peoples', which today encompasses eastern Indonesia, West Papua, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia.

belonging to the mammalian order *Artiodactyla*, the even-toed ungulates, and of the lineage of the *Suiformes* (whose other two families are the *Hippopotamidae* [hippos] and *Dicotylidae* [peccaries]). The many traditional forms of European pigs were descended from the European Wild Boar, *Sus scrofa*, but most of these have almost disappeared now as since the mid-1800s Europe and much of the rest of the world has been swamped with pig breeds imported originally from Asia and highly modified pig breeds especially from China – *Sus indicus* and the ‘China Pig’ (often called the ‘China White’) so familiar everywhere today. The latter are the kinds of pigs often called ‘longfala sora’ (‘long ears’), ‘bigfala sora’ (‘big ears’), ‘sidni pig’ (‘Sydney pig’ – as the first ones came to Vanuatu from Sydney) or just ‘pig blong waet man’ (‘white man’s pig’) in Vanuatu bislama – or in local languages, eg, *boe tamaute* (pig/white man) in Auta language from northern and western Malo. These pigs breed quickly, have large litters, and fatten up very easily. This may sound only good to people unfamiliar with Vanuatu, but from a traditional point of view these pigs can actually pose a few problems, as we shall see below. This digression into ‘white man’s pigs’ is not irrelevant to this study.

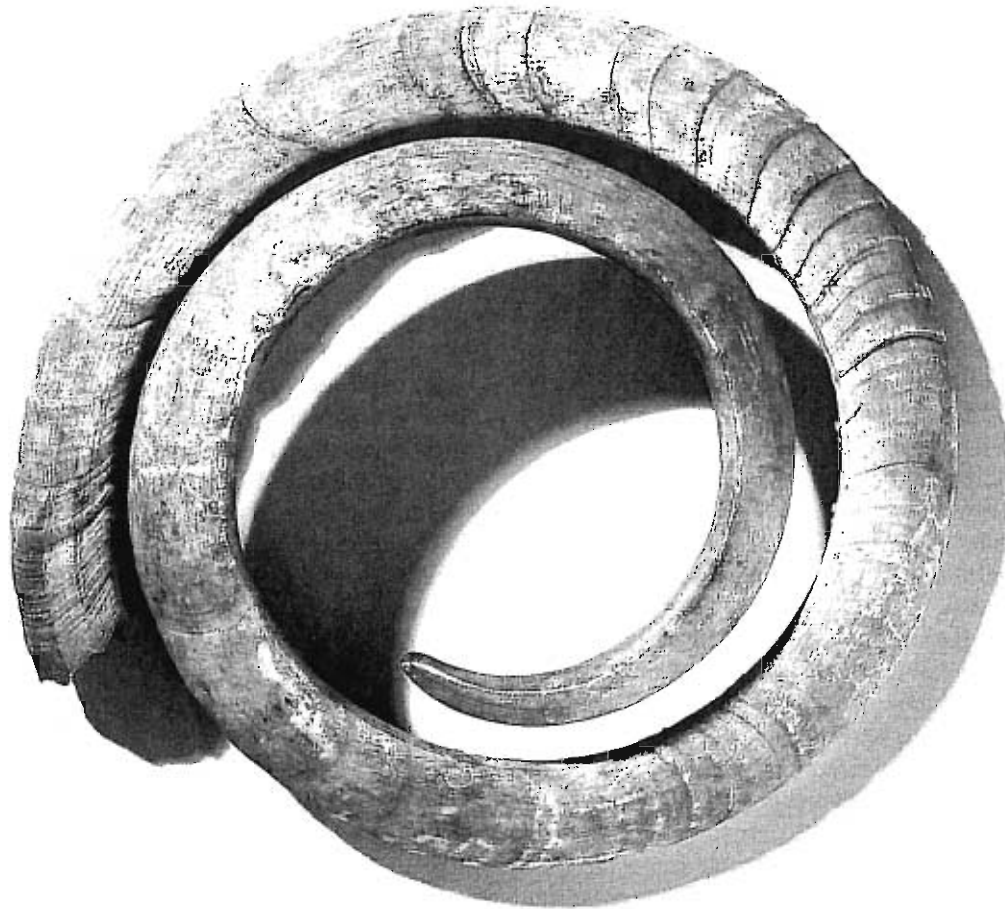
Traditional Vanuatu pigs have a very different and much more complex story. Some variations of creation stories from the Banks islands relate how the god Kwat (Qat) created men and pigs as similar beings at the same time, both walking upright and both possessing language: men (and in one version the Creator’s brothers) became fed up with the pigs’ overbearing and lordly attitudes and petitioned the Creator to do something about it. The Creator then pushed pigs down to make them walk on all fours (but did not, apparently, completely destroy their language). One story from Ambae has the first pigs appearing from a man’s hair. In a story from one south Malakulan mountain culture, pigs originally ruled over men, had domesticated them, and periodically sacrificed them in rituals to increase pig status. The men were kept in compounds attached to the pigs’ houses and could hear the pigs talking inside. One man eventually learnt the language of pigs and overheard them one night discussing which humans to sacrifice in a ritual the following day. Warning his colleagues, they broke down the intervening wall to the house, tied up the pigs, reversed the world order and ever since then men have been sacrificing pigs to increase mens’ status. In northern and western Malo, the first pigs appeared out of holes in the ground, ‘pig holes’, *Nabambae boe*. On Tanna one story relates how the god Karapanemum sent the first kava and pig (in the form of a stone, ‘stamba blong pig’) to the island in a canoe from the east. Each area has its own stories, and the variations are endless. It is possible, however, that pigs first arrived in the southern islands at a later date than in the northern islands, and from a slightly different origin area: major differences in aspects of pig culture at least indicate a major ‘pig culture’ split between the southern and northern

parts of the country.

Almost all academic publications since the late 1920s state that traditional pigs in Vanuatu are of the variety *Sus papuensis*, the Papuan pig, in line with an origin in the area of Papua New Guinea. A more recent in-depth scientific work theorizes that they may originally be more of a cross/hybrid between/of *Sus celebensis* and *Sus scrofa vittatus* (the latter a pig of Indian affinities), indicating an origin further west and north, and therefore possibly even earlier. The most recent study, however, provides Mitochondrial DNA evidence that pigs may have been domesticated from indigenous wild boar varieties in at least five different areas of the world. This work eliminates *Sus celebensis* as a possible ancestral element and pinpoints the possibility of the area of Halmahera in the northern Moluccas (Indonesia) as the ancestral domestication homeland of Pacific pigs. A significant percentage of these original pigs are now more or less mixed with varying amounts of blood from ‘European’ pigs, and pure-blood Vanuatu pigs are becoming rarer and in fact certain types may have disappeared already in some areas (such as the *Davelu* type of pig from western and northern Malo, one of their original types of pigs which may now be lost forever in pure form) and in other areas seen only very infrequently (such as the *Bua na Waghere* ‘pygmy’ pigs in southern Pentecost).

In many areas of the northern central islands, however, it is still possible to recognize pigs of pure or almost pure descent. These are usually of hardy, light and compact body structure, fine-boned, relatively long-legged, with a long tapering snout (‘longfala nus’/‘long nose’ in Bislama) and smallish mouth. In their wild state in the bush they are incredibly fit and agile, wary of human contact, and can be extremely aggressive when cornered: in their domesticated state they can be friendly, docile, talkative, pensive, bossy, grumpy, absent-minded, active or lazy – in fact almost everything that humans can be. Hair colour can be varied, ranging sometimes from off-white to reddish-brown to black, to spotted and striped, but those approaching the ‘ideal’ type tend to be black, with a fine ridge of hair from the top of the head along the spine (and often the tips of these bristles are slightly lighter in colour). They are beautiful creatures and worthy of admiration, very different in appearance from the big-boned, heavy-set pigs of ‘European’ origin.

Traditionally, many cultures in Vanuatu permitted their domestic pigs to range freely, fencing in their food gardens to prevent damage. This permitted regular breeding with agile, wild, pigs and a good, balanced diet. Most areas now tend to fence in their domestic pigs and have less effective garden fencing (except in those areas where there are large numbers of wild pigs). This development (often suggested by early missionaries – at least those who did not want to completely ban pigs – for hygienic reasons) has not always been beneficial to the pigs as it restricts exercise, decreases diet variety, may interfere with water requirements, and



CIRCULAR PIG'S TUSK, MALAKULA. Originally obtained by either Robert Etheridge Jnr. (one-time curator of Ethnological Collections and then Director of the Australian Museum) or his son Robert James Etheridge, an 'island trader' with Burns Philp. Late 19th or early 20th century, possibly northeast Malakula. Donated to the Australian Museum 1988 by Dr. Brian Symons, great-great grandson of Robert Etheridge Jnr. Registration no. E81623. Photo: Carl Bento © Australian Museum. Photo by and courtesy of Australian Museum, Sydney.

promotes growth and transmission of internal and external parasites. However, these traditional pigs, more so than those introduced from overseas from the mid-19th century, are much better suited to the environment, climate and geographical dispersal of the islands. The lighter, smaller, more compact body build and the tendency towards blackish colours are ideal adaptations for tropical conditions, as are the smaller litter size (4 to 5 offspring per litter as compared to 10 or 11 with modern commercial pigs) and less frequent birthing (once every 12 - 18 months as compared to twice a year for commercial pigs) in uncontrolled breeding situations. Female pigs tend to have their first birth later than the modern ones, usually only after they are over a year old, and the young are extremely precocious, being able to survive alone from one week of age if need be. These are pigs definitely geared to survival in sometimes uncertain conditions.

They are also, and this is a note of a practical nature,

slightly better travelers, in general, than the newer types. Not only are they smaller and lighter, but after maybe hundreds of generations of being perpetually traded around - carried in arms, led on ropes, transported by canoe - they seem to be less nervous than those not yet used to perpetual movement (docility is also enhanced in that a significant percentage of traveling male pigs have also been castrated). Australian scientists in 1994 announced the results of a 15-year study on pig personality, indicating they are intelligent sensitive creatures easily susceptible to stress.

The basis of pig value

IN THE NORTHERN AND NORTHERN CENTRAL ISLANDS of Vanuatu, pigs are the major and most important form of traditional money, the focus of much of daily and ritual life, and the standard by which almost everything is valued. Male

pigs, that is. As said earlier, female pigs have their role as bearers of new generations, and are essentially bystanders in this economic and sacred world. Although certain Melanesian male-female cultural attitudes may be thought to be responsible for this difference, the real reason may be an ancient cultural adaptation which ensured the survival of valued pigs as a species – as, if female pigs were also objects of ritual value, their ensuing use as sacrificial fare could seriously endanger the future continuation of pigs as a viable species. Moreover, the major factor really ensuring the safety of females is that they do not grow tusks, and that which makes a male pig valuable in northern Vanuatu is not its body size, but purely its tusk size and curvature.

Male tusker pigs and pig's tusks

THE 'MONETARY' AND SPIRITUAL VALUE OF MALE TUSKER pigs in northern Vanuatu is actually man-made³. Man has taken the possibility of a naturally-occurring phenomenon and developed it in a sophisticated way, with complex techniques, to produce an object not only of high spiritual symbolism, beauty and respect, but also an object through which commercial transactions, social relationships and spiritual desires can be purchased, obtained, maintained and defined. Although male pigs can grow tusks (as, for

example, the European wild boar), these tusks can only reach a certain length since their further growth is impeded by the presence of the upper canine teeth which grind down (and sharpen) these lower canines and prevent them growing too long. Such unmodified male pig's tusks have had and have cultural significance in many cultures worldwide – from ancient cultures in parts of northern and western Europe to their role in certain ritual masks in present-day Bali (Indonesia), and their cultural use in many societies of the vast island of New Guinea, for example.

The cultures of northern Vanuatu have developed this theme into a commercial and spiritual art form. By taking out the upper canine teeth of male pigs at a certain stage of growth, the lower canine ('tusk') can grow unimpeded, and grow it does, gradually growing up and around and back to form a beautiful, glowing circle. This growth process entails a lot of care and assistance from humans to ensure that the tusks grow properly and safely and are not broken accidentally by the pig itself. The growing tusk and its curvature, for northern Vanuatu cultures, thus represents not only the increasing commercial, ritual and spiritual value of the pig, but also the numerous hours of human care involved in guaranteeing the physical survival of the pig during this process. Ideally, it should take about 6-7 years of care for the pig's tusks to grow in a complete circle, and a total of possibly 10-12 or more of increasingly intense care

³ Modification of aspects of respected animals is neither unusual nor rare – many cultures worldwide and throughout history have developed and perfected techniques to enhance the cultural value and beauty of the animals those cultures hold most dear. Traditional pastoral Lapp cultures in the northernmost part of Europe have modified and trained the horns of their reindeer; some early cultures in Europe modified the horns of their cattle, as do present-day pastoral cultures in northeast and eastern Africa and certain settled cultures in India, to give just a few examples. The current slight trend towards non-permanent (ie, dealing only with hair or apparel) modification of pets (particularly dogs) in cultures of European origin does not necessarily reflect cultural preferences or practices, but is purely dependent on the whims of the owner and like-minded people and may often reflect the decreasing importance of family ties, increasing personal loneliness and a search for companionship with a more personalized representative of the animal world.

It is often said that the practice of taking out the upper canine teeth of male pigs to permit full tusk growth is unique to societies in northern and central Vanuatu. Yes, well almost unique, one could say: it is also found amongst the megalithic cultures of the small island of Nias off the coast of southwestern Sumatra in Indonesia as well as amongst a small series of inter-linked cultures in the southern and southwestern areas of the large island of New Britain off the eastern coast of Papua New Guinea. Here it is of interest to note that these southern New Britain cultures also practice human head modification/deformation/elongation, a trait shared by most of the cultures of southern Malakula in northern central Vanuatu. Such comparisons between Nias, southern New Britain and northern Vanuatu may indicate separate developments from the general one of respect for pigs, or they may, to a certain extent, be isolated remains of historical 'stepping stones' of developments of ancestral Melanesian cultures gradually shifting down from the west and north towards outer island Melanesia in the east and it could therefore be an even more ancient tradition than if it was just restricted to Vanuatu.

One should here point out that although these may be extremely ancient practices, pig tusk 'cultivation' and human head modification/elongation should not be looked upon by outsiders as 'primitive' practices. Regarding the latter practice, it too has a long and respected history in many cultures worldwide and those from, for example, the Developed World denigrating such a custom may have forgotten similar traditions within many cultures of western, central and eastern Europe. Readers from France, one is sure, will be delighted to learn that their country was in fact the 'head modification' centre of western Europe well into the 19th century. This practice was restricted to several French rural peasant areas, was done for aesthetic reasons and to increase memory, and a large collection of French medical photos (taken between 1875 - 1912) exists of the last surviving French peasants with such heads. It may be pertinent to point out here that the last time a young French child was seen wearing head-binding cloths was said to be by a French medical doctor visiting an extremely isolated hamlet in 1925. This digression may seem to be irrelevant, but in a way it is not: ni-Vanuatu have had to put up with nearly 150 years of peoples of European origins denigrating or trying to prohibit certain respected ancestral traditions (such as the raising of tusker pigs) and it is only fair to turn the cultural telescope the other way around now and then. What if European readers read reports of a 'recently discovered tribe of dark-skinned people practicing arcane ceremonies in which great numbers of them chanced large sums of wealth in vast crowds gathered to see which one of a particular group of four-legged animals could run the fastest'? One could be sure that disparaging comments would be made and fundamentalist missionaries would be hurriedly packing their bags and looking for the place on their maps. Horse and dog racing may be, of course, slightly more sophisticated than the above comment, but it is a modern tradition with a long history. The raising of tusker pigs is also a modern tradition with a long history (but with a deep side to it that the European practice cited above does not have).

for them to grow forming a double circle. Some cultures stipulate that the pigs should be castrated at an early stage before the upper canines are taken out (others accept both castrated and non-castrated tusker pigs as valued creatures). Not only can castrated male pigs be looked upon as having more value, but a practical side-effect of this operation is that it makes the pigs more docile, less likely to violently damage their own tusks, easier to transport and is also thought by some to enhance tusk growth (as the pig 'now puts all his energy into growing his tusks'). Once the upper canines have been removed, each subsequent noticeable growth of the lower tusk is named and valued – and there can be anything from, say, five to nearly 30 different terms for pig value depending upon tusk curvature.

It is this fact of gradual tusk growth and therefore increasing value that has made such pigs the ideal element in purchase, investment, loan and credit. Everything has a price in pigs and the tusk curvature is the determining factor. It should be emphasized here, though, that the tusk itself, on its own, has only symbolic value: to be viable in commerce, exchange and ritual it must 'still be attached to its live owner', ie, part of a living pig. Certain cultures in North Pentecost and on the neighbouring islands of Ambae and Maewo, however, also accept and value complete unbroken skulls and jaws of tusker pigs as live pigs in ritual and 'commerce': when the skull is broken by a blow with a club it is equivalent to dispatching a live tusked pig. Pig's tusks worn as a right by important men and women signify the value of the pigs they have sacrificed in ritual and are not, traditionally, 'money' in themselves. There will be more on many aspects of these topics in Part 3 of this report.

Pig investments: Loans, debts, interest and compound interest

IF ONE NEEDS SO MANY PIGS OF SUCH AND SUCH A TUSK curvature for a normal or ritual purchase – for anything from, say, bride-price to adultery fines to purchase of ritual status – payment can be easy if one has them. If not, one then has to borrow pigs (of the required tusk curvature) at a fixed rate of interest and eventually pay them back. Interest is determined by the rate of tusk growth plus an extra amount: thus, if one borrows a pig whose tusks are two years away from completing a full circle, what one must pay back in two years is a full circle-tusker plus an extra small pig or two with short but growing tusks of pre-agreed upon value or, say, five pigs of tusk curvature whose combined value is the equivalent of all the above. Every combination of tusk curvatures are intricately worked out, so it is known – and much debated upon – what sorts of combinations of tusker pig values are needed in every instance. Pig loans and debts, interest and compound interest, are part of normal life, are never forgotten, and serve to link individuals, lineages, clans

and cultural areas throughout the northern islands into an intricate series of social and economic relationships that symbolize, are part of, and one of the major benefits of this wonderful, living, system.

It is a common sight in the outer islands to see groups of older men squatting or sitting, in eager discussion, periodically lifting their hands with certain curved finger gestures to their cheeks; they are, of course, talking about tusker pigs and each curvature has a recognized finger shape and gesture describing it. These groups of lively elders could be looked upon as the local equivalent of a group of Wall Street investment bankers, in the same way that a group of Wall Street investment bankers in discussion could be looked upon, in the US, as their local equivalent of say, a group of such old men discussing similar investment tactics somewhere in South Malakula. There are, moreover, some other similarities; in the same way that some of those in, say, the Developed World, might try certain slightly dubious tactics to increase profits, hide losses, recover loans and debts, etc, some individuals in northern Vanuatu might use special dietary and magical techniques to speed up the tusk growth of one's own pigs or to do the opposite to the pigs of a potential rival, use the threat of sorcery to speed up debt recovery, or even attempt to magically make one's rival's female pigs infertile. In addition, in the same way that investment bankers overseas sometimes specialize in perpetual loan and credit operations, so too in northern Vanuatu, where some men's pigs are perpetually out on loan necessitating a continuing series of borrowings from other areas to keep the system flowing. There is never a dull day on the pig stock market.

No-one really knows how long the tradition of tusker pig growth has existed in Vanuatu, but it has definitely been around for many centuries. The Spanish expedition of de Quiros noted circular pigs tusks worn as decorations by men and many pigs in the coastal Big Bay area of Santo in 1606 and large numbers of pigs collected for rituals in a village maybe 15 miles inland. Captain Cook noted circular pigs' tusks worn decoratively by men in southeast Malakula in 1774. Circular pigs' tusks (of the narrow, carved double-pointed type still produced in one area of Tongoa until the late 1920s) have been found in the famous 'Roy Mata' burials on Eretoka ('Hat Island') in central Vanuatu, and these burials have now been dated at around 1600 AD. Such traditions do not spring up overnight, they take many centuries – or more – to develop, evolve and spread.

Pigs and the 'graded systems' in northern Vanuatu

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE NORTHERN VANUATU traditions seems to lie in the extent to which male tusker pigs have been developed into creatures which perform complex economic, ritual and spiritual roles. Their area of

major importance with these functions corresponds very closely to the regions of northern and northern central Vanuatu governed by the traditional power systems known as the graded system(s), with (a possibly later) extension further south into areas of central Vanuatu governed by variants of title systems of a slightly more 'Polynesian' type. The custom of raising tusker pigs does not extend to cultures south of the island of Efate in the centre of the archipelago. Interestingly, the areas in which the graded systems occur are also the areas in which sand drawing, proclaimed a "Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" by UNESCO in 2003, is a traditional practice.

The graded systems of northern Vanuatu, known as 'Nimangi' in Bislama, are a vast and varied series of ritual systems in which men progressively purchase higher and higher social rank, prestige and titles which can assist, promote or confirm their influence and authority and, in some areas, ensure their attainment of perpetuity in the World of the Ancestral Spirits after death. Many of the cultures also possess parallel and linked, but slightly less complex, similar systems for women. The attainment of such social height (and therefore more respect) is through the gradual purchase of specifically named social ranks which become more and more expensive the higher one goes. The means of purchase is with tusker pigs, plus possibly also other forms of traditional value items such as plaited and dyed pandanus money-mats and stringed shell money if the latter exist within the particular culture (see below). In some areas these traditional wealth items are almost completely interchangeable, a certain amount of money mats of a certain type or a certain series of lengths of stringed shell money being the value (but not necessarily ritual or spiritual) equivalent of a pig with a certain tusk curvature.

As the languages and cultures of the northern islands vary greatly, so do the numerous differing graded systems. Each area has its own specific variety of the system, with its own particular name and differing number of ranks (and therefore differing prices, commitments and obligations for each rank). System names, ranks and title diversity is almost boundless: although 'Nimangi' (in Bislama) is a relatively new term covering the system in general, the name is still not widely enough known in certain isolated areas to be easily understood. Local language names for the system, varying from culture to culture, can be as diverse as (picking a few examples from north to south) *Sokwe*, *Sok*, *Sok'w*, *Sukwe*, *Sumbwe*, *Sumbwea*, *Hunggwe*, *Hukwe*, *Vüster*, *Bolololi*, *Lele'utan*, *Lele'boan*, *Warsangul*, *Maki*, *Nangi*, *(Ni)Mingi*, *(Ni)Mangi*, *Mengge*, *Maghe*, etc. The numbers of ranks in each system can vary from as little as two (although each one taking as much as a generation to attain) to over twenty, although most systems have numbered ranks in the nine to twelve-level range. Increasing rank in each system gives one influence and respect within the boundaries of one's own culture, but once one gets to the higher/highest levels

of each system one clicks into a series of more generally recognized titles that spreads one's status, influence and respect beyond these confines into neighbouring cultures on one's own island and even into cultures of nearby – or further away – islands. One goes 'island-wide', so to speak, and then 'wide into the islands' (or, more properly, 'island high' and then 'high into the (other) islands').

The spread of the graded system using tusker pigs was looked upon as the spread of 'the Road of Peace', providing a form of social competition that did not necessarily involve warfare and also providing a sophisticated form of leadership influence whose higher levels linked up larger areas of the islands. In general, graded systems or graded societies are, in essence, democratic in the sense that entry is open to anyone (who can afford to pay and who has the stamina and drive for a lifetime of literal social climbing, expense, investment and regularly perpetual impoverishment). But the higher one goes the older one grows, and therefore the highest ranks are inevitably attained by the older men. Society then naturally is governed by a gerontocracy which is hopefully steeped in wisdom and spiritual riches. Like anywhere around the world, though, sometimes someone with a slightly malevolent character can sneak his way up to the higher levels, but the laws of respect, compromise and balance (plus the requirement that one needs a sponsor plus much public support) tend to weed these types of character out before they reach too high.

This whole vast, complex, order of social mechanisms would be impossible without tusker pigs; they are the sacred currency that purchases the steps in these ritual ladders and the oil that smoothes the links in the chains of relationships that spread outwards, across and upwards from them. With them and through them one can purchase and obtain all the necessities of normal, ritual and spiritual life. In fact there is no life without such pigs.

But there are other pigs that go beyond even this.

Naravwe: Intersex (hermaphrodite) pigs

IN CERTAIN OF THE NORTHERN ISLANDS THERE EXISTS another type of pig even more valuable than male tusker pigs; this is a rare form of pig which exhibits both male and female characteristics but can grow superb tusks. The Bislama term for these pigs is 'Narave' or 'Naravwe': proper language terms (a few examples from northern and northern central Vanuatu) for them vary from *Nerao*, *Neraw*, *Rolas*, *N'dre*, *N're*, *Nerav*, *Narave*, *Naravue*, *Naravwe* and *Narawe*. Cultures in the islands that value these pigs recognize not just one type of these, but anything from four to nine different types, each with a special name, according to external genitalia and other features. Only certain areas recognize and value 'Naravwe': the Banks and Torres, Ambae, Maewo and North Pentecost, Santo, Malo and (formerly at

an early date) northern Malakula. In these cultures the value of a tusker *Naravwe* is usually about half as much again (or more) as that of a similar male tusker pig so, for example, if a full circle tusker in one area is worth the equivalent of \$250 then a similar *Naravwe* would be worth around \$375 (or more). In the mid 1970s Keneti Vatu of Avunatare, Malo, told anthropologist Bob Rubinstein,

“Boe (male tusker) is like silver, but (Na)*Ravue* is like gold”. When asked the basic meaning of the term *rave* or *ravwe* (*na* is just the definitive article, ‘the’), most northern ni-Vanuatu will just say that it refers to these pigs. One footnote in an 1891 publication, however, suggested that an indication of the term’s early meaning could possibly be found in the Maori form of the Polynesian language: this led the author of this report to ask a Maori friend, who said it was a non-sacred term meaning ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ and that, moreover, in the slang of present-day Maori youth in Auckland the new ‘in phrase’ is ‘*Ka-rawe!*’ – ‘awesome!’

Few outsiders know about these pigs, but most that do tend to call them ‘hermaphrodite’ pigs. The proper scientific term overseas is actually ‘intersex’ pigs and ni-Vanuatu will be pleased to note that some of these northern islands mentioned above were home to the world’s highest birth ratio of intersex pigs. They are now extremely rare and the only island where they still exist in significant numbers is Malo. There are traditional ways to try and maximize birth numbers of these wonderful pigs by choosing male and female siblings (for interbreeding) from lineages known to bear them and feeding them on a special diet. Modern scientific assistance on this aspect could be provided with the sympathetic involvement of the zoologist James McIntyre of the Southwest Pacific Research Foundation of Florida, USA, the only living scientist to have done extensive work on this in northern Vanuatu and Malo.

Tanna: Hairless pigs

ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY OUTSIDE OF THE SCOPE OF THIS report, mention should be made of the rare hairless (or, scientifically, ‘glabrous’) pigs of Tanna. The cultures of southern Vanuatu do not use pigs, mats or shell money in transactions in the same way as cultures in the north: their social and economic systems function in a different way, a superb method of ritual and social exchange and balance with no commercial aspects. Some forms of this they call ‘*Swapem*’ (‘swapping’) in Bislama, although the process is much more complex than this word suggests. The system works perfectly in the traditional world and supplies all ones wants and needs; it is only now when modern cash is needed for certain items and non-traditional services that one must resort to some form of paid work to obtain that. The northern and southern systems are worlds apart. In the same way that, for example, people from the southern island

of Tanna do not value tusker pigs (some have not even heard of their existence) – although they do value pigs for their size – and do not know of the existence of intersex pigs, peoples in the northern islands do not value (or know of) the rare glabrous pig so respected by Tannese and called variously there *Poka Kepwia*, *Kapia*, *Kapwia*, etc. These pigs are born with little or no body hair, are more docile than the normal pigs, and have special – and high – ritual exchange status, equivalent to that of a human or a turtle or for exchange only with another pig of the same type during the massive *Nekowiar/Nokiari* clan alliance exchange rituals. They cannot be exchanged with normal pigs, they function in a separate sphere, and befitting their prestige they can at times wear the decorated bark belt of a man of title and have their faces painted accordingly. Their status can be better understood if one refers to one of their origin stories (this version is from one section of the Kwamera area in southeastern Tanna) where the first *Kepwia* was brought into existence by the creation god Kumwesen (also known as Wunghen by certain cultures on the island) who wanted human company. Finding his creation lacking in certain desired characteristics, Kumwesen changed it and made it walk on four legs. He then created the first human, to whom he gave the right to eat the ‘de-humanized’ pig. Birth rate of such pigs is at about 6% of each pig generation.

Traditional pigs vs ‘imported’ pigs

THE INTRODUCTION OF LARGE, GIANT, FAST-BREEDING pigs of ‘European’ type into Vanuatu since the mid-19th century has, of course, gladdened the heart of ni-Vanuatu as would anything to do with pigs (but note that, for example, 8000 pigs from Tanna were exported to Australia in the year 1865 alone – maybe one should look for rare hairless pigs in Queensland). There are probably about 70,000 pigs in Vanuatu today, although what percentage are tusker pigs, or *Naravwe* or *Kapwia* or ‘modern’ pigs just for eating is not known. According to a 1989 Department of Agriculture smallholder survey, it was estimated that ‘rural households’ had on average 3 pigs each (and looking deeper into that, those households actually holding pigs had about 5 each). This may be an under-estimate as it would be normal in remoter areas for certain owners of rare tusker or intersex pigs to hide these from unknown outsiders (that is the way of the world). The islands with the highest percentages of households with pigs in 1989 were Ambae and Maewo (70%), Pentecost (73%), Ambrym (66%), Paama (67%), the Shepherds (67%), Efate (68%) and Tanna (with over 86%). Malakula had 57%, Santo/Malo 40% and the Banks and Torres only 28%. It seems some islands need re-stocking. But re-stocking with what types of pigs? Just over 600 pigs passed through the commercial abattoirs in 2003 (this presumably to feed restaurants, urban inhabitants and tourists in the

two urban centres) whilst over 7000 were killed in rural areas in the last 6 months of 1989 alone: a significant percentage of the latter would have been for ritual purposes or ceremonial feasting as well as normal consumption.

There are basically two 'pig markets' in Vanuatu, one for traditional use and one just for consumption. For practical considerations, it may be best not to mix up the two: pigs of 'European' origin are superb for consumption, fast-breeding and they grow to enormous sizes. But, in the northern islands particularly, it may well be worthwhile also considering a major emphasis on promoting the retention of 'pure blood' traditional pigs for the necessary ritual purposes. Firstly, it seems their tusks do grow better and slightly faster, and secondly, they are easier to sacrifice. This latter point may seem unusual, but it is not: most tusker pigs sacrificed in ritual are dispatched by hitting them squarely on the forehead just above the eyes with a special club (although for some types of ritual they can be speared, shot with arrows, or, in one area, smothered). Pigs of traditional blood are much lighter and finer-boned than modern ones, and the forehead bone is particularly thin. Pigs of modern blood have a much heavier bone structure, and their forehead bone is much thicker. To lighten the potential heavy weight of modern pig foreheads, these have adapted by having something scientists call 'Diploë' (pronounced 'Diplo-y') in their forehead bones. This term is used when air bubbles in the interior bone mass (that between the outer and inner bone) reach 50% or more of the interior bone space. Many elderly ni-Vanuatu state that it is not as easy to sacrifice pigs now as it was when they were young. It is not that they are getting older and weaker, but as the percentage of modern pig blood spreads throughout the country, pig foreheads are gradually getting thicker and probably stronger – there is a possibility that the webs of bone between the air bubbles actually act as struts, or a web of struts, thereby making the forehead stronger. There may be a dietary reason as well: a traditional pig 'bush' diet tends to result in low bone density, a more modern, or 'commercial' pig diet results in higher bone density. So the elders are probably not wrong.

The need to preserve and promote traditional pig varieties

THERE ARE NOT JUST CULTURAL AND PRACTICAL reasons for promoting the retention of traditional breeds of Vanuatu pigs. Scientists in Europe and the US are becoming increasingly concerned about the potential disappearance of many types of rare breeds of animals with the rapid spread of particular breeds that are more 'commercial'. These rare breeds should be kept as, not only do they represent numerous adaptations to particular environments (and cultures), but they are also necessary as a survival protection

in case particular types of viral or other types of diseases target a particular breed. If, for example, all the pigs in the world were only of the 'modern' type, a disease targeting that type of pig could potentially wipe them out worldwide. Rare pig breeds need to be kept to ensure the safe survival of the species (and its variations) as such diseases do not usually affect, for example, all different breeds of pigs, but are often 'breed specific'. With these potential problems in mind, the European Union announced in late October 2004 that it will seriously begin to support the preservation of rare domestic animal breeds as a safety and conservation measure. Potentially, therefore, Vanuatu may be able to get some sort of assistance from the EU in the future to support its rare breeds of pigs. And then we can all sleep happily on our mats near the warm oven stones in our thatched huts and dream of tusks growing and curving safely into the future.



MATS: FOLDING, ROLLING AND WALKING MONEY – THE WORLD OF RED MATS

AN INTERCONNECTED SERIES OF ISLANDS IN NORTHERN central Vanuatu – Pentecost, Maewo and Ambae – form the hub of a series of worlds in which woven and dyed pandanus mats are not only worn as items of traditional male and female attire but also play essential and critical economic and ritual roles. Mats, and cultural input from these mat worlds, had extended themselves by trade and influence to the island of Malo, to many of the small islands off southeast Santo, and to neighbouring coastal areas of the Santo mainland by at least the time that white people began appearing in the area. They also impinged upon, by ritual connections, some of the cultures of a series of small islands off the northeast coast of Malakula, which were already a part of a large series of 'red mat' cultures dominating the northern third of Malakula and certain other southern coastal regions of this vast island. These mats are produced and dyed within the world of women, by women (although in certain areas of northern Malakula and central Pentecost men have critical roles to play in the dyeing process) and essentially for women. However, women weave and dye items of male apparel (eg. penis wrappers, *Nambas* in Bislama, in northern and parts of southern Malakula and southern Pentecost and male breechclout/loincloth mats in Ambae, Maewo and northern and central Pentecost) and their mats are also essential (especially in the latter areas) in many forms of payment and ritual, such as marriage payments, initiation payments, and the numerous payments and exchanges involved in both male and female graded rituals. Tusker pigs are essentially part of the world of men (although in most areas a woman will look after and feed her husband's pigs and in those areas with women's graded systems can own pigs herself): with the world of mats and

the delicate, intricate and sophisticated links between these two spheres, the worlds of men and of women balance and interlink at all levels. One cannot fully function without the other and a good equilibrium between them ensures vibrant cultural vitality.

Origin plants

THE PANDANUS TREE, OF THE SCIENTIFIC FAMILY *Pandanaceae*, can grow up to 25 (8 metres) feet high and has aerial prop roots and a prickly stem. It is sometimes called 'Screwpine' in English. It has extremely long leaves, sometimes over 6 feet (2 metres) long, which spiral from the branch tips. There are two varieties, one which grows best in rocky and sandy shore areas and another which grows in the bush and which gives a softer leaf in weaving and is generally more highly valued (this latter type is called *veveo* in Raga language from North Pentecost). The fresh leaves are gathered and softened over a fire, split, washed in fresh water and then bleached in the sun, softened, and then stored in a darkened damp area for several months. At this stage they are then finally ready for weaving.

The dark, purplish-red, brownish-red or blood-red dye is obtained from skin scrapings of roots of a tropical vine or lofty tree climber called by scientists *Rhamnus ventilago neocaledonica* of the family *Rhamnaceae*. It is a lofty climber, looping its way up the chosen tree and sometimes sprawling over its top. The stem is straight and strong, sometimes up to two inches thick. In some of the relevant areas of northern central Vanuatu the plant, root and dye is called variously *Laba* (central Pentecost), *Labwe* (north Pentecost), *Langwe* (east Ambae), *Lambu* (west Ambae) and *Lambwe* (northern and western Malo). In these – and neighbouring areas – the colour is highly symbolic, powerful, and much sought after (certain spiritual aspects of it should not necessarily be outlined in this report). It is interesting to note that the roots of an Indian variant of the plant, *Rhamnus ventilago madras Patana*, called 'Pitti' in Hindi, is there used traditionally to give a dark red dye to cotton, silk and wool garments. The northern Vanuatu dyeing process is complex, and will be dealt with in more detail in Part 3, but it basically involves immersing the bound woven material (with the relevant trappings which will give the desired patterns) for several hours into boiling seawater into which the dye has been diluted.

Mat circulation and exchange

ONCE THE ITEMS ARE READY, THEY CAN BE PUT INTO circulation: they are alive, in the same spiritual sense that tusker pigs are alive, and off they go through an innumerable series of commercial transactions, exchanges and rituals until they just fall apart. If they are worn as

traditional costume, they will possibly have a shorter life than if they enter the never-ending ritual exchange world. Almost all shapes and sizes have a monetary, utilitarian, ritual and spiritual value, these sometimes functioning separately, partially, or all at once, and the woven and dyed materials are symbolic at all these levels.

Value/exchange/purchasing scales operate so that everyone in a particular culture knows how many woven materials of such and such a type are worth how many of another type, and how many are worth a tusker pig of such and such curvature. These values vary over time and from culture to culture. Tusker pigs remain the standard of value, the 'big money'; mats are the 'small money' (which, in sufficient types and quantities, are equal to pigs). Women (and men) in southern Pentecost will know how many *peipis* (woven and dyed penis wrappers) will be needed to purchase a large *badjienriri* (large red-dyed money mat) and how many of the latter may be needed to purchase such and such a pig, if need be. Women (and men) in central Pentecost will know the varying values of *tsip* (the smaller dyed mats used as female wrap-around skirts), *tsip malmal* (the smaller dyed mats used as male loincloths), or *sese* (the large money mats which feature greatly in marriage payments and grade-taking rituals) vis-à-vis each different type and vis-à-vis tusker pigs. Moreover, there are levels of value, status and meaning within each type, depending upon weaving patterns, size, fringe decorations, dyed designs, and depth and type of colour. Similar values permeate the *bari* (smaller mats of varying types for female wrap-around skirts or male loincloths) and *bwana* (the various types of larger 'money mats') worlds of North Pentecost; the *gwana*, *wasmahanga*, *singo* and *maraha* materials from east Ambae and the *vuhru*, *vualamalisi*, etc, from western Malo. In Part 3 we will look in more detail at one of these linked series of mat/pig value systems, that from North Pentecost.

Mats in northern Malakula

THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN MALAKULAN CULTURES IS very different from those of Ambae, Maewo and Pentecost, although there were some superficial similarities. A major series of northern Malakulan 'bush' societies placed high value on woven and red-dyed mats, but they were of a different style and often of more general use than those in the areas mentioned above. Interwoven mat sections were, in general, very narrow, but fringes extremely long. Again woven by women, men sometimes had important roles in the dyeing process. Although the mat sections were usually narrow, some had interwoven or dye designs that had particular significance. In the Big Nambas area of northwestern Malakula, women wove and dyed (although men sometimes participated in the dyeing) voluminous split pandanus leaf *navai* (penis wrappers) for the men, and

enormous *nahei parei* (long-fringed head mats) and *nahei ph'ph* (short-fringed mat skirts) for themselves (these were daily attire), as well as a series of 10 differing lengths of the *nahei tet'van* money mats (valued in relation to pigs and tusk curvature). Neighbouring bush cultures, such as the peoples of the Batar'nar area just eastwards had variations on these themes, women weaving and dyeing *numba* (penis wrappers) for the men, and *bot'got huhunan* (head mats) and *born'n'dr'lak* (mat fringe skirts) for themselves plus a range of exchange mats. Woven sections in the latter culture were wider than in the Big Nambas area, and the fringes shorter, thus giving more scope for interweaving and dye designs. Bush cultures here had a lack of easy access to enough dye materials, though, and had to set up extensive trading networks, using coastal villages with middleman links on Malo and Vao to obtain certain of the dyes, sometimes from as far away as Santo. All these different types of woven and dyed materials had exchange value (with again, the tusker pig as the high focal point of the system) and were thus exchanged within their own cultural areas. The 'red-wigged' women with their voluminous skirts were essentially walking money, seen to their best effect, for example, in the women's section of the lengthy *Maki* grade rituals for a Big Nambas hereditary chief when hundreds of red-covered women participate in *navel tavet*; for viewers it can be like watching a vast sacred field of moving and chanting currency.

The various cultures of the small islands off the northeast coast of Malakula – Vao, Atchin, Wala, Rano, Uripiv and Uri – were essentially sea-faring cultures, great maritime traders, and those on, for example, Atchin, classed themselves as just that, *Mwere'n'Das*, 'Sea Peoples'. They traded widely to Ambrym, Pentecost, Ambae, Malo and even Santo. Male costume was a wide woven and red-dyed (with designs) pandanus penis wrapper, *na'avu* (Vao), *na'mbwes* (Atchin), *bwesbwes* (Wala), woven and dyed by women, who also produced wide, red-dyed, short-fringed pandanus mat skirts for themselves as well as the special woven and dyed money-mats (*mangau* on Vao, *nimbwen* on Atchin) mentioned at the beginning of Part 1 of this report. These money-mats are essentially 'fossilised' versions of female woven 'currency' headgear as worn by inland cultures from the neighbouring Malakulan mainland – or the latter could be seen as living versions of the former. Woven penis wrappers, mat skirts and money mats circulated in trade mainly only within these small island cultures and nearby coastal mainland groups, but some went further afield; Wala, for example, trading and selling *bwesbwes* as far away as Ambrym. These intrepid Sea Peoples did, however, have a special woven mat input, in the form of male and female costume mats, from the Lologaro area of southwestern Ambae. There existed a tradition of male initiation pilgrimages from these small islands to that area of Ambae: initiates returning home brought with them Ambae mats which only they could wear, and then only in

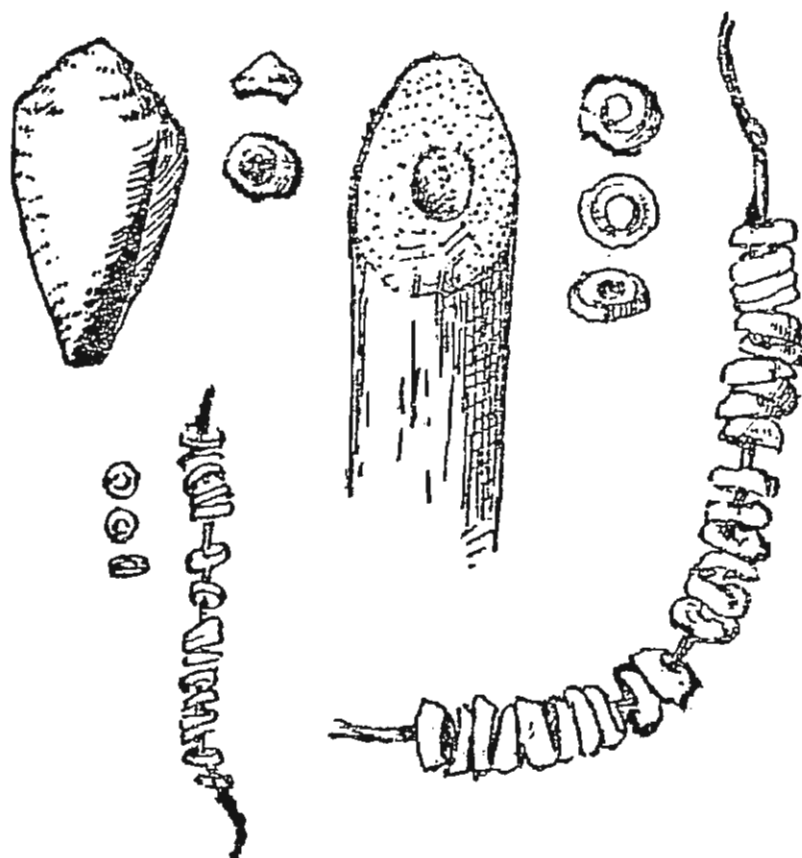
certain dances. On Atchin these mats were called *nimbar*. On Wala the smallest Ambae mats could be worn by these initiates sometimes as a *bwesbwes*, and were there called *man masangk*. Female Ambae mat skirts could be given by the initiates to their girlfriends, and these mats were extremely prized and sought after. Canoe sails on the return voyages back home were painted a bright red (with the red colour called *marang* on Atchin).

All of the above outlines are obviously very simplified, to make this text readable: woven (or, technically, plaited) pandanus material worlds are much more complex and the items more numerous. Some areas have as many as 30 to 50 or more different named types of mats, and maybe even 'mats' is too simple a term to use, something that may be classed as a 'mat' in one context not necessarily being so in another. The main point to remember is that these are, like tusker pigs, living, moving, items circulating in a multiplicity of cultures at a number of levels. At one level they can be looked upon as 'women's small pigs', at another as plain small currency, at another as symbolic femininity on the move, at another as value and power from the dead, and so on. Most importantly, however, they are objects that link women, that link the world of women with the world of men, and provide balance and beauty in the systems. They start small, but by moving, they establish, promote, prolong and develop social relationships beyond the purely commercial into a higher, more complex world.



SHELL MONEY: MONEY FROM THE SEA: SHELL CURRENCIES OF THE NORTHERN ISLANDS

WE NOW ENTER THE WORLD OF STRINGED SHELL money, whose focal point is the Banks Islands in northern Vanuatu. In this area the production and use of shell monies approaches most closely, more than tusker pigs and various forms of mats, the simple Western definition of 'currency' or 'money'. Unlike pigs and mats it has, inherent in itself, no aspects that link it specifically to the more profound levels of the spiritual domain. It is, basically, 'cash'. With recognized production centres and modes of distribution, it serves as a medium through which anything can be purchased in pure commercial transactions, can be invested, can be lent out at defined rates of interest, and can be deposited (or) hidden in personal 'banks'. Taking its name in the Banks islands from the type of shell from which it is made, *som* (some Banks islands languages call it *sum*), the general term for this shell currency is also *som* (or *sum*), and there are two basic forms of it: rougher, knapped, pierced small shell discs and a finer pierced shell disc whose outer surface is then ground when stringed to produce a smooth, shining white, variety. These shell beads are strung on finely split hibiscus bark thread and valued by length.



Som shell and various stages of Som shell money production. From Rivers, 1914, page 166.

Som is, and is made from, the upper tip of a marine gastropod cone shell of the scientific genus *conus* of the *conidae* family of the superfamily *conoidea* of the order *neogastropoda*. The few published references to Banks Islands shell money all state that the specific type of shell used is scientifically termed *conus ceylanensis* Hwass, but research for this reports indicates that this is a synonym for '*conus musicus* Hwass in Brugiere 1792'. Furthermore, it seems that neither identification may be correct and that it may be an as yet scientifically unnamed species of cone shell (of which there are at the moment estimated to be about six unnamed species in that part of the Pacific). This of course means nothing to anyone in northern Vanuatu: Banks Islanders know which type of shell is used and the scientific nomenclature is irrelevant for them.

Production

ALTHOUGH SMALL AMOUNTS OF SOM COULD BE MADE on other islands of the Banks, especially Mota Lava, the main production centre has traditionally been the small island of Ro (better known as Rowa, its name in other Banks islands languages) in the isolated Reef islands.

Here the vast reefs have over centuries provided untold numbers of these shells for *som* production – and as one whole shell produces only one minuscule shell bead, that boundless supply is necessary. The population of Ro was never large, maybe averaging around 50 individuals, but they were specialized professionals working fulltime on the production of shell money (and dried or salted fish). There were no food gardens on Ro, there was very little arable land and the growing of food crops was forbidden by tradition, as were female pigs. This latter taboo was said to be in the interests of the Ro people themselves as it was believed that female pigs would 'devour the population'. The growing of crops on Ro was believed to be able to cause a famine on the large island of Vanua Lava. Thus the people of Ro were perpetually fed by food brought by canoe from other islands in the Banks – for examples, yams, taro and male pigs from Vanua Lava and yams from Mota Lava. This food was exchanged for *som* and dried fish. The system worked well, Ro habitants realizing that regular *som* production ensured them unending food without the toil of gardening and looking after pigs, and other Banks islanders supporting this as it ensured them an unending supply of *som*. A superb system, in which everyone gains.

On Ro, *som* production was regular, time-consuming

and leisurely meticulous, but not hard. Men gathered the shells in baskets which were left to dry in the sun until the gastropods died. The men's work finished there – they could then spend the rest of their time fishing, or whatever. From here the women took over. Firstly, the Ro women do *vit pulpul*, breaking each individual shell by hitting it with *chele* (called *talai* in the more widely-spoken language of Mota), a giant clam shell. The pointed ends are then re-dried in the sun, washed with fresh water, and then submitted to *vit tartar*, chipping them further with another larger shell fragment until only the smaller pointed end of the shell remains with a hollowed underside. This pointed end is then rubbed on a special flat stone which is sprinkled with water and covered with a thin layer of black volcanic sand imported purposely from Vanua Lava: to do this, the hollowed side of the small shell tip is embedded into the sliced interior end of a small straight branch of a type of hibiscus called *kwagala*. This branch is about four feet long and as thick as a finger. With the small pointed end of the shell protruding from the branch, it is rubbed across the wetted volcanic ash on the stone. This process rapidly wears down the point, allowing a hole to appear and the small shell disc now appears. As each disc is produced, it is washed and placed in a coconut shell cup ready to be strung when dried. When enough discs are ready, they are strung on a thin, strong and flexible length of split inner bark of the *vir* tree (called *var* in Mota, another type of hibiscus). The string is called *gaviv*, and is extremely durable. Production is easy, regular, and could be thought by outsiders to be monotonous, but it is not.

The writer of this report has seen the production of stringed polished shell money in a traditional area of Malaita in the Solomon Islands, and the process is very enjoyable for the women, who work in groups, with many songs, and times of much enjoyment. Stringing of this basic chipped shell money finishes the process: for a finer, smoother, brilliant white variety the already stringed shells are placed in long grooves in specially carved long stones which are again covered with wetted black volcanic sand: an upper grooved stone is placed over the length of shell money and rhythmically slid back and forth to grind off and round the chipped edges. Working leisurely from sunrise to sunset one woman could produce daily approximately half a stringed length of *som* called *chil* on Ro (or more commonly known as *tal* in other languages of the Banks). Half of a *chil* or *tal* is the equivalent in length to the distance between the outer ends of the fingers of two outstretched arms, ie, one fathom (about 6 feet or 2 metres). A complex system of named and valued measurements existed, almost every few inches of stringed money having a special name and value, usually based on distances between fingers and other parts of the body. For example, to pay for a large bundle of 10 yams brought in the old days by canoe from Vanua Lava, a Ro woman would pay a length of *som* called *chiregi*, which was

about four feet long (*chiregi* money length is the distance between one shoulder and the finger ends of the extended opposite arm). On Ro, this would provide the major food needed for a family of five for a week.

Not bad, if you compare it with the way things go in the modern world. Think of it. You are not stuck in a sweat-shop with no windows and badly-functioning air conditioning working for minimal wages producing something that others will make an unseemly profit from. You are in a pleasantly breezy thatched hut or lean-to, sitting with other female friends (or, on Ro, mostly female relatives of one type or another), with other friends and relatives popping in from time to time. Your husband and the other men are out fishing (and probably having to keep the fish from swamping the canoe: the reefs are vast and rich and the population small) so you can talk about women's things easily whilst you 'work'. If you want to rest, you can rest, if you don't want to work, you don't – and as it is not permitted to make *som* during menstruation you get a week or so 'off' every moon anyway. And all this hardly costs you anything anyway; the shells are free (and you don't have to pay your husband to gather them), 'labour' is free as it is your time and you don't have to pay yourself and you do not have to pay anyone else working with you. Just about the only thing that actually costs you anything is the black volcanic sand from Vanua Lava. In a way, there are actually very few better ways to spend a day.

Values and use

THE NORMAL BULK MEASUREMENT OF STRINGED SOM is to put two sticks in the ground a fathom apart, ie, the distance between the tips of the fingers of your outstretched arms. One end of the long *som* string is tied to one of the sticks and then passed around the other stick to come back to the first one: this looped measure, two fathoms (4 metres), is the basic widespread Banks islands *tal* (which means 'loop', to 'go around'). Some islands use the term *tal* to define just one fathom, half of a real 'loop' and the actual differing uses of the same term for different measurements can be rather baffling unless one is actually inside the system. *Rov* (on Ro) or *rova* (on Mota, Mota Lava and further afield) is actually the term most widely used to describe just one fathom, and can sometimes be used meaning a *tal*, or more colloquially put as, for example, *rov totgo* (on Ro) or *rova totogoa* (on Mota), literally a full 'stretched' fathom.

Som can be used to pay for anything, from food, to services, to wives, to social rank, to anything. It can be lent out at interest – and interest is hefty, 100% irrespective of time lent. It can be 'deposited' say, in supporting another individual's rise in social status and influence. It can be 'banked' in a hidden place – in a hole in the ground, under the roots of a tree, in a cave, its whereabouts known only to the owner.

A particular child who well looked after an elderly relative might be rewarded with a massive gift of *som* before the old relative dies, but some individuals may die suddenly, leaving the whereabouts of a hidden banklode unknown. Some people employ magic techniques to discover lost hoards and also the accidental discovery of such wealth features often in the oral literature of the islands. In some islands each individual must possess a traditionally copyrighted personal song, the possession of which helps to ensure the safe passage of the dead person to the world of the dead: specialist composers charge in *som* for creating these individualized and absolutely essential pieces. In southwestern Vanua Lava these songs are known as *o'es tamat* and traditionally cost about five or six fathoms of shell money. With *som* a man can pay his way up the intricate steps of the grade-taking systems known variously as *sukwe*, *sok*, *sok'w*, *wuswus wutve*, etc.; in a way, although tusker pigs are considered now the determining factor in such ritual payments, not only can these pigs be purchased easily with *som* but at one level the *som* are almost more important. This may reflect the possibility that many of the Banks islands systems were originally *som*-based and pigs became involved only later – it is known, for example, that in one area of western Vanua Lava the right to actually use pigs was originally paid for with shell money.

Certain areas of the Banks, though, were at the end of the shell money trail, and it could sometimes be in short supply; in these districts another type of money could be used, stringed feather money. This was made from the soft feathers from around the eyes of fowl and other birds, the quills of which were stuck between spirally wound cords. These feathered strings, with alternating white and red bands (the red from root dye), were found in Mere Lava and eastern Gaua (in the latter area they could be called *sumtamin*, or *sumtameghin* in western Gaua, which were also the local terms for a form of shell money). Although essentially of 'status decorative' value, these feathered strings could be used commercially by people of status, and also linked up with the higher, more decorative, type of polished white *som* coming out of Ro.

A highly desired – and more expensive – type of stringed shell discs/beads mentioned above was the famous *som ta Ro*, more widely known as *som ta Rowa*, the finely polished white form which men – and women – strove to purchase (with ordinary *som*) for the right to wear in a decorative fashion as a mark of high status. It is basically this form which is also found in other islands further south – such as parts of Santo, Malo, Ambae Maewo, Pentecost, Malakula and Ambrym – and used as the white beads in graded armbands and other ritual paraphanelia. Some of this reached the latter areas from the Banks islands through a complex series of middlemen, and some was produced locally (eg, on Malo).

Within the Banks, shell money and tusker pigs circulated without the involvement of red-dyed money mats (which is

not a tradition in that area), but the shell money provided the female input that is provided by woven mats, and women themselves could use shell currencies to advance themselves and assist others.

IN ALL THE ABOVE DESCRIPTIONS THERE HAS BEEN MUCH simplification – we have only touched, so to speak, the tip of the pig's tusk, the edge of the mat fringes, or the tip of the unbroken cone shell. The real world is much more complex. Moreover, for it to survive, it needs a continuation of that balance between the worlds of men and women to enable it to function well. ○

Part 3:

THE CURRENT STATUS OF TRADITIONAL WEALTH ITEMS IN NORTH PENTECOST AND SOUTHERN MALAKULA

IT IS ASSUMED BY MANY CURRENT ECONOMISTS AND social planners that development, progress and modernization are naturally good and therefore should be desired by all. However, many populations in the 'Developing World' might rightly ask 'Development from what to what, Progress from what to what, and what is 'modern'? If, as seems to be gradually happening, the effect (not necessarily the aim) of much present-day social change worldwide appears to be that indigenous or traditional societies lose their land, have to move to urban areas and end up being forced to take up maximum menial labour for minimum pay, then anyone with any intelligence might suggest that there may be something wrong in the system. In some parts of the world these developments may have worked well, in other parts they may have introduced 'poverty' into areas or populations where none existed before. Anyone in the Pacific with a knowledge of the past and present activities of, for example, certain large mining or logging companies will admit that the hoped-for benefits to local communities are usually only theoretical, to put it mildly. Almost any ni-Vanuatu spending a certain amount of time overseas in a packed urban situation in a 'modern' country returns home secretly convinced that this may not be the way to go, that there is too much stress and that people are not really content. Many of the foreign readers of this report from those areas overseas may secretly agree with this. We will look again at aspects of these points towards the end of this section, but a basic idea that one would here like to emphasize is that what societies consider as normal and good or desired is largely culturally defined. The world has been blessed with thousands of languages and thousands of cultures and although some of the latter may periodically 'go off the rails', there is something to learn from each and every one. If one series of cultures or economic models – eg, the thirst for modern money almost as an end in itself – spreads itself too widely, then it can actually result in linguistically and culturally impoverishing the world. As the world is a finite resource, and we all have to live on it in a rapidly changing situation (as in, for example, looming climate

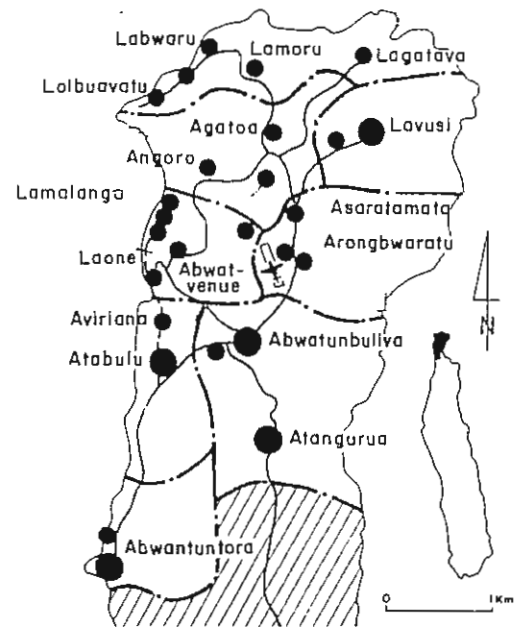
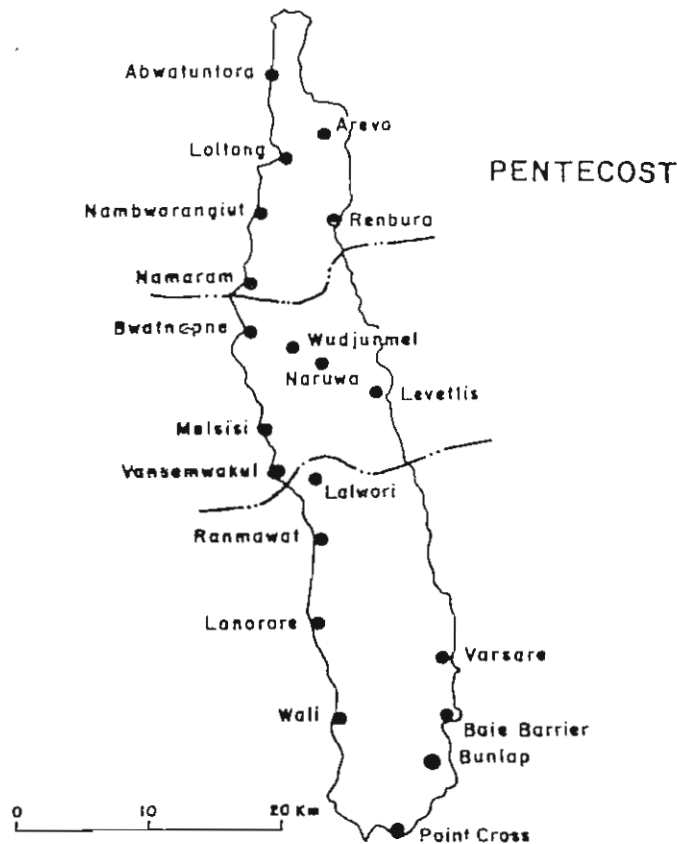
change), it behoves us to respect the linguistic and cultural diversity of mankind. We may need it in the future, as many of the world's still-existing smaller scale traditional cultures are the tried and proven real 'Survivors' and we may all have to rely on some input from them in the future.

Vanuatu is in a lucky situation in that its geographical isolation, geographical dispersal, rich agricultural and marine resources, its amazing linguistic and cultural diversity and the uniqueness of its contact with the outside world have placed it in a situation where it can actually choose 'which way to go'. The ideal way, of course, in any society in the world, is to keep and protect what is of value in one's own culture and maybe slightly mix it with only what is useful, or of benefit, from the outside. One should be cautious and remember that everything that shines may not necessarily be silver or gold or a bright white pig's tusk – it may only be silver-plated or gold-plated or may be a plastic tusk. Support of traditional wealth and economic systems – and thus the material and intangible cultural aspects associated with them – and allowing an input from, or a balance or inter-use with modern money would possibly be an ideal solution. A 'mixed' economy or even a two-tiered system might be feasible. It works in some areas, maybe it can work in others. Let us first look at the example of North Pentecost.



NORTH PENTECOST

THIS SECTION WILL LOOK INTO THE CURRENT SITUATION in the Raga-speaking area of North Pentecost. Raga is one of the larger languages spoken today in Vanuatu and may have a total of over 6,500 speakers in its homeland and elsewhere. It is spoken in the northern third of Pentecost, from its northern tip down to Tasvarongo on the western coast and to around Renbura on the eastern coast. The origin area, or 'focal point' of the language is said to be a small hill or knoll called 'Arag' not far from Nazareth in the north.



Since the 1940s and 1950s, the language has spread into southern Maewo (in the Asanvari, Lavatu and Avanbatai areas) and into previously unpopulated/depopulated areas on the northeastern coast of Pentecost (around Avanguresi, Lavatmangemu and Renbura). The area is divided into five traditional districts (from north to south); Ahivo, Hurilau, Aute, Lolkasai and Aligu, and further divided into sub-districts. North Pentecost has strong mythological, ritual and cultural links with the islands of Maewo and Ambae, all three being the realms of the god, creator hero and cultural hero, Tagaro, whilst it also has important material links to the area of the Apma-speakers in Central Pentecost to its south.

With a local government centre at Abwatuntora on the northwest coast, an airstrip (opened in the mid-1980s) at Sara in the far north, a secondary college (the Hon. Father Walter Lini Memorial College) at Nazareth and a basic network of motorable earth roads (re-graded in mid-2004 for the first time since 1988) – but few vehicles – the area is quite well-served from the point of view of medical dispensaries, primary schools, co-operative stores and a few new telephones, although distances on the ground are great and much transport is still by foot and canoe or speedboat. The Vanuatu Credit Union at one time had a branch at Lolton, and now has one at Namaram, on the western coast, just inside the northern section of the Apma-speaking area on the southern border of the Raga language area. A

new home-grown ‘business’ activity centre seems to be developing at Lavatu (‘Bisi Strit’) 20 minutes walk from the airstrip. Although the majority of the population gradually converted to the Anglican form of Christianity between the 1890s and the 1930s and the last full traditionalists, mostly from Aute district in the northern interior, did not convert until the early 1950s, traditional beliefs and rituals remain strong and form part of normal, daily, life. White Anglican missionary influence was relatively benign, and the majority of the population was able to convert to Christianity without too much disruption, and then gradually re-model it to make it more culturally relevant to themselves, to the extent that in modern bible translations the Christian God is often given the name Tagaro. Modern education was readily accepted, and North Pentecost has produced a significant number of highly-educated, dedicated, and visionary individuals who have had great influence on the country. The most significant of these, of course, was the late Father Walter Lini, the Anglican priest who led the country to independence in 1980 and was Vanuatu’s first Prime Minister from then until 1991. Well-educated Raga speakers are found in numerous positions in public and private institutions in the capital, Port Vila, and in the other urban centre of Luganville/Santo Town on the island of Santo. The current President and Secretary of the Malvatumauri, the National Council of Chiefs, Chief Paul Tahi and Chief Selwyn Garu,

are Raga-speakers from Pentecost, and the former is also President of the National Cultural Council.

What happens in North Pentecost can have significant impact around certain areas of the country, at many levels. Not only are there the traditional connections with other cultures on Pentecost, but because of the profound ancient cultural links through the god Tagaro with the islands of Maewo and Ambae, what happens in the Raga-speaking area automatically has effects in these other islands. This can permeate much of the rest of the country because of the significant number of educated, dedicated, Raga-speakers outside of their homeland. The total population of the island of Pentecost at the time of this report (October 2004) is estimated to be around 16,000 (14,057 at 1999 census) with an estimation of just over 5400 Raga-speakers resident in the northern third of the island (4722 at 1999 census). Estimated population of Maewo is just over 3,600 (3,171 at 1999 census) and Ambae just over 10,700 (9,418 at 1999 census). Thus these culturally inter-linked areas have a current resident population of over 30,000, approximately 15% of the nation's people.

The maintenance of tradition: A cosmological interpretation

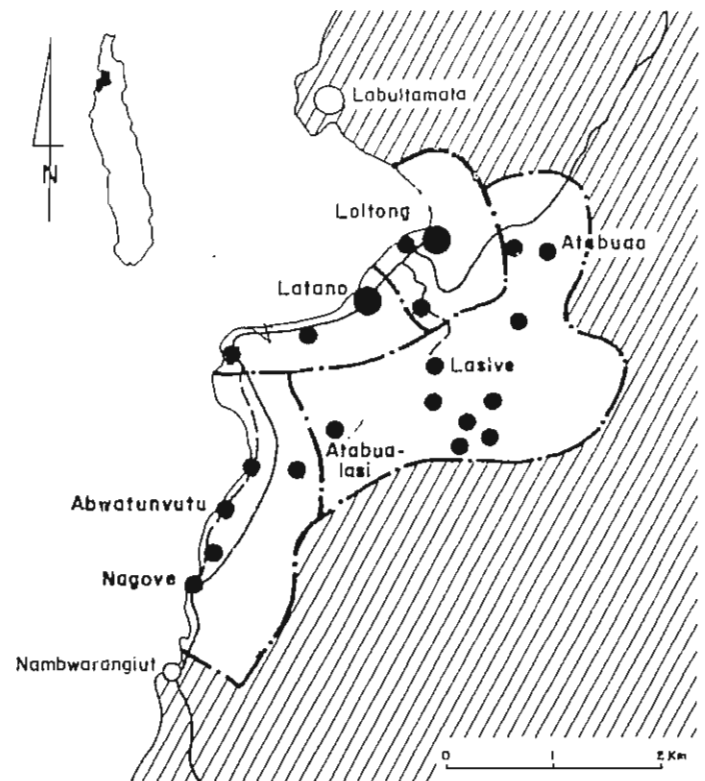
NORTH PENTECOST HAS HAD FOR SOME TIME THE possibility of 'going almost completely commercial', of nearly completely leaving its traditional way of life and following what modern state planners or economists overseas seem to like, emphasis on money-related work in a wage economy. The fact that the area has not gone completely this way is a tribute to the intelligence of the people and the strength of their culture. Raga-speaking traditional culture is highly sophisticated, ancient, extremely complex, and with a profound spiritual and mythological depth that can provide its people with security and contentment at many levels. There is actually nothing that the modern world could introduce that could completely replace this and provide the same benefits. Society here is extremely aware of the relevance of local geography, flora, fauna and other natural elements in mythological and factual history, and just about every hill, creek, rock or reef formation or whatever, in this vast area, has a name, a history and a past or present function relevant for life today. Current local events – and even international ones, if heard of – are slotted into a sophisticated historical viewpoint and are examined for philosophical relevance and meaning.

In the traditional cosmology of North Pentecost, history is divided into a sequence of periods, epochs, ages, 'world changes' or 'generations' called *Tauvwa*, of which we are currently living in the fourth and possibly awaiting the beginning of a new *Tauvwa*. The first *Tauvwa*, at the dawn of history when the islands of Maewo and Pentecost were

joined together, was the realm of the primordial female spirit power Mugarimanga and a panoply of spiritual land guardians, the *Atatun Vanua*. The latter still exist today and are relevant. The second *Tauvwa* saw the creation of *Tavalurao* ('Narasaed wol' ['the other side of the world'] in Bislama: although not a direct translation, this Bislama term is recognized in many cultures), the appearance of many spirit or spirit-human forms, and the beginnings of the links between *Ureure* ('the World') and *Abanoi* (the spirit world or the world of the dead). The third *Tauvwa* is the traditional historical and mythological world that existed before the arrival of the white man, the world of the Raga cultural hero Bwatmahanga and his (more successful) counterpart from Maewo, Tagaro. Human society flourished, the laws of the land (*Silon Vanua*) and society (for example, *Subwe* or *Huwe*, the graded system) developed and were established. It was the period of balance and harmony, the time of *Tamata*, Peace (or, possibly more correctly, 'the power of Peace').

The arrival of outsiders, foreigners, white people, the *Tuturani*, the floating people with no roots, ushered in (from the 19th century), the fourth and current *Tauvwa* in which the balance developed in the former period has been disrupted. The material and spiritual resources and power drawn upon and obtained in current ritual, which depends upon connections and input from still-existing forces from the three previous *Tauvwa*, has been greatly diminished. This weakening can affect everything from the health and fertility of crops and pigs to humans and the quality of life. Need is seen to re-establish essential balances, the laws of land and respect, to look back into the traditional past for insight and advice to better face the future. Because of the innumerable connections between the tangible and intangible aspects of their culture, support for such practical traditions as the production of woven money-mats (see Part Two of this report), the production of shell beads, and the raising of tusker pigs would be extremely beneficial at many levels. It may, in fact, help to usher in the beginning of the awaited fifth *Tauvwa*, in which elements from the traditional world and the modern world come to a balance which is beneficial to all.

Such concepts of *Tauvwa* exist also in the culturally critically important and linked island of Maewo. In the Sungwandaga-speaking area of central Maewo, history is divided into similar epochs, there called *Marama*: like North Pentecost we are currently in the fourth *Marama*, awaiting the beginning of the fifth. It is quite likely that this central area of Maewo is the spiritual – and scientific – origin area for the traditions of the weaving of money-mats that are now spread throughout culturally-linked parts of Ambae and Pentecost. It is, more importantly also, the birthplace in northern Vanuatu of Tagaro, the cultural hero and god so influential in these three linked islands, and under name variants (Tagar, Taghar, etc) and cultural variants (Kwat, Kwet, etc) influential further afield in the northern



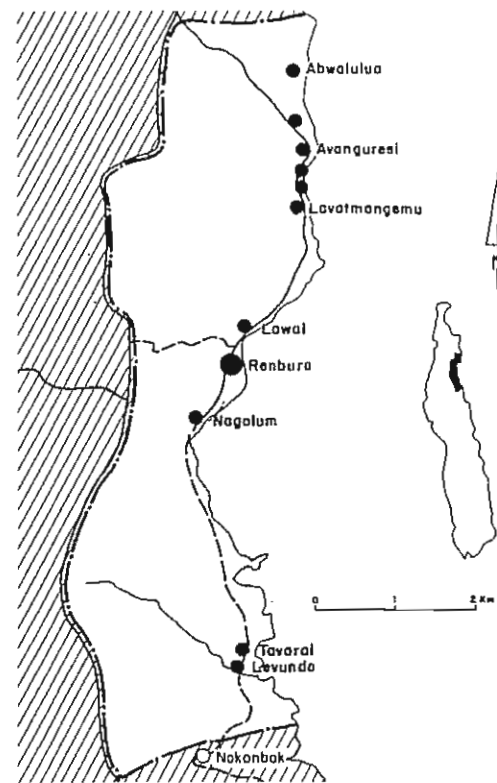
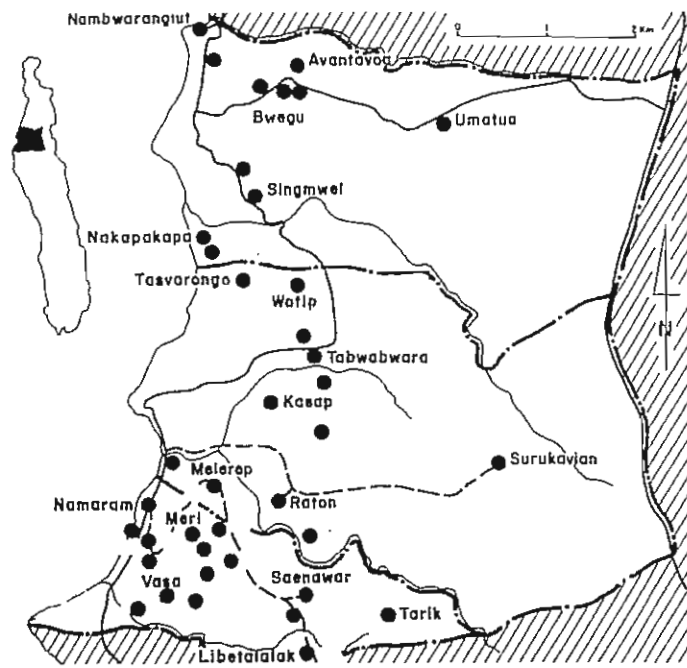
islands. But the influence of Tagaro in various guises was not restricted to northern Vanuatu: in name variations such as Tangaroa, Tangaloo, Tagalo, etc, his influence spread eastwards across much of the Pacific, even reaching Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in modified form. His origin may be much earlier than northern Vanuatu, variations of his name and cultural identification and influence are found sporadically further north and westwards even into the small Siasi area of the Tapul Group in the Sulu Archipelago in the southern Philippines. The writer of this report would not like to propose any theories from this, except to point out to readers that the topic of Tagaro is not an insignificant one as, up until, say, 500 years ago, respect for a being of this and associated names was probably a belief system that covered the widest area of the world at that time – nearly half the earth's surface.

The graded system: The main motivator for the use of traditional wealth items

LIFE AND THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP SYSTEM ARE focused on the men's graded system, *Hubwe/Nahumbwe/Subwe/Nasumbwe*, whose manifestation is the *Bolololi* ('pig'/'to perform with ceremony'), the pig-killing ceremony. The system consists of a series of 8-10 or more named grades/ranks each with a specific cost price in a complex combination of tusker pigs and red-dyed money mats,

plus extra costs for particular rank decorations. A man wishing to rise in this system calls in traditional financial assistance from among extended family and supporters. The latter invest in him, a person, who hopefully will, through higher rank, pay back material and spiritual dividends to his supporters and people. Possession of *muramura*, a type of usually spiritual power, can assist in gaining this support, and successful ritual performance can also increase it. Although each rank has a title (plus specific name) associated with it, those attaining above a certain grade in the system can aspire to be called '*Ratahigi*', a term translated by some outsiders as 'Big Man' but which actually means 'mother' (who thus looks after the population like a mother looks after her children) and effectively means 'chief'. The lowest ranks are quite straightforward, but from the third rank upwards increasing complexity creeps into the naming of the system, some ranks being left out or jumped over or even classed as subdivisions of another rank. There may also be rank systems within systems, plus 'left over' ranks from earlier systems as well as newer ranks being added.

This intricacy is the mark of a living, functioning, system, flowing like a wide river controlled by its riverbanks but having myriad internal flows, eddies and currents – and also tributaries and distributaries. Basically, the rank names might flow something like this (starting from the lowest): *Tari, Moli, Udu, Livusi, Vira, Bani, Mahangmaita, Sese, Tamangamanga, Garovuroi, Vuhunganvanua*. After taking a rank, the rank-taker's sponsor will give him a title which



These and the above maps are taken from the Vanuatu National Population Census May 1989 Population Atlas, Vol III, *Ambae-Maewo-Pentecost*. Vila 1991.

consists of the rank name plus a special addition geared to suit the particular individual's characteristics, thus, eg, *Mol (Moli) Vanua*, *Vira Vanua*, etc. The higher one goes in the system, the more astronomical in pigs and mats becomes the price, often necessitating the involvement of literally hundreds of people as pigs and mats shift themselves back and forth over large territories in preparation. This complex system of investment in individuals as 'Living Banks', that give back with interest, functions with mats and pigs as the investment means.

Mats: "Small change"

THE 'LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR', OR SMALLEST form of currency, is the woven pandanus mat. Such mats are of two basic types, *bari*, a smaller form whose variations can be used for male and female costume, and *bwana*, a larger form of much higher value in transactions such as *Bolololi*, marriage payments and funerary/burial mats. There are a vast number of named variations of these, depending upon type of weave, decorations, and tassels/fringes, but each type has an undyed and dyed version. Extremely long ones – particularly for marriage and funerary rituals – also exist: traditionally valued by the number of folds and sometimes taking up a lot of space, special storage huts (sometimes smoke huts) for them were relatively common until several decades ago to store the mat wealth of families of status.

There were – and are – also extremely large woven pandanus 'bank baskets', *tanbunia* (pron. 'tangbunia'), in which were kept smaller items of wealth. Even today almost all families in North Pentecost have one or more smaller *tanbunia* filled with traditional wealth items, and these moveable bank baskets can be seen regularly at marriage, grade-taking, and funerary ceremonies disgorging wealth that then disappears into other *tanbunia*.

The art of weaving itself is said to have come to North Pentecost via a woman from Maewo. Maewo even today specializes in the production of gleaming white, undyed mats, the smaller ones being termed *baru* or *baro* in central Maewo, the larger ones *bwana* or *bwana seresere* (the latter with tassels). In North Pentecost such undyed ones are termed *bari maita* ('white *bari*') and *bwana maita* ('white *bwana*'). The red-dyed versions of each one are termed *bari memea* ('red *bari*') and *bwana memea* ('red *bwana*'), with numerous additional terms covering the various levels of each type. At the time of this study (September 2004) the current modern cash value of white *bari* was 100-150 vatu (US\$2-3), red *bari* 200-250 vatu (US\$4-5), white *bwana* 1000-1500 vatu (US\$20-30), red *bwana* 2000-2500 vatu (US\$40-50), with ideal 'prices' at the lower end of the scale, the higher value being only for those of exceptional weave, design, fringe, or colour marking. Valuations in modern currency may seem small by today's standards, but when one realizes that very often hundreds of mats of varying sizes and designs may be used in any particular ceremony, plus tusker

pigs, then one begins to get a more correct picture. The red dye is from the scraped skin of the *labwe* root (see Part Two of report) and, although this grows in North Pentecost, and a number of Raga women know the dyeing technique, most undyed mats are transported to the Apma-speaking area of Central Pentecost, following traditional connections, to be dyed there. This has been going on since long before the arrival of influences from the outside world, Central Pentecost being recognized as the traditional red dye centre.

Upon arrival in Central Pentecost the undyed mats are washed, sprinkled with a special leaf, and then immersed in saltwater for four days: this process is to enable the dye to take better and has the beneficial side-effect of disinfecting the mats. After once being washed in fresh water and dried in the sun, the dyeing process can start. This process follows the normal process for similar mats from the Apma-speaking area, where the smaller mats are known as *tsip*, the larger ones *sese*, and the dye known as *laba*. There are slightly different dye techniques for the two different basic types of mats, one involving the cutting of traditional stencils that are tied to the bound mats, another involving cut plant strips, one resulting in red on white designs, the other white on red. Once the mats have been properly bound, they are immersed for four hours into a large container placed over a fire and filled with simmering (not boiling) water in which the dye has been dissolved. For the best quality results the container should be made of the bark of one of a series of half a dozen acceptable trees and filled with saltwater. Metal containers are now often used, and these must be filled with simmering freshwater and dye. Mat purists recognize that the best colours (dark, purplish-red) and the clearest designs are produced by the full traditional method using bark vats and seawater. Modern methods using metal containers and freshwater produce lighter-coloured and less clear designs. The least valued and admired dyed mats are those produced in modern metal containers using store-bought dye. Once taken out of the dye vat, the mats are hung out to dry, washed in fresh water, and then re-dried face down in the sun. They then start their return trip to North Pentecost (but Central Pentecost women, of course, will also be producing and dyeing their own mats for their own purposes).

Although recognized for generations as possibly the major red-dye centre in the northern islands, the Apma-speaking area in Central Pentecost probably originally got their dyeing knowledge and techniques from an almost extinct language group just south of them. The Apma language splits into two dialects, *Surubo*, spoken north of Bwatnapne, and *Surumwarani*, spoken south of Bwatnapne. Just south of the southern border of the *Surumwarani* southern dialect of Apma, in between Ranwadi and Ranmawat on the western coast, lies the traditional territory of the Sowa-speakers. In 1969 linguist David Walsh estimated there were 40-50 surviving Sowa speakers (none under the age of about 35) in two villages (one of which was

'Waterfall') there. In September 2004 it was said that only two elderly speakers survived. Apma stories relate that they first received the knowledge of red dyeing from the Sowa-speaking area. As with the origin of any such important technique, there will be detailed information on both the spiritual and material origins within the originating culture. To ensure this is not lost, it may be extremely important for the Vanuatu Cultural Centre Fieldworker from the Apma area, Bruce Tabi of Wujunmel village, to make an urgent trip to visit these last Sowa survivors to record the stories of the origin of red dye.

Pigs: The "large bills"

THE LARGER, MORE IMPORTANT, TRADITIONAL currency is, of course, the male tusker pig (see Part Two). Another type of pig of even greater value is the intersex (sometimes called hermaphrodite) pig, *ravwe* (see Part Two), but these are now so rare in the area that it took one high-ranking chief two months of enquiries on the ground to find one in north west Pentecost for the writer of this report to photograph. At the time of this study another *ravwe* was being raised by a Raga-speaking chief in the Asanvari area of south Maewo. The pig in general, *boe*, being a focal point of the culture, has innumerable linguistic terms associated with it. The female pig, *dura*, does not have a ritual role, her purpose being to bear and raise male pigs for exchange and ritual (see Part Two). Ideally, male pigs, when young, are castrated and then when still at a young stage of growth the upper canines (*basi* in Raga language) are removed to permit the lower tusks to grow unimpeded. An uncastrated male pig, *boengao* ('rope pig') tends to be more violent and needs to be tethered. A castrated male pig, *boutaga*, tends to be more docile and is said to grow better tusks (see Part Two); castration is best done at the *udurugu* stage, but can be done up to and including the *tausiri* stage (see below). The value of tusker pigs is determined solely by the growth stage of the tusk: each stage of growth is named (there are over 20 named stages of tusk growth) and valued, both in terms of other pigs, both types of money mats and now modern cash. All three systems, pigs, money mats and modern cash are completely interchangeable.

At the time of this study (September 2004) the following exchange values were in operation in the Loltong area in the southern part of Hurilao district, and can be taken as general at the moment for most areas of North Pentecost (there is, however, a serious and well-based re-evaluation of mat and tusk values going on in one area of Aligu district whose influence may well spread more widely in the future). Modern currency values are given in Vatu, the official currency of Vanuatu. Language names used are those naming/describing either the growth stage of the young piglet or the tusk curvature of the live pig. All language

names refer to male pigs.

List available in publication but not online,
to indicate respect for indigenous nomenclature

Homu (shell beads)

THERE IS ANOTHER INTERESTING VALUE ADDITION: *homu* (shell beads [see Part Two] – called *sum* in Central Pentecost). These are not necessarily used as currency as traditionally in the Banks Islands, but more for ritual decoration, either as wrist bands (*bani*), necklaces or as decorations on ritual belts or headdresses. These are all expensive status items required for particular ranks in the graded system and are paid for in tusker pigs and mats. They are no longer manufactured in North Pentecost and are therefore increasingly rare, although still purchasable with set pig prices. Some new shell beads have actually been brought in from the Solomon Islands within the last few years to supply necessary ritual needs.

North Pentecost: A model for the complementary use of cash and traditional wealth items

ALL OF THE ABOVE COMPLEX TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL and ritual activity is not a thing of the past in North Pentecost, it is still very much a part of daily life. Mats and pigs move continuously. During just one weekend at the time of this study two major *Bolololi* rituals took place in just one corner of northwestern Pentecost within a few kilometers of each other: in one two-day ritual three men and one woman took grades and in the other, nearby, three men took rank. Dozens of tusker pigs of many types and hundreds of red mats shifted back and forth and each ritual involved hundreds of people and lengthy planning. Many of the mats used, however, were not necessarily new ones. Mats circulate continuously for marriage and status rituals but the most valuable ones eventually end up 'in the bank of the ground' as respectful funerary wrappings for deceased loved ones. One goes to the world of the dead wrapped in sacred money, and the more important one was during life the more one goes with. When the late and much lamented Father Walter Lini 'Livustaliure' passed away in 1999 the outpouring of respect and grief was such that he was buried wrapped in 300 of the most expensive largest red mats in existence. When his father, the late and much loved Harper Lini passed away shortly afterwards, he was wrapped in 100 mats of similar quality and value.

This is the proper way to go and the proper way to use such mats. However, if the mats are not being replaced in the

system by enough new ones of the same quality, then Raga society is gradually depleting one section of its material and cultural reserves. It is not enough to replace them with quickly made mats coloured with store-bought red or purple dye. Quality, both material and spiritual, should be maintained as the innumerable steps in the traditional manufacturing process serve better to link peoples and areas – as the dyeing process links areas of North Pentecost with areas of Central Pentecost. There has been some suggestion that maybe more North Pentecost women should be taught the dyeing techniques, but if this is done it may seriously disrupt the traditional North – Central Pentecost cultural connection which has been in existence for centuries. It may actually be better to find ways of supporting and facilitating this customary connection, thereby assisting two large different language groups rather than one at the expense of the other.

A survey should be done to ensure that there are enough growing stocks of the creeper whose root supplies the *labwe/laba* red dye (see Part Two) for an increased supply of mats. Some concern was evinced in Maewo and North Pentecost that modern dyes might eventually begin to take over, as they seem to have done in certain areas of Ambae: from the point of view of some people in North and Central Pentecost such coloured mats are frowned upon or even considered ‘fake’. Ambae women sometimes say they have been forced to use modern dye as the creeper there (*langwe/lambu*) has, for some reason, almost died out – some say a ‘fungus’ has destroyed it on Ambae. A survey should be done to see if this is actually the case and, if so, ensure that this fungus (or whatever) does not spread to other islands. Many people on Maewo and Pentecost said, though, during this study, that they did not believe the plant had died out on Ambae but that the Ambae women had taken the easy way out; ‘problem blong lez’ (‘a problem of laziness’), said a few individuals. Whatever the reason, maybe Pentecost can help to re-supply Ambae with plantable specimens of the dye creeper. Maewo and North Pentecost women questioned during this project all said they were willing and eager to produce more mats, but that very often their husbands would not permit them enough time to do this important work, often telling them that they should be spending more time cutting and drying copra to earn small amounts of modern cash. Enhanced recognition and use of mats in all forms of transactions would diminish the need for this wage labour and contribute greatly to the protection and promotion of both material and intangible aspects of culture.

Bilmalvanua (the Pentecost Council of Chiefs), and Malvatumauri (the Vanuatu National Council of Chiefs), could greatly assist in this by strongly recommending that customary marriage payments from now on should be only, or mostly, in the traditional items (mats, pigs, yams, etc) and not in modern currency (or the latter in only small amounts). Marriage payments are supposed to have a modern currency

ceiling of 80,000 vatu, but this has been gradually rising. Such costs are hard for families with little cash income, it is much easier for them to get together the required amounts of traditional items. Not only would this decision assist a great number of families to fulfill customary marriage obligations more easily but it would also better support the intangible relationships involved. Such recommendations could also be extended to emphasizing payment in traditional wealth items for customary court cases and customary fines.

Cash payment for school fees is another burden on most families. Certain local schools in North Pentecost will accept payment or part payment in the form of yams and even mats and pigs. This has enabled a large number of families to send children to school that would ordinarily be unable to do so if only cash payments were accepted. Early this year (2004), however, the new principle of the largest secondary school on Pentecost, the Hon Father Walter Lini College of Advanced Education, rescinded such previous arrangements and said all education fees there must now be paid in cash. This may have been because the Ministry of Education has withdrawn a previously provided subvention which gave leeway for traditional items to be given in lieu of fees. Discussions with the Ministry of Education may enable these subsidies to be continued in the future so that families with minimal modern wealth but normal traditional wealth will be able to obtain education for their children.

To assist in the interplay between modern and traditional wealth, the Vanuatu Credit Union League should be supported in re-opening its previously established offices in Lolong and Abwatuntora and maybe a new one at or near the airstrip at Sara. Through its initiative of trying to enable the exchange of traditional wealth items for modern currency, and vice-versa, the VCUL can greatly benefit the community in many ways. There are certain small local initiatives that have already begun this process: a good example is the Lolmahuri (‘inner tranquility’) Women’s Marketing Co-operative at Lavatu: this was started in August 2002 and at the time of this study had 165 members (mostly from the districts of Ahivo, Aute and Lolkasai) and is extremely well run. Women can bring in food items from their gardens (yam, taro, manioc, breadfruit, etc) or baskets (*tan*), all types of mats, *tanbunia*, and even *homu*. Once sold, the women can pick up their payment in cash (or an equivalent value in food, mats, or whatever): the co-operative takes only a small, reasonable percentage and also pays out a yearly dividend to members. As people do not always need cash but may need, for example, certain types of mats for an approaching ceremony, small co-operatives of this type can also link traditional and modern currencies. At the time of this study a similar women’s co-operative, the Vavinebulura Women’s Council Co-operative, was just in its early stages at Beterara in central Maewo.

There are several other larger North Pentecost organiza-

tions of note that have long-standing relevant initiatives that would be worthy of support: (from north to south):

HERENHALA (Chiefs Council of Ahivo District): Focused from a large traditional *gamali* (men's meeting house – in which women are also allowed) a short walk from the airstrip at Sara, Herenhalā (the 'Road of Light') have had intense discussions over an extended period on ways to implement a strengthening of the traditional leadership system through support of customary respect and ritual. Influential members include Chief Paul Tahī (chiefly title 'Hubwehubwen Vanua' ['the Peak of Cultural Heritage']) and Chief Selwyn Garu (chiefly title 'Batan Tamata' ['Foundation of Peace']) who are currently respectively the President and secretary of the Malvatumaui, Vanuatu's National Council of Chiefs. Chief Paul Tahī is also the president of Vanuatu's National Cultural Council. Their council is an ideal organization to support for overall material and intangible cultural initiatives in the Ahivo district.

VATUTOGO (Chiefs Council of Hurilau District): Headquartered at Atanbwalo village in the Hurilau interior Vatutogo ('strongly founded stone') is also the focal point for the Gaiware Bulvanua (tree/singaot 'come here') whole island comes together in one place) organization established several decades ago to protect and promote customary values in the whole of the Raga-speaking area. The latter organization includes representatives from all the chiefly councils of the region as well as other men and women of high traditional status. It has, as well, extremely close links with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and has received UNESCO funding for the construction at Atanbwalo of the Gaiware Bulvanua Cultural Centre, which hosted the extremely successful first National Sandrawing Festival (another project supported by UNESCO) in May 2004. Formerly a very remote area, a motorable road has recently reached the centre and there is now a functioning telephone. Gaiware Bulvanua had already begun passing resolutions in 1993 regarding the necessity of support for items of traditional wealth and have had plans for some time to establish a large secure area for specialized raising of tusker pigs. Its most influential member, Chief John Leo Tamata, is a man of great wisdom and dignity; another member is the dynamic Vanuatu Cultural Centre fieldworker for North Pentecost, Kolombas Todali (whose uncle is the extremely respected and influential Chief Richard Leona of Lolong on the northwestern coast, another focal point worthy of support). Gaiware Bulvanua is extremely supportive of this project's objectives and has proven itself to be a very effective organization.

TURAGA: Turaga (possibly 'Raga Stands') is headquartered at the village of Lavatmangemu on the remote eastern coast of Aligu district. The organization is headed by the visionary Chief Viraleo Boborenvanua (whose spokesperson is Motarilavao Hilda Lini, sister of the late Father Walter Lini) and is the movement that follows most closely the late first Prime Minister's vision for complete economic self-sufficiency. Since 1983 Lavatmangemu has become a focal point for the development of an independent system of traditional currencies which has become integrated into a system of traditional banking linked in with traditional education. With well-established links to red dye centres in Central Pentecost, Turaga has gradually built up major stocks of red mat money and live tusker pigs. It has also undertaken major new initiatives to enhance the use of traditional monies, developing a new type of currency in pig's tusks (without the jawbone or skull) and revaluing money mats to take better into account the hard work involved in weaving and dyeing (a large red mat here is valued at the equivalent of 8000 vatu, not the 2000 vatu accepted in other areas). The system is extremely sophisticated and enables almost complete self-sufficiency (except for shell beads brought in from the Solomon Islands) in areas where it is followed. Through its well-known spokesperson, Motarilavao Hilda Lini, Turaga has an international exposure through articles, lectures and radio and is seen as a model of what a large community can do with a deep spiritual philosophy, a strong culture, and a search for real independence. The organization is currently looking for support for a permanent office for its spokesperson somewhere nearer easier centres of transport and communication, either at the airstrip at Sara or in nearby Lavatu.

IN GENERAL, IN NORTH PENTECOST, THE RAISING OF male tusker pigs and their use in 'Pig business' and ritual goes ahead better than in almost every area of the nation except for neighbouring Central Pentecost. Some assistance could be considered, though, for support for the breeding of male tusker pigs of 'pure blood' (see Part Two); for increasing the numbers of *ravwe* intersex pigs (this could eventuate from support for an increase in such pigs on the island of Malo) and for the re-introduction of locally produced *homu* (shell beads) either from project support for a shell-money production centre in the Banks islands to the north or for production within North Pentecost itself. Major project assistance in North Pentecost should be geared towards support for the weaving and dyeing (bearing in mind the traditional position of Central Pentecost in the latter) of the numerous types of pandanus mats: spinoffs from aspects of this could greatly assist Maewo (in supporting their production of undyed white mats) and Ambae (by emphasizing the importance of traditional dyes). The

Vanuatu Credit Union League can have an essential role in providing a link with 'the modern systems' (and thereby also assist large numbers of peoples from these areas who live in the two urban centres but who also need regular access to red mats, etc, for traditional purposes).

By project support in these key areas continuation and development of important material and intangible aspects of cultural heritage can be assured. As Chief Shedrak Culwick Qarani of Maewo told the project team in September 2004, "Wan milion watu hemi wan bigfala samting: kastom hemi smol nomo, be igat pis mo uniti insaed long hem" ("One million watu is a big thing, Kastom [here referring to traditional wealth] is very small, but there is peace and unity inside it"). This is true; the traditional way links people together in relationships in ways where peace, harmony and respect are developed and maintained. Support for this can bring *Tamata*, 'the power of Peace'. And may bring in the next *tauwawa*.



SOUTHERN MALAKULA

THE ISLAND OF MALAKULA IS A WORLD AWAY FROM North Pentecost and the languages and cultures are very different. Although certain sea-faring cultures in northeast Malakula had 'pig business' trading connections with North Pentecost, southern Malakulan cultures had no connections with Pentecost except for certain cultures in the southeast which had trading and cultural connections with parts of Ambrym that ultimately linked up with southern Pentecost.

Malakula is the second largest island of Vanuatu, covering an area of 2069 square kilometres with an estimated

mainland population at the time of this study of just over 25,000 (23,043 in 1999 census). Southern Malakula covers approximately two thirds of the surface of the island, but possesses only just over one third of the total population, around 10,000 (8,800 in 1999). Linguistically and culturally the island is the richest and most diverse in Vanuatu: it possesses 35 different languages, just under two thirds of which (20) are spoken only in southern Malakula. Many of these languages also possess dialects and some even have sub-dialects. Within the nation that has the world's highest ratio of linguistic and cultural diversity in relation to population size, Malakula is the 'Mount Everest' of that diversity and southern Malakula is the peak of that mountain - literally the most complex spot on the face of the earth.

The graded systems 1: Nimangi

AS IN NORTH PENTECOST THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM OF traditional wealth is the male tusker pig, used in traditional marriage payments, fine payments, and in the all-important intricacies of rituals associated with male initiation and social status change, the 'graded system', which is the focal point of life and leadership. Traditional leadership systems vary from strict hereditary chieftainship amongst the Big Nambas peoples of Northwest Malakula (where the title passes from the father chief to the first-born son of his first wife) through hereditary systems mixed with graded systems (as amongst the Batarnar peoples originally from the interior of North Malakula, where a graded system exists but with the highest grades restricted to those of hereditary chiefly lineage) to a vast array of differing graded systems (non-hereditary and open to all men) in the rest of the island. On Malakula the Bislama term 'Nimangi', denoting the men's graded system, is widely understood as the word entered Bislama from various Malakulan languages: real language terms for the system there vary from *nangi* and *maki* in various areas of North Malakula to *mangi*, *mangge mingi*, etc, in various areas of southern Malakula. The word has entered Bislama with the common prefix *na-* or *ni-* ('the'). The number of grades vary greatly, from some systems in the northeast with only two grades, to some in the southwest with over twenty, to the traditional situation in the interior of southern Malakula where two systems, one of 15 grades and the other of 19, co-exist side-by-side. Most systems will also have an associated separate grade system for women, usually less complex.

A separate but parallel system 2: Nalawan

A VAST SERIES OF SEPARATE BUT PARALLEL RITUAL systems for men, known generally as 'Nalawan' in Bislama, also exist in many southern Malakulan cultures. Proper

language terms vary from culture to culture – *nalawan*, *nilawan*, *nuluwon*, *niluwon*, *naluan*, *nilun*, *luan*, *ruan*, etc. Each society, each men's hut ('Nakamal' in Bislama; *namal*, *amal*, *nemil*, *emil*, etc), will have the rights over a certain number of Nalawan. Each 'Nalawan' consists of a complex series of myths and mysteries, rituals, drum rhythms, spirit voices and materialized spirit forms ('art', masks, headdresses, etc) that form a complete unit but that can be inter-linked to other Nalawan. A male must pay (in tusker pigs) for the right to become a member of, and be initiated into, a particular Nalawan, and then pay further pigs to obtain rights over further sections within it. In some societies, each men's hut may have the rights over anything from one to a dozen or more different Nalawans and men can become members of/initiates into more than just one. Nalawan, in general, is more sacred and profound than Nimangi: Nimangi, in general, deals primarily with social status and influence within the world of the living and an assurance of certain status in the world of the dead. Nalawan – essentially 'the hidden thing', generally deals more with spiritual and ritual cycles that link closely with the ancestral spirits, the world of the dead, the spirit world, and the innumerable links between the material and non-material worlds. Unlike Nimangi, Nalawan systems are not graded (or if they seem to be, they are graded in a different way).

Most Nalawan activity, which always involves periods of seclusion, takes place away from the gaze of women and the public but the public Nalawan ritual activity can be seen as the affirmation of those spiritual links and the visible signs of the impingement into the material world of powers from the non-material, spirit world. For the cultures in the interior of southern Malakula, Nalawan is essentially associated with male initiation and incision (which most people call 'circumcision'), a stage all southern Malakulan males must go through. For most other southern Malakulans Nalawan covers broader aspects of ritual life. Nimangi and Nalawan can be described by some southern Malakulans as being like two powerful sacred tusker pigs: separate, but standing close together and facing in the same (but slightly diverging) direction. Throughout southern Malakula there are literally hundreds of different Nalawan, and Nalawan can move from men's hut to men's hut, from village to village, from culture to culture, through sacred sale and purchase in the intricate copyright system that exists in the area.

Copyrights

THE CULTURES OF NORTHERN VANUATU POSSESS ANCIENT and sophisticated concepts of traditional copyright, and laws relating to the sale and purchase of such copyrights. All exchanges involve the transfer, as payment, of male tusker pigs. Southern Malakula is the area where this copyright system is at its most complex: literally almost anything

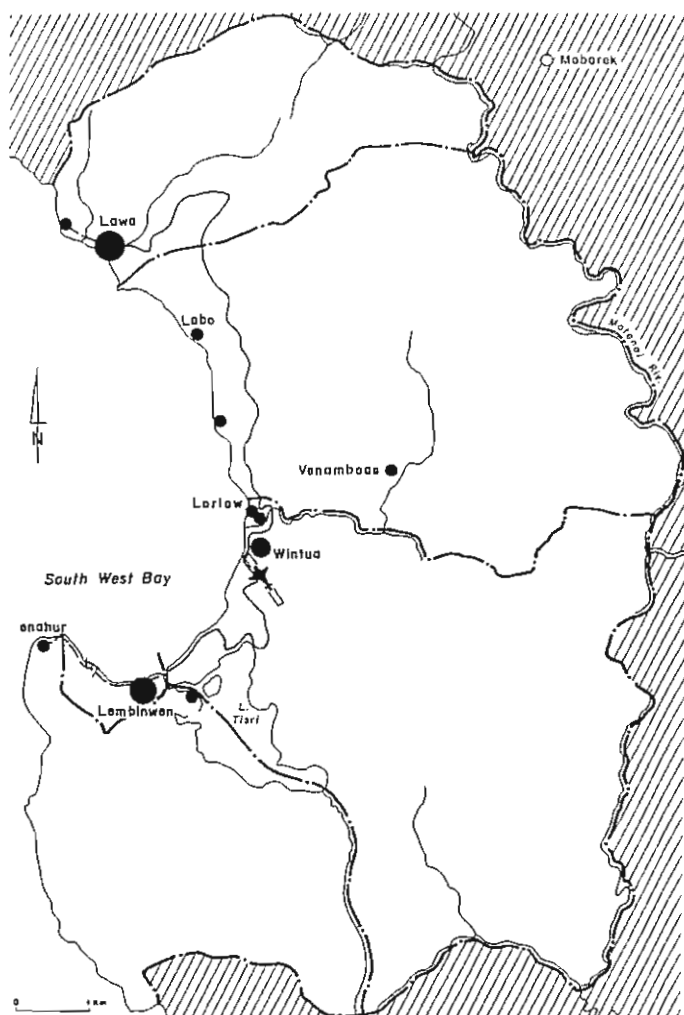
can be bought and sold with pigs: songs, dances, ritual decoration styles, mask and headdress styles, mythical cycles, even sometimes dreams or visions. If one negotiates and eventually pays for the rights to, say, a particular mask style, what one obtains is not the mask itself, but the sacred information related to it and the secrets of its manufacture. These rights can then be sold and re-sold ad infinitum, but neither the original copyright holder nor the subsequent purchasers ever lose their rights, so they themselves can still sell. This is all a sacred business, based upon the monetary value and sacred value of tusker pigs. This 'bisnis pig' is time-consuming and involves incessant travel, trade, negotiation and learning. It thus serves as a mechanism that links up large numbers of initiated men into a network that spans different languages and cultures and even traditional links into other islands (in the case of southern Malakula these links were mostly, but not always, with the island of Ambrym). In the interior of southern Malakula, for example, an ambitious initiated male could spend as much as two thirds of his life perpetually moving on customary business or ritual activity, and this situation pertained in parts of this area right up through the 1980s until the conversion of the last full traditionalists to Christianity in 1989. It continues in a modified form in almost all areas of southern Malakula, the extent varying greatly with the attitudes to ritual life espoused by the differing Christian denominations implanted gradually in coastal regions from the end of the 19th century.

It is important to note here that the island of Malakula has an extremely high profile in the ethnographic museum world. Of the approximately 25-30,000 objects from Vanuatu held in museums worldwide, around half of these objects are from Malakula (the majority of these are from southern Malakula and many of the objects incorporate pig's tusks of varying curvatures).

Southwest Malakula: The proposed focus of activities

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PROJECT STUDY, WE WILL look only at the situation in the southwestern part of the island, around Southwest Bay and neighbouring areas. Aspects of the peoples and systems in this part of the island link in with other areas of southern Malakula and project support put in to the former area will have normal flow-on positive effects in the latter.

The Southwest Bay area of Malakula, plus some linked areas, is the ideal focal point for project support to assist in the raising of adequate numbers of proper male tusker pigs to ensure cultural survival in both its material and intangible aspects. As all cultural, ritual and artistic activity is linked, at one level or another, to such animals, their continued raising is of the utmost importance. Unlike North Pentecost, where the raising of such pigs has continued



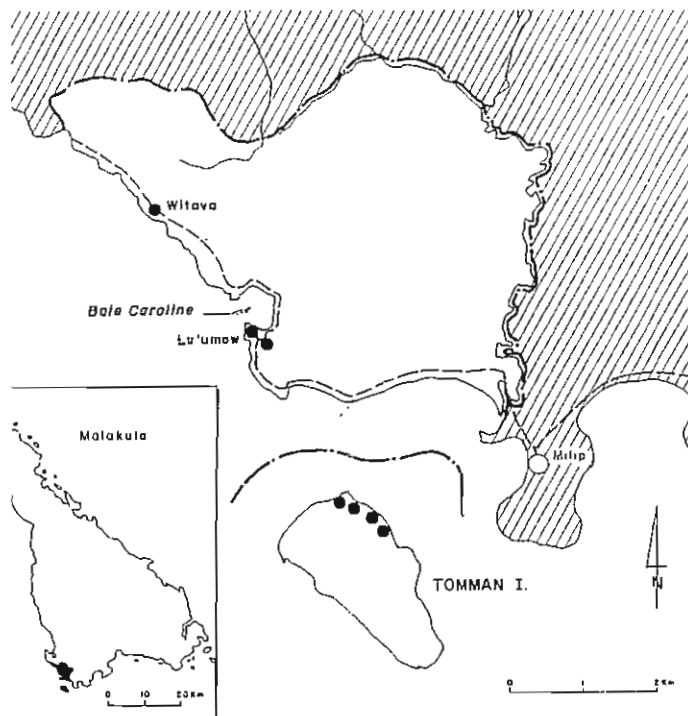
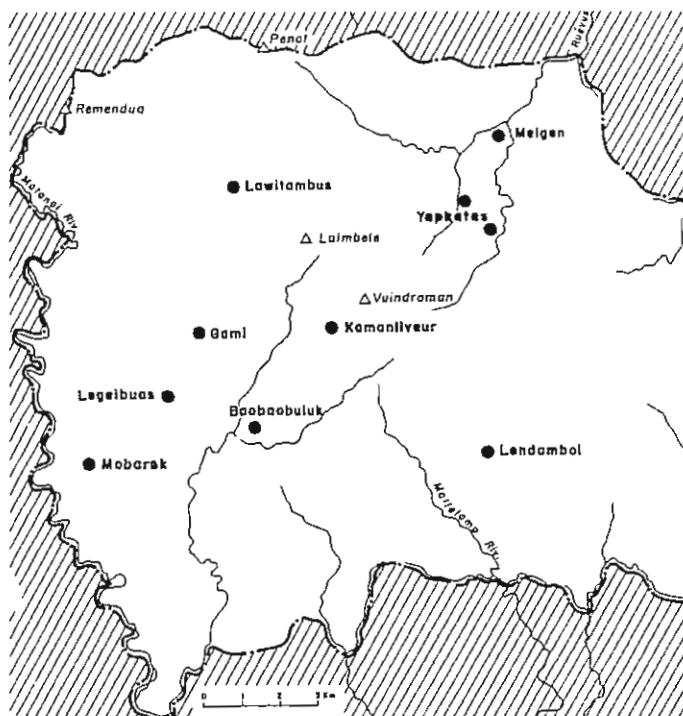
Malakula were not necessarily of the lenient variety that were in North Pentecost. Presbyterian and Catholic missionaries to the southern part of Malakula often saw themselves as involved in a war with the traditional cultures. One French Catholic missionary based in southeast Malakula even arranged for a French warship to assist his endeavours in 1896 and various early English, Scottish or Australian Presbyterian missionaries in the Southwest Bay area periodically called in British or (later) Condominium patrol boats or punitive expeditions to punish unruly 'unconverted' segments of the population from the late 19th century through to the early 1920s. Traditional ritual activity was strongly disapproved of by the missionaries and some went so far as to try and prohibit transport of and trading in pigs. By the 1950s and early 1960s traditional belief and rituals were believed by the missionaries to be dying out or becoming 'folklore'. This was not necessarily the case though: in many coastal areas much of traditional life had just gone 'underground', biding its time to re-awaken. This time came in the move towards Independence (1980), and by the late 1970s re-evaluation of coastal attitudes towards aspects of the traditional life began a cultural re-awakening that continues unabated today.

Many coastal communities have now come to appreciate that real identity lies in retaining cultural identity and continuing ritual activity to approach the new world in a balanced way. However, extended breaks in the past in ritual activities have resulted in a situation today where cultural revival and activity proceeds apace, but without enough tusker pigs of the proper types to ensure a strong 'tusker foundation'. Moreover, as in southern Malakula there is a regular need for great numbers of pigs tusks of medium curvature for use as part of ritual masks and headdresses, those produced at the moment often incorporate tusks from older masks or tusks taken from older collections stored within existing men's huts or from abandoned men's huts in the bush. Giving support to the raising of tusker pigs in various areas will not only ensure that proper payments can be given when needed, but also that eventually the tusks from these pigs can be used in the proper way in the increasing numbers of ritual objects being made for use.

The extended period of intense, strict, missionization in most coastal areas essentially also broke the back of the numerous rituals to enhance the status of women, the women's graded societies, and therefore almost destroyed the numerous women's traditions of production of woven pandanus materials of ritual and exchange value. In fact, in many areas here, the introduction of Christianity effectively made the social position of women worse by actually nearly destroying the only traditional way women had for status enhancement. Support assistance could be considered for raising the awareness of the importance of these culturally essential woven materials within the numerous cultures of the area and the revival of their production and use.

unabated, the introduction of a stricter and sometimes rather dour form of Christianity in most areas of southern Malakula has resulted in a drastic drop in the numbers of pigs with proper tusk curvatures. In almost all coastal areas such pigs are now almost non-existent, their place in the ritual copyright, etc, payment system now being taken up by either modern cash or male pigs without proper tusk curvatures. Coastal societies all had a tusk curvature nomenclature system on a par with that outlined above for North Pentecost (but, of course, in their own language with their own cultural variations). However, no southern Malakulan cultures used tusker pig skulls as in North Pentecost nor valued intersex pigs (and many southern Malakulans do not even know of the existence of the latter) and each culture also had various types of woven pandanus mats (some types dyed, or partially dyed) that could be used as forms of smaller payment within women's rituals or as parts of payments within marriage, male initiation, and funerary rituals (although the mat systems here were not as complex as those in North Pentecost).

Early (and later) Christian missionaries to southern



These and the above Malakula maps are taken from the Vanuatu National Population Census May 1989 Population Atlas, Vol IV, Malakula-Ambrym, Vila 1991.

The current population of the whole of southwestern Malakula today, including some areas inland, is estimated to be around 3,000. At least six different languages are spoken among peoples of the area and therefore it would take an inordinate amount of space – and reader's time – if one was to repeat a local language list of mat names and pig's tusk curvature names for each one. The North Pentecost listings should be born in mind to give an idea of the complexities of such lists and to make the reader aware that such complexities also exist here in southern Malakula for each culture, but also with specific variations for each culture. And note that the variations are great: for example, speakers of Ninde, the language spoken in the Mewun area (from Wintua to Lawa in Southwest Bay) traditionally have no Nimangi (men's graded system); the functions of Nimangi in their society being provided by an expanded Nalawan system unique to them. Speakers of Nati language in the Wilemp area southwards and inland from Mewun combine both Nimangi and an interlinked Nalawan system that is extremely complex and almost 'graded'. Speakers of Nahai in the SSW and the small offshore island of Tomman have a Nimangi of around 20 grades but basically only one form of Nalawan (*nuluwon*), with sub-divisions. Botgate-speakers in the interior have one Nimangi system of 15 grades, another of 20 and one Nalawan for initiation. Nahava-speakers in the Sinesip/Seniang area have one Nimangi system and dozens and dozens of different Nalawans. The variation is almost

endless and investment in pigs is essential for all of them.

Southwest Bay has no roads (and therefore no vehicles). There is an airstrip (opened 1983) at Wintua that has not been operational for a year (and the local airline at the moment has no plans to re-open it). All transport is either by foot, canoe, speedboat or other boats. This is normal. There are medical dispensaries, schools, and periodically functioning telephones. Local government is based a long way away, but community life functions well with various forms of chiefs and church groups taking leading roles. Life is peaceful and is actually very good in comparison with many areas of the world. Ceremonial life can be extremely rich: around the period of this field study alone the public aspects of nearly two dozen different masked Nalawan rituals were performed in the coastal Southwest Bay area and involved not only cultural representatives from the southwest, but also other groups from east and southeast Malakula. During the same time intense masked rituals at Lowoivenevet several hours walk into the mountains took place for the re-opening of the men's sacred hut there. Not a single one of this vast array of ritualized material and spiritual wealth ceremonies would have been possible without investment and payment in pigs.

Due to the traditional splintered nature of society – there are no paramount chiefs or overall chiefs, but men of influence/chiefs over small areas – project assistance will be most effective if it is geared at a smaller family/ 'kompani' level. This can be extremely well done if organized

through the extensive Vanuatu Cultural Centre Fieldworker network in the area which has proved itself so effective there over the last nearly two decades. These fieldworkers are: Chief Alben Reuben (Ninde-speaker) at Lawa village, Chief Matthias Batick (Ninde-speaker) at Lorlow village, both for the Mewun area (and also George Thompson [Chief Sarawoh] of Alo/Wintua who although not a Fieldworker is closely linked with and extremely supportive of their work); Chief Aiar Rantes (Nati-speaker) at Wintua and Lo'ormbap for the Wilemp area and for traditional links with both Botgate-speakers in the interior and for Nahai-speakers in the Hurtes area of the SSW and Tomman Island; Longdal Nobel Masingyau (who also runs the Nahai Cultural Centre set up in 1998 with assistance from the Australian High Commission and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre) at Luwannari Bay for the Hurtes area and the Nahai-speaking peoples and Chief Longlel Tom and brother Chief Tom Aimangil of Yumoran on Tomman islet, and finally James Teslo up in the southern Malakula interior mountains at Lowoivenevet for the Botgate-speaking peoples of the interior. They, along with the female Cultural Centre Fieldworkers from the area, can also help promote and co-ordinate a re-awakening of production and use of woven pandanus mat materials necessary for much ritual use. Local project co-ordination on Malakula can be overseen by the Curator of the Malakula Cultural Centre at the local government headquarters at Lakatoro, Numa Fred, who has regular contacts in the area. The Malakula Cultural Centre (opened 1991) is an outer-island branch of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, so overall co-ordination would be in the hands of this latter organization and its dynamic and dedicated Director, Ralph Regenvanu and his team, who have had much successful experience with complex cultural projects in the outer islands. The Vanuatu Credit Union League should be encouraged to open a branch in Southwest Bay, probably at Lawa or Wintua.

WITH THE MENTION OF JAMES TESLO JUST OVER A DOZEN pages above, this brings us back, like a curving pig's tusk, to the beginning of this project report and to his 1992 request for assistance, out of which all this has grown. Project support for help with tusker pigs and weaving production in southern Malakula – an area so well represented in museums overseas – will immeasurably assist not only the material production of much ritual material but also help develop and protect the essential intangible aspects of these complex cultures by enabling proper payments to be made through the ancient copyright system and therefore the proper handing down to future generations of the non-material, spiritual side of the systems, the knowledge that makes everything work and balance. This is a project worth doing, and doing well, in the most intensely complex spot on the linguistic and cultural map of the world. ©

Annex 1:

ORGANISATIONS & INSTITUTIONS WITH POTENTIAL COLLABORATING ROLES IN THE PROJECT

Government/State sector

MINISTRY & DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Facilitate policy allowing payment of school fees with traditional monies
- Role in including awareness of traditional monies in schools and national curriculum

MINISTRY & DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- Facilitate policy allowing payment of medical fees with traditional monies

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SECTOR PLANNING

- Facilitate implementation of future phases of project and development of additional (resulting) projects

DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS

- Liaison with Provincial Governments
- Joint development of future projects

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

- Facilitate implementation of future phases of project and development of additional (resulting) projects
- Assist in coordination and management of project activities.
- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

- Preservation and promotion of traditional pig varieties

ENVIRONMENT UNIT

- Assessment and revitalization of red dye plant
- Assessment of som shell stocks

RESERVE BANK OF VANUATU

- Advice and assistance on legal and policy matters

STATE LAW OFFICE

- Advice and assistance on legal and policy matters

DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS

- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas)

DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVES & RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas)

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE

- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas and abroad)

DEPARTMENT OF NI-VANUATU BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas and abroad)

Statutory Bodies

MALVATUMAURI NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHIEFS

- Key partner in overall management and implementation of project (with Vanuatu Cultural Centre and Vanuatu Credit Union League)
- Development and implementation of supporting policies

VANUATU CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas)

NATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL

- Assistance in training needs

Non-Government Organisations**CHIEF'S COUNCILS (PROVINCIAL, ISLAND, AREA AND VILLAGE LEVELS)**

- Development and implementation of supporting policies

TURAGA

- Development and implementation of supporting policies

GAIWARE BULVANUA CULTURAL CENTRE

- Development and implementation of supporting policies

VANUATU ASSOCIATION OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (VANGO)

Liaison with non government organisations

- Joint development of future projects
- Development and implementation of supporting policies

VANUATU NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

- Development and implementation of supporting policies
- Joint development of future projects

VANUATU ASSOCIATION OF RURAL TRAINING CENTRES (VARTCA)

- Assistance in training needs

FOUNDATION FOR PEOPLES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC (FSP)

- Joint development of future projects

VANWODS

- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas)

ANABRU WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE CENTRE, PORT VILA

- Development and implementation of supporting policies
- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas)

NORTH PENTECOST LOLMAHURI WOMEN'S MARKETING COOPERATIVE

- Development and implementation of supporting policies
- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas)

MAEWO VAVINEBULURA WOMEN'S COUNCIL COOPERATIVE

- Development and implementation of supporting policies
- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas)

MALAMPA BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION

- Development and implementation of supporting policies
- Assist in development of strategies to facilitate exchange of cash for traditional monies (rural areas) and sale of traditional monies for cash (urban areas). ○

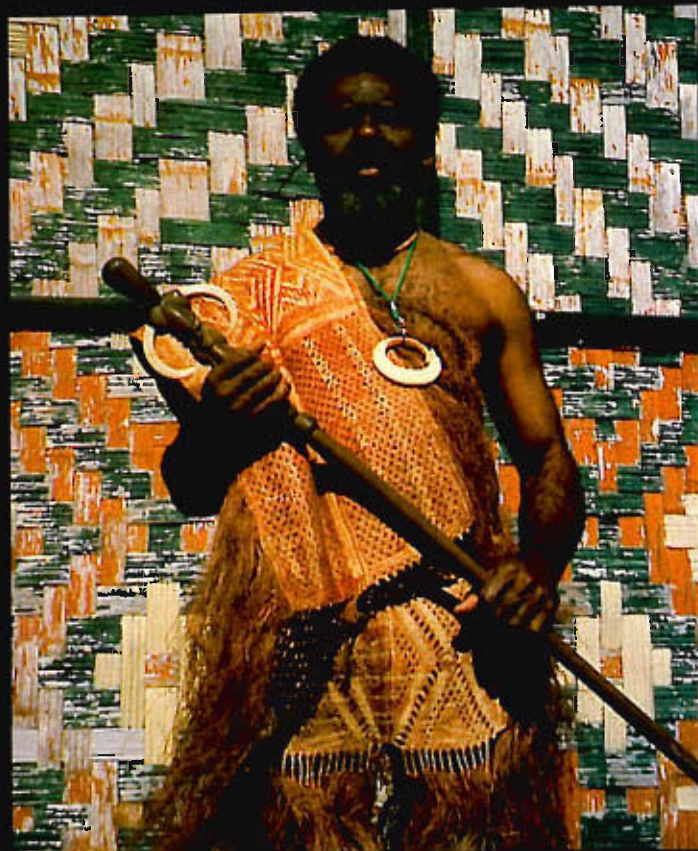
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FRONT COVER: Circular pig's tusk, Malakula. Originally obtained by either Robert Etheridge Jnr. (one-time curator of Ethnological Collections and then Director of the Australian Museum) or his son Robert James Etheridge, an 'island trader' with Burns Philp. Late 19th or early 20th century, possibly northeast Malakula. Donated to the Australian Museum 1988 by Dr. Brian Symons, great-great grandson of Robert Etheridge Jnr. Registration no. E81623. Photo: Carl Bento © Australian Museum. Photo by and courtesy of Australian Museum, Sydney.

OPPOSITE: Chief Paul Tahihubwen Vanua, from North Pentecost, President of the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, wearing pig's tusk, Bari memea money mats and Homu shell bead status necklace, Port Vila, September 2004. Photo: K. Huffman.

Northern Vanuatu's traditional wealth items –

tusker pigs, red mats and stringed shell money – have an ancient and respected history. They are forms of currency with sacred aspects and the cultures using them have advanced ideas of investment, banking, lending, interest and compound interest. The modern western economic system and the use of modern money is actually much simpler and does not fulfil the wide range of social, economic, cultural and sacred functions of the traditional systems. This report explores examples and possibilities for integrating aspects of the traditional systems into a more self-reliant and sustainable development path for Vanuatu.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Kirk Huffman pursued studies in anthropology, prehistoric archaeology and ethnology at the Universities of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Oxford and Cambridge 1966-1977. After fieldwork on Malakula in 1973, 1974 and 1976, he became the first full-time curator of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre from 1977 until the end of 1989. Since 1991 he has been Honorary Curator of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. He is also currently Research Associate of the Australian Museum, Sydney; Honorary Associate of the Macleay Museum, University of Sydney and Member, Scientific Committee, Musée de Tahiti et des Îles, Puna'iaia, French Polynesia.

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