

INVOKING THE SPIRIT OF 'HAWAIKI' AND 'AOTEAROA' TO INITIATE  
MALAYO-POLYNESIAN WORLD PROJECT COLLABORATIONS

By

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ABSTRACT

The Maori term 'Hawaiki' neatly embodies the concept of an expansive Malay World (*Alam Melayu*) of the the past. However, this symbolic oneness and unity was marred from the 14<sup>th</sup> century until recently, as the colonial powers began incursion into the heartland rendering us fragmented and colonised. This 600 years of colonised experience rendered the Malayo-Polynesian world's travels and trade restricted, their oral and written histories casted aside and even place names renamed. Thus slowly the political landscape changed, and the freedom and mind of the natives closed. Subsequently, there was hardly intergenerational transmission of knowledge and no inculcation of values for the younger generation. This cultural dead-ends make revival even more difficult, as the time and generation gap needs bridging up. Except for a few academics and enlightened leaders, close to 378 million Malay-Polynesians are ambling away within their own world of 'making everyday living'. While in the past we had been long-distance navigators, opening up new lands and islands as trail-blazers, today we meet each other like seeing aliens from other planets. What is needed today is to rewrite our new destiny - to travel, to discover and reclaim our lost ancestral history and heritage by face-to-face-contacts. This in-depth of cultural immersion comes within the ambit of 'cultural tourism', as tourism planners are wont to classify.

The term 'Hawaiki' and 'Aotearoa' perhaps best evoke our common ancestral spirit of exploration and adventure, travel and discovery, which had been always our pride.

This paper seeks to highlight clear benefits of forging anew ancestral familyhood links across communities and continents (*whanaungatanga*), and achieving self-determination through projects' collaboration based on real affirmative spirit. The initiative calls for (a) establishment of an Institute of Malayo-Polynesian Studies In Malaysia to empower our above-mentioned agenda, (b) Tourism-Travel Summer Camps and (c) Vocational Handicrafts Exchange Programmes.

**Key words:** Hawaiki, ancestral history, cultural tourism collaboration

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

**KIA ORA. HAERE MAI, KEI TE PEHEA KOUTOU? WELCOME, WELCOME.**

**SELAMAT DATANG, SALAM SEJAHTERA HENDAKNYA!**

After finishing my New Zealand studies in 1974, the first group of Maoris and Polynesians I met was at the Universiti of Malaya's *Malayo-Polynesian Seminar*, in Kuala Lumpur (1998); the second time at the *Malayo-Polynesian Festival of Literature and Arts* in 2002, also in Kuala Lumpur; and thirdly, at the *Conference on Malay-Maori Affinity* in 2003, in Auckland New Zealand.

In 2010, I made a special trip to New Zealand with the intention of writing my own version of a book on that part of the world. I only ended up with only a book chapter on the Maoris in the Malay language (Wan Salleh Wan Ibrahim, 2011). Since then, I never lost interest in learning and discovering the Maoris and the Polynesians.

The past seminar deliberations, aspirations and personal accounts had always ingrained in me the Maori spirit of *whanaugatanga* (family togetherness) and *manaakitanga* (resolute self-determination), if I may used these terms correctly. Once in 2003, one Maori Professor Tairahia Black at the *Conference on Malay-Maori Affinity* mentioned about the Maori word, *waiata*, which still lingers in my mind. Perhaps his eloquent elaboration echoes the same spirit at this seminar encounter this time as well:

*" waiata allows us to relate to our own creativity of the symbols, imagery, and characters on the personal level that encourages self-expression and a search for identity ... provide a vital dimension of cross cultural understandings of originality in heritage, customs and traditions that will impact on our social, cultural and economic resources, and inevitably will make a substantial contribution to advancing that form of independent scholarship for the present and future generations. "*

The term '*waiata*' comes close to what the Malay/Muslim believes in our faith that God looks with pride over people determined to reverse their own destiny. In our sacred Book, the Qur'an as is hereby quoted:

*" ... God will never change the Grace which He hath bestowed on a people until they change what is in their own souls: and verily God is He who hearth and knoweth (all things)."* (Al-Anfal : 53)

Similarly, God 's intention in bringing Mankind - of differences in colour, habits and styles had a higher purpose, that is we may live together appreciating the innate goodness within ourselves.

*“ O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female , and make you into nations and tribes, that ye may KNOW EACH OTHER (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).” (Al-Hujurat: 13)*

Thus, our encounter in this seminar materialised to fulfill many objectives for closer study and collaboration in the same spirit enshrined in the *waita*. Whatever shortcomings that we have should not a barrier. Since knowing a bit of Maori proverbs, if I may recite correctly the following:

*“ Tama tu tama ora – tama moe tama mate”* He who stands lives, he who sleeps dies.”

Those who are not striving will never achieve anything, like a corpse, so to speak. The above Maori saying is like the Malay's proverb : *“ Biar putih tulang jangan putih mata ”* (Let the bone be white but not white in the eyes, (not being chicken- hearted in facing threats).

## 2.0 INVOKING MYSTICAL 'HAWAIKI' AND AOTEAROA (NEW ZEALAND)

In invoking superhuman and mystical powers, we can win battles.

*“ He tukemata ano to te taonga.”* (Fortune favours the Brave)

The Maori term 'Hawaiki' has always fascinated me. According to Te Ahukaramu Charles Royal (2006: 41-44), 'Hawaiki' seems to suggest ` a mythical place of origin' perhaps for the Maoris and Polynesians. The term also suggests, in Maori history, mythology and tradition being conveyed in songs, proverbs and genealogies to remind ourselves of our common roots : of our birth, of our life and death associated with three geographical place meanings, that is (a) Hawaiki Nui (Great Hawaiki), (b) Hawaiki Roa (Long Hawaiki) and (c) Hawaiki Pamamao (distant Hawaiki).

My own humble submission is that Hawaiki denotes Heaven or Afterlife, which need accountability for every atoms of goodness we strive ; Hawaiki Roa, being the much travelled circuit of Malay-Indonesian Islands, while Hawaiki Pamamao, a more definite place of the first embarkation for the Maori and Polynesian tribes to travel to Aotearoa ('Land of the Long White Clouds : New Zealand).

All these place-names conjure great symbolic meanings. In Maori nothing escapes sacredness (Barrow, 2000: 29):

*“ In Maori beliefs all things had a kind of soul – the wairua. Most things – men, manufactured objects, land, and indeed all nature - had a spiritual ‘essence’ called mana. This vital inner force, which has been likened to electricity ... mana revealed itself in the efficient performance of anything, whether it was a warrior, a fish hook or a tract of forest.”*

As such, we need to restrain from doing prohibited things (*tapu*) to succeed.

If our three place-meanings may not signify enough, as such, we have to retrace our common *whakapapa* (oral tradition, geneology, *salasilah*).

## 2.1 THE MAORI'S 'TE HERE TANGATA' (ROPE OF MANKIND)

When God (*Atua*) first created Mankind (Adam), in Maori, *Tiki* it was in a kind of subliminal world altogether different from the physical world known to us now. To me, as Adam or *Tiki* was much alone, then *Hawa* (Eve) was subsequently created as partner; and from their union issued forth generations of mankind (*Hawaiki Nui*). However, the world they inherited then become a world of simply sky and earth (*Rangi* and *Papa*). This fallibility of Man, inevitably forced upon us great hardships.

However, being God the Ever Merciful, the children of this earth had been equally magnanimous in living together, in extending mutual help understanding and empathy. Whether we are Malays, Maoris, Papuans, Fijians or Christian, Muslim, Buddhist or others, we can commonly claim that we are descendants from our common ancestor (like the Malays believe).

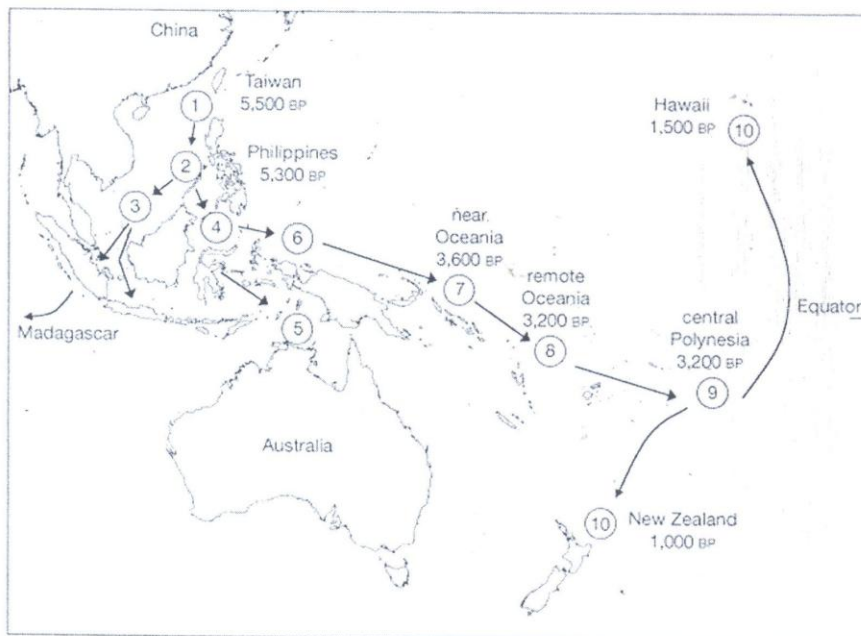
Likewise, humanity from the perspective of Malayo-Polynesia, since created from the first ADAM-EVE pair belongs to *Hawa* as the Earth Mother, thus, place-names like *Hawaii*, *Jawa*, *Hawaiki Roa*, *Hawaiki Pamamao* – I believe - took precedence. However, this may be just one theory. Other theories can be that of *whenua* (continent) beginnings.

## 2.2 SUBSEQUENT ORAL TRADITION

Another view (Wan Salleh Wan Ibrahim, 2003) deemed worth considering is the Great Maori Oral Tradition (*Te Here Tangata*), in that humankind was once `one ball of thread

that links to a (*te here*), a tree stump (*ohana* in Hawaii, *rumpun* in Malay-Indonesian); whereas *'tangata'* means People (*Orang* in Malay-Indonesian). This idea of interconnectness needs to be sewn anew, so that we become strong and successful.

Once a Maori Chief of the Te Arawa tribe of Lake Tarawera, Rotorua, New Zealand, Mr Anaru Rangihuea, reiterated to me that his great ancestors were from the Malay World. This larger Malay World, in the north had been *whenua* (*benua* in Malay, *vanua* In Maluku Indonesia). Thus, the Maori people had indeed been called *'Tangata Whenua'* (Stafford, 2011). A linguist, Professor Asmah Hj. Omar, clarified that the *'benua'* (Maori *whenua*) means 'upper regions' in Malay. A great Maori medical doctor, Dr. Buck (1964) explored Polynesia to discover his roots. Inadvertently, he discovered this *'whenua'* term, similarly used by other Polynesians : *fonua* (Tongan), *fanua* (Samoa), *fenua* (Tahiti), *honua* (Hawaii), *henua* (Marquesas). Interestingly enough the Rarotongans knew their (Polynesian) origins, being from 'a rice-growing continent' (*atia te varinga nui*). On further enquiry, Buck concluded that the Maoris originated from a part of Indonesia. Figure 1 below illustrates the probable migration stages to Aotearoa.



Source: <http://llmap.org/images/GrayandJordan/GrayandJordan.jpg>

**FIGURE 1 : STAGES IN MAORI MIGRATION**

### **2.3 WHERE EXACTLY IS THIS 'ATIA TE VARINGA NUI' OR 'HAWAIKI PAMAMOA' ?**

For want of a better term, we refer to ourselves as simply the 'Benua People'. In the pre-European past, this large Hawaiki Nui ancestral area was indeed extensive to criss-cross. However, we knew nothing except to proceed (navigating) from one Hawaiki to another Hawaiki. There were no checkpoints along the route 15,000 years back. Being adept at sailing and navigating their 'world' (Hawaiki Roa) - stretching from Madagascar in the west to Hawaii in the east, and from Hokkaido in the north to Aotearoa in the south – was no big deal. And why not, as we were adept at crafting catamaran and sea-going vessels in prehistory that none were known to equal us (Howe, 2006).

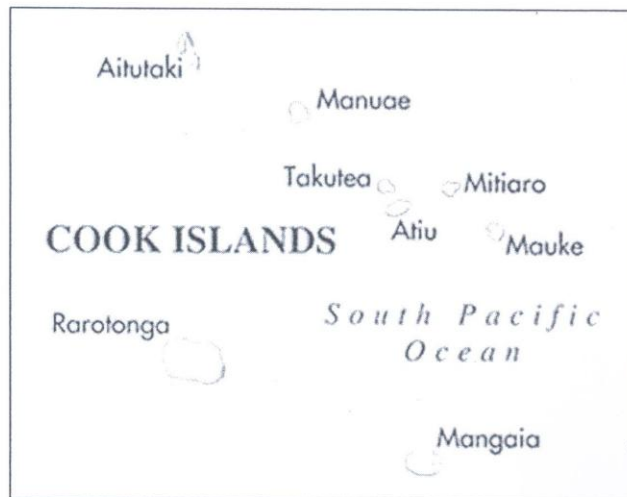
The prehistoric world of the Benua People were known to be somewhere in the drowned continent of the Sunda Shelf, with its centre between Sumatra and Java; and periphery extending beyond New Guinea, Australia, Easter island to New Zealand. If this is true as Santos (2011) and Oppenheimer (2001) described, then this prehistoric civilisation was the first to exploit gold and silver, tamed wild animals, found wild rice and carved mountainside rice terraces, invented long-distance sailing as well as build pyramids.

Polynesia and all their mysteries were known to the Benua People as they knew astronomy and their travels were guided by the stars.

### **2.4 PROBABLE STAR -GAZING LOCATIONS BEFORE REACHING NEW ZEALAND**

The true 'diaspora origins' of the Maori/Polynesian are not clear. The list below, though selective, suggests exploration and further research.

#### **a. RAROTONGA**



Source: <http://www.goway.com/romance/cookislands/index.html>

**FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF RAROTONGA AMONG THE COOK ISLANDS**

Rarotonga (Figure 2) is a small island, a small dot in the ocean. Enid Tapsell (1940) recorded the oral history of the te Arawa and Tainui tribe as originating from an island of Rarotonga. However, Tapsell's writing is fairly recent. And the Maori tribe had been diversified (Tainui, Te Arawa, Matatua, Kurahaupo, Tokomaru, Takitimu, Aotea, Horouta and Nukutere), with each claiming different versions of oral histories - of descent, canoes and landfalls locations in New Zealand (Wan Salleh Wan Ibrahim, 2011). However her effort to record is greatly appreciated.

None can dismiss the Southern Cook and Society Island easily as recent research had revealed. As a result of radiocarbon dating of archaeological settlement sites, canoes as well DNA analysis of Maori females, some believed that the Maoris originate from the Southern Cook and Society Islands.

#### **b) MESOPOTAMIA**

Best (1995: 224), the New Zealand pastor and museum curator, wrote that the Maoris were from the west of New Zealand, a land called Irihia, known for its hot climate suited to rice-growing. The stars, too, figured very significantly in their long-distance navigation. Their journey from Tahiti were guided by the star directions (*tama-nui-tera*) such as quoted:

*"Kia pai te takotoo ihu o te waka I runga I a kopu I te po; I te awatea ka whai I muri I a Tama-nui-e tera."* (ibid: 16). However, in normal Maori usage, the star is called *whetu*;

however, *fetu, hetu, etu* is also used across Polynesia (ibid: 30). As a result, the ancient Polynesians were naturally sun and star worshippers (Best, 1986).

Braddell (1989: 332 -335) on the other hand cited Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (1937) that the Himyarites (ancient Sabaeans, Yemenis) were great mariners and traders settling down in Mollucas (Indonesia), and subsequently married into the royal household of Celebes, and ended up into the royal households of Palembang, Malacca and Perak as well. If this is true, they may have been assimilated their Bugis and 'Malay' tradition of language, sea navigation and culture like the present Portuguese/Dutch of Malacca.

The Bugis ethnic group were well known sailor and traders in Southeast Asia, and Moluccas remains the most probable points of departure. Of course, more research needs to be forthcoming.

In my writings on the origins of the Malays (Wan Salleh Wan Ibrahim, 2011 : 74-77), I cited the ancient Malays were descended from the line of Prophet Abraham, 'Father of many Nations' through Siti Qanturah; and the Malays also have entered the Nusantara through navigation, spice trade, which linked up the Spice Route through Malacca and the Celebes. Thus the Malay origins' themselves were from Mesopotamia, and their eastward migration need thousand of years to be in Nusantara.

#### c) **INDO-ARYAN ORIGIN FROM TAHITI**

The Great Fleet theory (Howe, 2006: 28) started with Percy Smith's oral recording at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was believed the Maoris came to New Zealand in a 'great fleet' of seven canoes. The canoes were named Aotea, Kuruhaupo, Mataatua, Tainui, Tokomaru, Te Arawa and Takitimu. All the canoes were from Tahiti and their journey were about the same time. However, the Great Fleet narrative, though lately set aside, was greatly supported by Elsdon Best and Peter Buck. The Indo-Aryans may have come through the line of Siti Sara, Prophet Abraham; and from them issued forth the ancient Malays (Wan Salleh Wan Ibrahim, 2012: 78); which I presume, may need further research as well. However, the Indo-Aryans went through the Indian continent into Asia and through the land routes into the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian islands.

#### e) **MOLLUCAS ISLAND (INDONESIA)**



through income from tourist industry. It requires special expertise to package an effective marketing strategy, of course the local population's hospitality and openness contributes greatly in this destination branding. Preserving one's culture this way is a helpful contribution to assembling our collective memory of the past too.

The need to know and to discover anew our common lineage, cultures, appearances, traditional costumes and dressing without appearing tacky helps in driving the point of tourists making repeated visits.

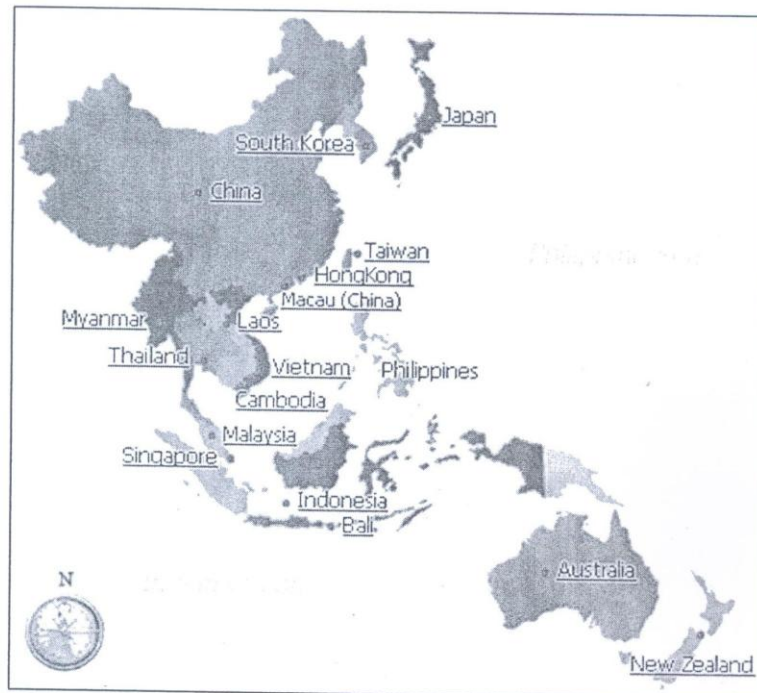
Cultural tourism, that requires tourists to visit museums, be involved in local cultural affairs like weddings, festivals, afford better opportunities for immersion in culture than the touch-and-go commercial tourism. Of course local facilities and practical tips to ensure this kind of organisation success needs experts/ expertise.

Family tourism involving different age groups should be increasingly popularised to wean the young away from standard type of recreation in the home. Thus cultural tourism amongst Malayo-Polynesian countries should be a good alternative strategy to educate and foster love for one's own cultural heritage. Once this kind of 'wanderlust' (*mengembara*) is inculcated from young, the next generation is ensured of appreciating our own community attractions.

In 1992, the United Nations (Charlesworth, 2010: 21-30) had launched its Memory of the World Programme. In consonant with this is the aspect of cultural preservation of the world's indigenous people, which the concerned Malay-Polynesians people knew better its social and global significance.

### **3.1 ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACHES**

Projects that can be explored by Malaysia and New Zealand (to be followed by other countries) (See Figure 4) can be as follows:



Source: <http://www.monoplanet.com/images/template/map-asia-pacific.jpg>

**FIGURE 4 : COUNTRIES TO BENEFIT THROUGH COLLABORATION**

**(a) Establishment of an Institute for Malayo-Polynesian Studies**

The objective of this Institute is to undertake research by bringing together writers and scholars - linguists, educationists, geneticists, archaeologists, leaders and so on - so that relevant materials can be collected, collated in all forms - monographs, maps, books, cultural artefacts from different communities of the world. In the final round, a museum with its own library and staffing will be organised - so that a permanent venue and platform for world documentation can be had. In the long-run an educational college, equipped with lecture theatres, studios, workshops teaching art, language and other vocational specialities to benefit young talents from the Malayo-Polynesian World will be made available.

The establishment can be further facilitated through the existing Chair of Malay Studies, already established in Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

This proposal can be discussed and deliberated about its feasibility and technical details amongst the committee and attending representatives of this conference. The final decision can be brought to the Negeri Sembilan State government and the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia for consideration.

To fast-track planning and organisation, it can be placed under any suitable faculty in the Malaysian universities.

#### **(b) Tourism and Travel Summer Camps**

Students from Malaysia and New Zealand (Wan Salleh Wan Ibrahim, 2003) can mutually benefit from many summer camps to be organised in Malaysia and New Zealand, and later be rotated amongst member countries on a more regular basis. In this way the younger generation can be exposed to appreciate other's culture activities, be it motivational, recreational or cultural. The idea may slowly snowballed into a United Nations' kind of Malayo-Polynesian World Youth Meet. This can be done by professional tour groups or on ad-hoc basis by non-governmental organisations partly financed by Ministry of Education of both countries and/with corporate sector sponsorships.

#### **(c) Vocational Handicraft Exchange Programme**

The Malayo-Polynesian World generally consists of people known for hospitality and handicrafts, part of their own psychological upbringing especially in batik making, woodcarving, boat building, pandanus weaving, songket and so on. We can foresee young Polynesians trained in Malaysian, Indonesian handicraft centres; likewise Malay-Indonesian hotel catering management and marine engineering students undertaking specific job-trade specialities in hospitality and deep sea fishing industries in Polynesia.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The issue of Malay-Polynesia had been deliberated long and hard over the past 30 years. Its high time our cultural strategists need to come together in a more organised manner by creating a permanent secretariat for any Malayo-Polynesian annual meet in the form of an institution as proposed.

The three programme proposals need consideration in preserving our valued cultural heritage for the next generation. Time and ingenuity is of great essence to ensure a better future for all.

## APPENDIX

### MAORI TERMS USED

#### `Manaakitanga`

A Maori term for self-determination and a strong will to create and reconstruct our social, economic and cultural integrity and wellbeing amidst outside challenges. It's a kind of positive *assobiyyah* in Ibn Khaldun's concept of civilisation. See Durie's book chapter (1997: 1-24) as Rarawa Kohere's Working Paper (2003).

#### `Whanaungatanga`

This term is used for integrity/strength in family institution and group support in mobilising for a common and collective ideals. There is debate in New Zealand and elsewhere that the strong family tradition is crumbling as a result of state-organised modern education and widespread mass media influence. See M.H.Durie's book chapter (1997:1-24).

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