

## **The Dynamic of Melanesian World** (Tracing the Origins, Migrations and Settlements of Melanesia)<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper provides input regarding the dynamics of the life of the Melanesian community. For this reason, the old understanding regarding Melanesian society has been criticized, by presenting current opinions regarding the existence of Melanesia. Thus, this paper deals with the origins of Melanesia, later migration and the condition of the Melanesian population as a whole on earth. The current findings of the Melanesian study are that the largest population of the Melanesian Society is in Indonesia, which for years has not been communicated openly. Simultaneously this paper is the beginning of our struggle with the Melanesian Society in relation to a broad study regarding Oceania, the Pacific and the Nusantara of Indonesia. There are three cultural treasures possessed by the Melanesian Society, namely prosperity, solidarity and humanity. These three basic cultural values always give fresh air to all Melanesian community members, to nurture relationships in all forms of community life activities.

**KEYWORDS:** Melanesia, seeking origins, migration, welfare, solidarity and humanity

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This paper focuses on the question of where the immediate Melanesian ancestors were located, and when the migrations of this ethnic groups moved from one place to another within the Oceanic domain. Tracing the migration of this ethnic group is not an easy task, given the lack of evidence pertaining to an overview of the Melanesian people homeland, as well as their migration across the ocean to seek a better settlement and create a community. In this regard, I will first examine the common Melanesian reliance based on linguistic anthropological findings on similar idioms and metaphors to define *ideas of origins* and on *the use of narratives* (Fox 1995). Both are used to construct a shared past which for the Melanesian ancestors become fundamental.

After exploring the origins of Melanesian people, by locating the archaic place from where the Melanesian ancestors came, we then should be able to go further into the heartbeat of time by reflecting on the migrations of Melanesian sub-groups. In doing so, we provide an overview of the common directions that can be the path to decipher the steps of their ancestors. Of course, all these accounts will mark today's diversity of Melanesian culture. So, it is beneficial to celebrate the diversity among us, which we face it and of course we can take into account the current opportunity as the golden discourse to call in our memory the relationships among us in different ecological principle.

#### **The Origins of the Melanesian People**

To date nobody knows the exact and a very special location, from where the Melanesian ancestors came from. Experts, such as anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists, ethnologist including historians, as well as ethnographers and others who concerned to trace the origins of Melanesian people, however, have their own materials to prove as well as establish an adequate knowledge of the Melanesian ancestors' time. I believe that each expert's understanding is based on his/her own analysis and reflections on the heartbeat and the entire lifecycle of the settlements of the area.

As a technical terminology, Melanesia is derived from Greek words: **Mellas** means 'Black' and **Nesos** means 'islands'. Based on this language note, Melanesia then originated to comprise the West Papua and Papua Provinces of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and later on East

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is presented for the first time at Melanesian Cultural Festival (Keynote Speech) 28th October 2015, Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara Province, INDONESIA. I then insert more input to complete the current paper.

Nusa Tenggara Province, Maluku plus North Maluku Provinces. However, it should include West Nusa Tenggara as well as south, north and east of west Sulawesi.<sup>2</sup>

In the stage of physically figure, most researchers come to a tentative conclusion of Melanesian identification as the settlements that have skin color ranges from rich black skin to light skin, and frizzy-hair to blond hair. In this paper my focus is not on the physical structure. Instead, my analysis will focus on how the Melanesian ancestors spread the seed of life with extending the three fundamental values: *solidarity, prosperity and humanity*.

As an area, Melanesia has existed around thousands years before French experts gave it a name. Since the end of the ice age period (around 20,000 - 14,000 years ago) a long and convoluted story has been revealed about Austro-Melanesian ancestors as inhabitants of the northern hemisphere including Southeast Asia and the Pacific region. In this regard, Mochtar Lubis uses the term Malay-Melanesoid in relation to the Mongoloid race of Indonesian people.

Within the Pacific region history, it was recorded, only around the 16th century until the 18th century the missionaries, both from the Catholic Church (Mission) and Protestant (Zending) began to explore the Oceania region which in the past was commonly known as the Pacific region. The area has become the point of departure for large-scale migration long ago, which is estimated to be around 200,000 years ago.

Next, we examine in general the periodization of European exploration of the Pacific region. In 1513 Vasco Nunez de Balboa discovered the Pacific region. The mission continued for the next seven years, where Ferdinand Magellan discovered South America and sailed throughout the Pacific region. On the way, Tuamotu and Guam islands were discovered. His expedition with the Spaniards found Caroline again, which was continued by Alvaro de Mendana de Neira and Pedro Fernandez Quiros (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol 13. 1980: 444).<sup>3</sup>

The same source said that around 1567 after being discovered in Peru it was the turn to find Southern Pacific with a visit to the Solomon Islands. Long after that, in 1606 Quiros Pilot Chief discovered the Cook Islands, Tikopia and the New Hebrides.<sup>4</sup> At the same time his colleague Vaez de Torres discovered Papua New Guinea (PNG) and several northern islands of PNG and Australia. This Spanish expedition was motivated by the quest for sandalwood treasure, relying on the passion to proclaim Christianity to others (Encyclopedia Britannica, Ibid).

In 1615-1616 the Spanish mission was transferred to the Dutch; where expeditions coming to the Pacific region are an extension of the Dutch expedition of Indonesia. A Dutch sailor named Jacques Le Maire visited Tuamotu and discovered the areas of Tonga, the Bismarck Islands, New Ireland and New Hanover. In 1642 Abel Janszoon Tasman sailed from Jakarta to the Pacific region and discovered New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji and New Britain. The Dutch expedition to the Pacific was interested in trade, but the expedition's reports and records revealed that there were no promising projects to build a good future in the region in the area of interest. Tasman argues that Oceania is only a transit area, which then all regions were given the name Melanesia by implementing various barter trade arrangements such as in Indonesia (Encyclopedia Britannica, Ibid).

At the beginning of the 18th century Oceania's discover increasingly developed when William Dampier visited New Hanover, New Britain and New Ireland. In 1723 Dutch admiral Jacob Roggeveen crossed into the Pacific from the east to the west to find the possibility of opening a trade expedition in the region officially. Then the Easter islands, Tuamotu islands, northern islands and the Samoan mainland were discovered. At that time a serious study began in the field of science, particularly the study of the atmosphere of life in the Pacific region. In 1765 a British admiral John Byron was sent by British Admiralty, who on his journey discovered the Tuamotu archipelago and the Gilbert islands. In 1767 Samuel Wallis and Phillip Carteret went to the Oceania region; where Wallis found Tahiti and Carteret found Pitcairn and also rediscovered the Solomon and Mendana islands, although both did not succeed in identifying the atmosphere of people's lives in the region (Encyclopedia Britannica, Ibid.).

In 1768 a Frenchman Louis Antoine de Bougainville visited the Pacific region and discovered the New Hebrides, Rossel Island and the Louisiana Islands. All of these discoveries are important in order to study the process of spreading the population of Europe in the Southern Pacific region and not merely the findings of new islands. A New Voyage round the world Dampier work is very useful in the narrative process of all expeditions from various European countries. James Cook is remembered as the first person to give the name Oceania to new areas discovered since the 16-19 century; where he visited the area three times, (i) first in 1769, (ii) second in 1772-1775 and (iii) third 1776-1779. With these three trips, the report submitted was high quality data to

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<sup>2</sup> Neonbasu SVD, G. 2017 *Citra Manusia Berbudaya, Sebuah Monografi tentang TIMOR dalam Perspektif Melanesia* Jakarta: Penerbit Buku KOMPAS, pp. 1-18

<sup>3</sup> Neonbasu (2015: 230).

<sup>4</sup> The New Hebrides were later named Vanuatu.

determine the disposition and structure of human life in the Southern Pacific or the name used in this article: Oceania (Encyclopedia Britannica, Ibid.).

Since the beginning of the 19th century, there have been frequent visits to the Pacific region, in various intentions, in addition to trade, as well as humanitarian purposes regarding social and religious services. Along with such activities, there was also review of various records carried out in previous centuries regarding the structure of the life of the Oceania Society as a whole. In general, the islands in the Oceania region are diverse and isolated from the reach of leading expedition trips from the Americas, Africa (Asia: India, Colombo, Singapore, Indonesia and directly to Sydney), to the north: Indonesia, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Yokohama and continue to America (Wallbank map, 1962). Generally found in the Oceania region which is not only different from the population of Southeast Asia, but also somewhat different from the races: Negroid, Mongoloid, and Caucasoid. It is claimed that the existence of Oceania stretches from the area around Southeast Asia, South Asia, from Malaysia to Hawaii and even continues to the USA. There is no strong evidence of Oceania's change to the Melanesian phrase (Encyclopedia Britannica, Ibid. 444-445).

In the frame of history, it began from 20,000 years ago in the Melanesian region, along with the flow of migration and shipping that occurred in every Pacific island settlement area, up to a quarter of the second millennium. After discoveries made by Europeans at the beginning of the 16th century until the end of the 18th century, the prehistoric Oceania world changed, initially the changes occurred as a result of ordinary visitors and then by regular visitors, such as travelers and later in the 18th century by missionaries. European influence entered the 19th century by missionaries, traders, invaders, and infiltrations from the European government to the region. In the 20th century, Oceania was included in the world of Europe and even the European Government managed to pull out of this area (Bellwood et al. 1995, Fox 1997).

Both prehistory and the history of Oceania are problematic. Oceania prehistory depends on reconstruction of archeology. This happened briefly in Oceania. As such prehistoric conclusions of Oceanic require interrogations and modification with each new location being examined. Linguistic, which is included in the 'pre-historical work' shutter is more advanced, but there are still many that need to be improved. Indeed, prehistoric times with clear chronological details are very unlikely. The history of Oceania also has many difficulties with evidence of documents, particularly the original texts from Europe and products of people who have not accurately recorded a culture that is different from their own culture - a culture that they have and are not perfectly understood. This deviation can be corrected into several sections using the findings of social anthropology and oral traditions of the inhabitants of Oceania, although it can be argued that the source is quite difficult because it is only temporary. These sources do not accurately describe the past because the source presents a contemporary meaning. However, the main historiographic problem is its diversity. More than 10,000 islands are scattered along 750,000 square miles in the oceans, many diverse cultures, hundreds of languages are not understood, and various historical experiences make it difficult to generalize (Bellwood et al. 1995, Fox 1997).

Physical diversity means that contact between islands never occurs due to long distances; this also means that the physical environment is not only isolated but also varies. The largest continental islands in Melanesian perspectives, such as New Guinea, New Caledonia and Viti Levu - not only have very basic differences in life and many weather variants and natural wealth but also rocky topographical conditions have been created for social seclusion. The smallest high volcanic islands like Samoa and Tahiti have the greatest homogeneity and even though they lack mineral resources on continental islands, the island is also very fertile, so it can support a better life. Coral islands, the lowest island in Oceania, help limit vegetation; the island is more open to bad weather and helps an existence closer to simple life, except for the source of marine wealth from lakes (Bellwood et al. 1995, Fox 1997).

The physical environment does not emphasize the type of society that exists, but it is limited. The large islands in Melanesia produce some major changes among coastal communities and those in the interior. The coastline is considered a filter for various people who come to Oceania. Therefore, Melanesia is characterized by a small group of people, which are classified according to language and customs. Social and political organizations are still relatively small scale. The opportunity to provide for life is not large enough to carry out a complicated ceremony. High volcanic islands in Polynesia have no restrictions for political and social unity. The island's wealth supports the development of religious, social and political ceremonies. Small islands also impose homogeneity and social grouping, but the source of their land produces nothing so that they can only survive as well as being fishermen (Bellwood et al. 1995, Fox 1997).

The diversity of Oceania not only covers the basic equation but also leaves various historical questions. The benefits of the Oceania division to Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia have encouraged the search for different origins of people in the region. They have been divided into several races, among others, Negrito, Mongoloid and Caucasian. They are carried away by different migration flows outside the Southeast Asian region; and Polynesians, originally from South America who were rejected with evidence relating to language and plants. The initial theory concerning the flow of migration from Malaysia is questionable archeologically.

This theory says that these three parts are found in Oceania and that there is no evidence of different origins outside the Oceania region. New Guinea has been inhabited since 20,000 years ago by Southeast Asian people. However, residents who inhabited around Oceania were no more than two millennia BC and this residence was extended to the Christian era. Evidence in terms of language strongly supports the above explanation. Residents in Oceania speak Austronesian languages, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and indigenous tribes in Taiwan and Madagascar while non-Austronesian languages are only spoken by some inland people on several islands in New Guinea and nearby places (Bellwood et al. 1995, Fox 1997 )

### ***Tracing the Origins of Life***

This paper elaborates on issues relating to the origins of Melanesian people, of which one is able to further overview migrations of the Melanesian Race, as well as settlements of such group over the world. The term *origins* deals not only with issues of genealogy but also refers to the cultural inheritance of people from early times. This inheritance always flows from its source to the present community (Neonbasu 2010). Such way also tries to more overview the Melanesian people's point of view, upon which we can face the fact of cultural diversity as an extraordinary assessments of the Melanesian families.

Our analysis is supposed to be based on the dynamic discourse of Melanesian world that has been started on the Oceanic ancestors' time of which they were spreading the three fundamentals values crossing the ocean. Such three fundamental values are solidarity, prosperity and humanity, which up to now, all the people over the Oceanic orbit have been faced it as golden esteems that flows from its source to the current generations as well as to the coming rank of people. In this regard, we really face the next challenge to come which is how we are able to establish a popular understanding of new Oceania, just based on an unclear past understanding of such word?

Historically, long time ago, and not only from the beginning of 13-16 centuries, Oceanian (Melanesian) ancestors were travelling crossing the ocean, of which it begun from west to east, from north to southeast and also to southwest, from north to everywhere and *visa versa*....this is the dynamic spreading of Melanesian seed of life. In this sense, we have to decipher findings of German scholar Wilhelm Milke who coined the more appropriate "Proto-Ozeanisch", and since then "Proto-Oceanic" has been used. The region covered by "Oceanic" in this context is the Pacific east of a line drawn from north to south and dividing Chamorro (Marianna Islands) and Belau (formerly Palau) from the rest of Micronesia and crossing the north coast of Papua of Indonesia (Pawley and Ross, 1995: 42-43).

It is a beneficial way to read the past, in terms of tracing the origins of Oceanic plate, in terms of looking beyond all the traditions by which we are not dealing to overview all the cases that have passed away; however we would like to seek the Melanesian ancestors steps through which they have been established a linkage upon which the current Melanesian people can put their efforts together, in terms of looking for an establishment for a prosperous environment. For instance based on the aforementioned Melanesian values, such as solidarity, prosperity and humanity, we are able to have authority to review Malensian discourse.

Let me go deeply into the heart of reading for the origin of the Pacific perspective that has been acknowledged by Alan Howard, professor of anthropology of Hawaii, Honolulu, who offered a thoroughly *historiography* about linkage between Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia in the frame of Oceanic domain. Howard mentioned two Pacific mentors Felix Keesing and Roger Keesing, who presented an appropriate analysis about history of the Pacific in the frame of reflecting more about the ecological principle of Pacific as well as the Melanesian people (1993).

In this sense, let me present the following quote from Horward, *In the 1930s anthropologists such as Felix Keesing and Ernest Beaglehole initiated studies of 'culture change' on Polynesia. These were premised on a reconstructed base-line culture that had been altered by European intrusion. History began with the European explorers, who, along with missionaries, traders, beachcombers, and colonists, set off a chain of causation that led to the transformation, and sometimes 'breakdown', of so-called 'traditional' cultures. A key concept in culture change accounts was acculturation', which originally was defined as a two-way process of change between interacting cultures, but in practice almost always referred to ways in which dominant Western cultures changed subordinated non-Western cultures* (1993: 84).

Regarding such case, let me present the findings of Raymond Firth on Tikopia who spent more time to search functional, cognitive and symbolic anthropology among the ordinary settlement of the area. Kinship, political systems, land tenure and economic organization became focal points for investigation in order to explain more about the original linkage between settlements of Pacific based on analysis of the relationship between Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia in the shade of Oceanic perspective. It is interesting to read Howard identification of Pacific anthropologists, since they paid almost as much attention to the culture of the European intruders as to the culture of the Pacific affected. I think this marked a major step forward to trace the origins of both Pacific (Oceania) and in our case the Melanesian people.

For years, I believe that silencing of Pacific voices, also silencing of Melanesian voices, as well as silencing of Oceanic voices out of our attention, in connection to review all the settlements of the domain through biography, and by assisting and encouraging the elders of the domain to record their own auto-biographies. One main aspect that is to be highlighted in recognizing historiography of Pacific according to Howard, is that 'history in colonial schools was mainly European history, and only a few indigenous individuals, usually rulers or warriors, were ever identified, mostly for the roles they played in abetting or thwarting the dominant society's agenda.

Here and now in East Nusa Tenggara Province of Indonesia, we are searching the origin of Melanesian people in terms of not to establish *a great wall*, but to call in our memory of living in a prosperous atmosphere of life as well as to create a living ecological principle within our community. Up to now nobody knows exactly the geographical paving or to promptly identify a real location from which the Melanesian ancestors came from. However we have a thoroughly materials, which will become proofs and evidence of tracing the origins of the Melanesian ancestors that had been travelled around the world. It is amazing to more decipher findings of mentors who have done reflection in great detailed about Pacific, Oceania, Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, Asia and Nusantara of Indonesia.

Based on linguistic account, Melanesian people is Austronesian-speaking population, which located over a wide area stretching from Madagascar to Melanesian domain with languages representative of currently recognized major sub-groups of the Austronesian language family: West Malayo-Polynesian, Central Malayo-Polynesian and Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, including speakers of both the Southwest Halmahera-West New Guinea and the Oceanic subgroups (Fox, 1997:1).

Anthropologist Prof Fox from *The Australian National University* of Canberra looks at the diversity of Austronesian societies and the proliferation of technical terms that have been used by observers to describe the origins of these societies. In the face of these diverse descriptive appellations, Fox focuses on a number of common features among virtually all Austronesian societies. Fox concerns with the tracing of local origins and the reliance on a variety of narratives for the construction of a shared-past. Thus the sharing of a journey may be used to define relatedness whereas claimed to precedence, often based on the order of events in particular narratives, figure prominently as means of defining social differences (Fox 1995:9-10).

### ***Topogeny: Social Knowledge in an Ordering of Place***

As a sequence, a topogeny may focus on points of origin and termination and thus define a line of precedence. A topogeny may provide the dimension of time but not the dimension of status generally associated with genealogy. Topogeny thus merely provide a framework for the 'placement' of more extended knowledge that can be called upon when necessary. Each place name offers the possibility for an elaboration of knowledge (Fox 1997: 12-13).

Place and landscape become two main issues in Melanesian mindset of topogeny, in terms of 'ways in which social knowledge is framed and vested in particular landscape. Both are usually used to describe model of societies among the Melanesian social life. In the frame of Austronesian societies, Fox proposed two formal models of social differentiation among the Austronesian societies, including Melanesian group as follows. *Firstly*, involving a process of 'lateral expansion', the living of groups of relatively equal status to form new groups and *secondly*, involving a process of 'apical demotion' among differentiated segments of society, often combined with a concomitant expulsion of high ranking segments to form new groups or opponent factions within society. These two systems of differentiation rely on different structured narratives of the past to base their construction of origins and their determination of precedence (Fox 1995: 10-11).

Regarding the places and landscape, Melanesian people have the tradition which is specific places identified by name form a critical component of a social knowledge that links the past, present and the future. Tales, folklores, oral traditions, stories and so forth always clearly portray the relationship between human beings and the universe, and that a good relationship can create a prosperous community life for the current generation. In the ordinary people's daily life, Melanesian people always lean on their ancestor's message by trying to cope with the ecological system as a thorough basis for establishing a better paradigm of life for the present community. That is why local people always present rites to secure their paradigm of daily life. In connection to the three dimensions of time: past, present and future, Melanesian Timorese use very often local idioms is known as trunk (*uf*), branches (*tlaef*), flower-fruit (*sufa-kaun*). These are familiar idioms for figuring the ancestor's authority out as well as to secure the present people's future with the establishment of a better community life for the future (Neonbasu 2010: 402)

In local Melanesian perspectives, such idioms above can be found within stories, folk life, folk tales, legends, myths which are used as the medium to illustrate the connectivity between mankind and the history. In the meantime all these oral traditions are used to articulate the nexus between people-land-realm and the ancestors with link to the Supreme Being in terms of building a prosperous living community in a society. The

following is ten tentative conclusions about function of oral traditions according to the Melanesian point of view.

*Firstly*, generally, oral tradition recounts events in the past in a multi-dimensional way. Here, 'variations' is the key notion to be kept in mind.

*Secondly*, oral tradition affirms the ethnicity of the identity of an ethnic group. Two aspects which are important to this function are event and place.

*Thirdly*, oral tradition can define the various relationship and communications between different ethnic groups. From this understanding, one can analyze and understand such issues as warfare, the marriage system, and networking among various ethnic groups and their enemies.

*Fourthly*, oral tradition becomes a way of exploring in great detail the social roles of ethnic groups. It can be used to analyze the structure of the marriage system and how networks in social structure are created and maintained.

*Fifthly*, oral tradition provides information about the definition of human beings. One can easily define the origins of ordinary people based on oral tradition, which always contains the idea of a journey for the people.

*Sixthly*, oral tradition tries to explain relationships between ethnic groups, the moral universe, the ancestors, an even the Supreme Being.

*Seventhly*, oral tradition explain the ecological system and, placing people at the center of it, accounts for the close relationship between people and the natural environment.

*Eighthly*, oral tradition can serve as a bridge linking people's ideas and beliefs with all aspects of their life.

*Ninth*, oral tradition can be seen as a way of teaching the philosophy of the ordinary people, offering a means and a path to trace the ideas and concepts of the ordinary people.

*Tenth*, oral tradition can be a gateway to understanding the religiosity of a group of people, and in particular their faith in their ancestors' links to the Supreme Being or the Holy, which holds a very central place in the joint life of the community. It can also clarify the people's central myths and the various ways people practice their religion.

These ten tentative categories indicate that oral tradition forms the identity of both a person and a society. Moreover, our people used oral tradition to portray three related issues: human beings, society, and the environmental system based on ancestors and the Supreme Being. Based on the anthropological and sociological discourses, these tentative functions of oral traditions open a better way for seeing the *worldview* of the local people. They include things such as the way of thinking, way of living, way of behaving and way of expressing when people locate themselves within and among everything on the face of the planet. In this regard, stories, folklores, folk tales, legends, myths and others contain the idea of 'human person' which needs to be understood in the larger context, not only as individual, but also as a social being, as an historical being, and as a being-in the world (Neonbasu 2010: 415).

In the light linguistic anthropological discourse, in the attempt to read Melanesian people's oral tradition, we have to respect the spirit of language, the spirit of words, the spirit of space/place, and the spirit of thought and the nucleus of everything which has roots in one's cultural heritage. For this reason our task is not just to interpret the ordinary people's culture – Melanesian culture – but to pass-over, that is, to participate with the people in their way of life, their way of thinking, their way of establishing networks with the ancestors and the world, their way of trusting God the Almighty and so forth.

### **Migration of Melanesian Seed of Life**

From cultural-historical implications, Fox stated: *The first Austronesian are believed to have originated in the south China area before moving off from the Asian mainland to settle on Taiwan somewhere about 5000-6000 years ago. There they lived relatively undisturbed for some time before one of the Taiwan-Austronesian communities, possibly from the south-east, moved south to the Philippines. Eventually they moved right through the Philippine archipelago. From there one group moved south-west, through Borneo and later Sumatra and Java, with branches penetrating the Malay Peninsula, eastern parts of Vietnam and Cambodia. A second migration from the Philippines moved south into Sulawesi. From there it is believed to have followed two major paths, one through Sulawesi and into the Seram-Ambon area and Timor, and the other towards Halmahera and Papua of Indonesia. From there the Austronesians are believed to have moved eastwards along the north coast of PNG, ending up in the Bismarck Archipelago (New Britain and New Ireland), where the Proto-Oceanic community is considered to have remained relatively unmolested until they were ready to move out into the Pacific* (Fox 1995: 35).

Based on mentor's different reflections on Oceanic domain, it is an interesting to locate Melanesian perspective within various paving in terms of celebrating real community life of Melanesian people. It is the fact that from time the past, Melanesian ancestor were moving from the origins of place with the honeyed values – that has been mentioned above - as the seed of living prosperous community. They have planted such initial

source everywhere and most especially in the heartbeat of time based on the physical place where the Melanesian ancestors settled.

In this sense, the time has come to all the Melanesian people to get golden values and review the linkage with varieties of cultures. Even though time has gone; migration still opens for reviewing people's behavior with tracing the Melanesian ancestors steps; it is an historiographical case to know that from its source such three assessments have been flown across the ocean with dreaming to keeping in touch with the origin of Melanesian style of life. Dispersal of Melanesian perspective that can be overviewed within various discourses of Melanesian cultures, can be compared to decipher Austronesian language family including Melanesian specific style of speech.

It is known of about 6,000 languages spoken over the world, and nearly 1,200 languages are spoken in Melanesia domain in the frame of Austronesian diversity of cultures. Anthropological question can be reflected here, which is how did they come to be existed in Melanesian plate of settlement? Up to now, the answer still open to have domains of Melanesian sub-groups for no one or scientist has the final and full truth about the origins of the Melanesian people, because there was no one who had a camera or tape recorder when things took place 55,000 years ago in the Sahul (the combined of Australia New Guinea at times of lower ocean levels) or 33,000 years ago when people entered the soil of Oceanic orbit. However, there have been many approaches to these questions of the origins of Melanesian people based on anthropological discourse.

Today, interrogation of the origins of Melanesian people comes not only from the anthropological discourse, but also from Archeology, linguistics and so forth, in order to provide proofs of the identity of Melanesian people. One main point based on Archeology approach, for instance, says that the Melanesian seed of life can make adaptation to the environment overtime. From Linguistic Anthropology stance, we know that the Languages of Melanesia is divided into two large groups, namely Austronesian and Non-Austronesian. There are similarities dealing to words, sentences and how to express point of view. Anthropological Linguistics studies takes up word lists and the structure of language and makes comparisons. In this way it is possible to put languages together in families, and one can see how some languages are related to others.

Physical Anthropology looks at the adaptations of the human body. One of the ways of studying people's origins is to look at blood chemistry: antigens, globulins, gamma-globulins and various enzymes. The results of these studies reveal that Melanesians show some connection to Polynesians and Micronesians, and then some (but less) connection to Asians and Australian Aborigines. Melanesians show little relationship to Africans.

Genetic studies show that Polynesians and Austronesian speaking Melanesians are related, and that non-Austronesian speaking Melanesians and Australian Aborigines are related. Similarities and differences are often due to what we call the "founder effect" - that is, when a small group from within a population emigrates and colonizes another territory or island, though they are related to the parent population, they are not likely to carry the full range or same frequency of genes as the population they left. However, they are now the founding generation in a new area. Whatever their range and frequency of genes is, that is what is available to be passed on to the next generation in the new place. So, migration can create quite a different population. This is one explanation for the diversity found within Melanesia.

Additional notes on the movement of Austronesian Speakers from Taiwan to Melanesia. Around 6000 years ago, a people developed in Taiwan who began to move south and east into the Pacific Islands. These people were Austronesians. They had advanced agriculture along with good seafaring skills. They left a subtropical world where cereals (rice, millet) were important but seafaring was not. They moved into the Philippines around 5500 B.P., and on to Indonesia around 5000 B.P. Overtime they were able to overwhelm the original populations of hunters and collectors. Their advantages were that they had: (1) Advanced agriculture so that they could sustain larger populations and thus a larger group of warrior; (2) Advanced canoe building sailing techniques so they could move quickly and could colonize every island and coast, and (3) Social organization that could keep large groups of people united and directed and thus prepared for offensive and defensive action, (4) All of the aforementioned advantages make the Austronesians effective long distance traders thus raising their level of living and linking together large regions, at least along their coasts.

What were the dynamics and what are the effects of Austronesians migrations and settlement? Even at the time of European colonization, Austronesian colonization was still going on. Thus, the Tolai were in the process of pushing the Baining (non-Austronesian speakers) back away from the coast arid into the hills. The Austronesian speakers of Lae coast were pushing up the Markham Valley with a border line of conflict between them and non-Austronesian speakers.

Austronesian speakers had established societies with a tendency towards hierarchy (Trobriars, Mekeo, Manam chiefs), towards long distance trading systems (Massim Kula, Vitiaz Strait trading system, Mailu trading system, Motu hiri trading system), and towards matrilineal descent as a major principle for organizing society (almost all Mime Bay and Bismarck Archipelago societies) or cognate descent systems (central Solomon and east into Polynesia). Austronesian speakers are not often patrilineal (Mekeo).

Perhaps more important, Austronesian speakers develop notions of diversity, discovery and adaptation to new environments (Fox, 1995). Many Pacific Islands stories of origin or creation start with an initial unity (one god, one ancestor, one tree, one egg), out this unity is immediately shattered. This turns out 'to be a good thing because the diversity that follows reflects the diversity of the origins of peoples and the diversity of skills and characteristics that people have. Diversity of origins often gives rise to diversity of social statuses or even social classes. In many stories the outcaste or foreign visitor becomes a respected central figure. Such thinking differentiates and gives order to clans or establishes a chiefly class separate from a commoner class. Diverse origins always leave open new possibilities. Societies can be redefined in each generation as one group grows more powerful while a traditionally powerful group declines. Thus, new big men and new chiefs can be accounted for as the old are relegated to other tasks but rarely discarded. Austronesian societies thus may be characterized by "ascent" groups (working your way back to justify a new social order) rather than descent groups (starting at the top, the same place all the time, and working your way down to make sure the present is unchanged).

Again, the notion of being on a journey is also important for Austronesians societies, including the notion that those who share the journey share kinship and vice versa. Tension in society, which is undeniable and not entirely undesirable, is often characterized by the disputants (often brothers) journeying opposite directions, although this may be accomplished by one brother staying home while the other one sales off. So, there is a freedom to leave, but also a yearning for reunion, How the younger brother is able to make the return trip back home again, perhaps with good news of a discovery. In fact, age differentiation, elder from younger, is an important principle in Austronesian societies.

### **Closing Remarks**

Through Melanesian Culture Festival (MCF), it can be seen the fact of Melanesian people's point of view, upon which we are celebrating the cultural diversity as an extraordinary assessments of the Melanesian families including of course Oceanian family.

First of all, the dynamic discourse of Melanesian world has started on the Melanesian ancestors' time through which they were spreading the three fundamentals values which are solidarity, prosperity and humanity to others. We have tracing the origins of Melanesian ancestors, that at least not only from the beginning of 13-16 centuries. It has been said that thousands years ago, Melanesian ancestors were crossing the ocean, shortly, let's to say, it begun from west to east, from north to southeast and also to southwest, from north to everywhere and *visa versa*....this is the dynamic spreading of Melanesian seed of life.

Historically, the first Melanesian ancestor were moving from the origins of place with brought (with them) as well such three honeyed values as the seed of living community. They have planted such initial source everywhere and most especially in the heartbeat of time based on the physical place where the Melanesian ancestors settled.

The Melanesian meeting, hopefully, can present such golden values to remind all the people over the world – including and mostly the Melanesian families – regarding the linkage among the Melanesian people with varieties cultures. Time has gone and migration still open to review all the people' behavior with tracing the Melanesian ancestors steps, who flew across the ocean with dreaming to keeping in touch with the origin of Melanesian way of life.

Dispersal of Melanesian perspective that can be overviewed within various discourses of Melanesian cultures, it can be compared to decipher Austronesian language family including Melanesian specific style of speech. It means that MCF conference offers the opportunity in terms of we are not only able to review the Melanesian community. MCF conference is beneficial to collect memories of the Melanesian seed of life as well as seed of culture that have been tie up different cultures over the world and most especially the Oceanic domain community to be more thinking of the future networks.

An interesting point that should be counted dealing to the intention of MCF meeting is to highlight MSG's 20<sup>th</sup> meeting appraisal of establishing a stronger Melanesian where peace, progress, and prosperity is ensured and sustained for all. In this sense, MCF tries to keeping in touch with the origin seed of perspective of life that has been spread across the ocean, as well as within the diversity of cultures and can be overviewed upon the heartbeat of time over the Oceanic orbit.

Cultural diversity encourages all the Melanesian people to establish 'mutual respect' as golden opportunity to celebrate our life every day!

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