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Man versus Myth: The Life and Times of Ratu Sukuna

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Steven Ratuva: Personal Journey

I took leave from the University of the South Pacific (USP) in 2002–03 to take up a fellowship position in the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia program (now the Department of Pacific Affairs) at The Australian National University (ANU). I returned to USP to join the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance. Since then, and even after leaving USP for New Zealand, I have maintained a close relationship with ANU.

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For generations, mythology about Ratu Sir Lala Vanuayaliyali Sukuna's superhuman imagery dominated Taukei political discourse. He was classed as a demigod of celestial proportions, a larger-than-life intellectual virtuosi whose wisdom and *mana* far outshone the most extraordinary of Fijian mortals. In a community where cosmological appeal helped frame world views, Ratu Sukuna was the human embodiment of deific perspicacity and a precious gift of the ancestral world to the Taukei community.

Superlative-laden poems, songs and dances were composed to deify the man, and generations of school kids (like myself) were reminded daily of the need to emulate Ratu Sukuna's grandiose behavioural dispositions and righteous moral virtues. Ratu Sukuna was seen by Fijians as the moral, political and intellectual icon of his era and revered almost the same way as Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King, although their ideological orientations were far from similar. In an era where there was no media scrutiny of leaders, where chiefly leadership was considered divine and where oral tradition was the most accessible form of communication, Sukuna's phenomenal reputation established him as the undisputed *turaga vuku ka rai yawa* (profoundly wise and prophetically visionary) whose quintessence bordered on the supernatural.¹ How much of the man was myth and how much was real?

This essay revolves around Ratu Sukuna's biography *Ratu Sukuna: Soldier, Statesman, Man of Two Worlds* (1980) written by Deryck Scarr, a distinguished Australian scholar. The essay extends the analysis to deconstruct some of the myths about the great man by looking at his professional achievements, chiefly background, political power and the future implications and impacts of these on the Taukei community as well as Fijian society as a whole. In an unpretentious way, it is an attempt to provide an alternative framing of Ratu Sukuna, often concealed by the fascia of political myth-making.

Background

Born into a high-ranking chiefly status, Ratu Sukuna was no doubt the leading Fijian intellectual, statesman and leader of his era. His father, Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, was a Roko Tui, a government administrative position (often given to high chiefs) that oversaw the governance of the *yasana* (provinces). Madraiwiwi's father, Ratu Kamisese Mara, was a flamboyant chief, whose womanising and political adventures in Fiji and Tonga became the stuff of legends.² His differences with a close relative, Ratu Seru Cakobau, one of Fiji's paramount warrior chiefs, led to his execution by hanging on 6 August 1859.³ Although it would be too simplistic to

1 Taken from a Fijian poem written about Ratu Sukuna.

2 Fiji's first prime minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, was named after Ratu Sukuna's grandfather.

3 Ratu Cakobau styled himself Tui Viti (King of Fiji). He led the leading Fijian chiefs in ceding Fiji to Great Britain on 10 October 1874. He was often at war with neighbouring chiefdoms such as Rewa and was intolerant of those like Mara who despised his rule (see Waterhouse 1866).

call it vengeance, this incident, to some extent, whether consciously or subconsciously, shaped Ratu Sukuna's future political views and tactical manoeuvres by ensuring that Cakobau's direct descendants did not pose any more threat to his political ambitions and dominance. An example of this was his choice of Lauan chief Ratu Mara, his nephew and namesake of his slain grandfather, as his successor, rather than someone from his Cakobau paternal line. Another was when he appointed Joeli Ravai, a commoner, as Roko Tui Tailevu, ahead of a Bauan chief, which protocol at that time would have demanded. Ironically, high chiefs like Ratu Edward Cakobau had to carry the humiliation of working under someone of much lower sociocultural status as Ravai. The politics of Bau, often referred to as *verevaka-Bau* (Bauan conspiracy), was both manifest and latent and Sukuna played it strategically in subtle but effective ways.

Ratu Sukuna was born in 1888 and died in 1959. He studied at Wadham College, Oxford, and later at Middle Temple in London, and in 1921 graduated with a BA and an LLB degree. He was the first Taukei to be awarded a university degree. He became a barrister-at-law at the Middle Temple in London and returned to Fiji for an illustrious career in the civil service and politics. His Oxford studies were disrupted by the First World War. He joined the French Foreign Legion after being rejected by the British army on racial grounds. He was wounded and was later awarded the *Médaille militaire* (military medal) for bravery. Ratu Sukuna had a meteoric rise through the ranks of the colonial service as District Commissioner, Provincial Commissioner, Chairman of the Native Lands Commission, Secretary for Fijian Affairs and first Speaker of the legislative council. He helped set up the Native Land Trust Board to administer Taukei land and also made changes to legislations and regulations on Taukei governance. At a time when infrastructure and communication was at an embryonic stage of development, Ratu Sukuna walked for days across Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, the two largest islands in the Fiji group, and sailed hundreds of kilometres, criss-crossing the archipelago, for consultation on land ownership and registration as well as to extend the state's influence and control to remote parts of the country. Visitation to remote villages was seen as a gesture of *veivakaturagataki* (chiefiness) and *veinanumi* (deep concern) by someone so highly respected and esteemed and this fed into the community-wide exaltation as man of the people.

The Biography

Ratu Sukuna: Soldier, Statesman, Man of Two Worlds attempts to pull together the multiplicity of social, cultural, political, class and personal factors and forces that shaped Ratu Sukuna's privileged life as a Taukei chief, intellectual, colonial bureaucrat, soldier, politician and statesman. It is an official biography⁴ of a man who put Fiji on the regional and global map through his academic achievements, military service and professional demeanour. Scarr fuses together real life experiences of Ratu Sukuna as well as of others he came into contact with, either directly or indirectly, using the historical narrative method. Although this method has often been criticised as positivistic because of its tendency to be merely descriptive of surface manifestations of a social phenomenon, it nevertheless helps to provide a broad account that can inform us of the occurring sequence of events.

It is thus not surprising that while the book provides a commendable historical narrative of Ratu Sukuna's life, it does not fully explore the deeper thoughts and philosophies of the man as well as his influence in modern day postcolonial Fiji. There is also no discussion of Ratu Sukuna's Oxford experience and how this shaped his future philosophy and ideology. Most biographies or autobiographies of important people emphasise the impact and influence of their university education on their professional lives, vision and achievements. This is a major drawback of the book. Nevertheless, Scarr's role as official biographer also extended to editing *The Three-Legged Stool: Selected Writings of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna* (1984), a collection of speeches by Sukuna over the span of a number of years since his experiences in the First World War trench warfare as a member of the French Foreign Legion.

Contrary to mainstream assumptions, historical narrative method is neither 'objective' nor empirically irrefutable, but is based on implicit or explicit political, cultural and ideological conceptualisation, framing and interpretations of events and issues, articulated in a variety of historiographic texts and analysis. Some of these are imperial historiography, which deals with stories of colonial conquest and glory; nationalist history, which

4 Ratu Sukuna's biography committee was established by the Government of Fiji and comprised Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara (then prime minister), S. B. Patel, Sir Joshua Rabukawaqa, J. Thomson, L. G. Usher and Dr I. Q. Lasaqa (then secretary to Cabinet).

attempts to provide a local narrative of a group's struggle against external forces; elite history, which focuses more on the ruling classes; and social history, which is the story of ordinary people in everyday life.

Scarr's biography of Ratu Sukuna is an interesting mixture of imperial and elite histories. Much of the book revolves around Sukuna's life as a chief and his colonial experience. Ratu Sukuna loyally relished his chiefly position and thoroughly fetishised British imperial culture. The book weaves together Taukei chiefly narrative and British imperial discourse, intertwined in a rather odd symbiotic embrace and does not really reflect Fiji's social history. In fact ordinary Fijians, the very people who helped create the Sukuna myth, only exist as near invisible players in a class-based chess game.

The Chieftocratic Narrative

Fiji's chiefly aristocracy, which I refer to here as 'chieftocracy', was co-opted by the British colonial regime into their fold and in turn acted faithfully as trusted compradors between the colonial state and the Taukeis. Ratu Sukuna's father and later Ratu Sukuna himself, were part of this chieftocratic class, whose members were mostly related by blood and were drawn from loyal tribal groups that were considered politically reliable by the colonial state.⁵ While Sukuna himself was an intelligent and visionary individual, his chiefly background and his father's connections to the colonial state provided him with the privilege and means for upward social mobility within the British imperial system. He was sent with his brother to study in Wanganui in New Zealand, and he later studied at Oxford. Ratu Sukuna's chiefly position and the British patronage of the chiefly system gave Ratu Sukuna a head start and commoners who were more academically inclined but did not have similar opportunities could not make it far enough and many remained disgruntled proletariats.

Because of his education, he stood out from other chiefs and was constantly pushing for the virtue of hard work by chiefs as a means of asserting their legitimacy. One of his most famous adages was *ai tutu sa sega ni itekiteki* (rank is not an ornament) to inspire chieftocrats to work hard and prove their worth as chiefs (Scarr 1980:125).

5 Those who resisted colonial rule were subdued in a systematic nationwide process of 'pacification' (see Nicole 2010; Ravuvu 1991).

Two or Multiple Worlds

In his busy life, Ratu Sukuna had to deal with a complex world, not just 'two worlds' as Scarr's title deceptively suggests. The British world at the time of Sukuna was not a homogenous one but a conglomeration of multiple subworlds consisting of the vestiges of the feudal order in the form of the royalty, sub-royals and lords who maintained unquestioned hegemony in the British class structure; an expanding corporate and merchant class that controlled the economy; an educated and globalised professional class; and a large working class. Britain was also a growing multiethnic society with people from other parts of the world, including the colonies, making the country their home. These were multiple worlds, not a single world. Fiji, although much smaller geographically and demographically, was equally complex. The Taukei community, contrary to what Scarr assumed, was far from homogenous given its vertical divisions between chiefs and commoners and divisions between regional and tribal groups based on distinctive locally defined identities and loyalties, a situation which Frances Stewart (2008) referred to as 'horizontal inequality'. A number of chiefdoms in the western and central Viti Levu attempted to assert their political and sociocultural distinctiveness by rebelling against the colonial state and the comprador chiefly class. The punitive response by the colonial state, supported by the comprador chiefs, in repressing the rebellion was to redefine the future dynamics and configuration of the Taukei community as the comprador chiefs exerted their hegemony and became the 'legitimate' representatives of the Taukei people. In addition to these complexities was the multicultural, multireligious and multiethnic nature of the colony. All in all, Ratu Sukuna had to deal with these diverse groups living in multiple worlds, often 'separated' from each other.

Ratu Sukuna's professional life oscillated between these groups, but he made it clear where his loyalty and identity was. Although he was a chief and saw himself as man of the people, he remained aloof from the ordinary people who treated him with ultimate veneration. While he enjoyed the rare privilege of entering whites-only private clubs in Suva as well as the feudal luxury of Boron House mansion (lent to him by European plantation owner James Boron), ordinary Taukeis were not even allowed into public bars and lived in villages in semi-subsistence poverty. While he enjoyed the fruits of his Oxford training, ordinary Taukeis were denied higher education. In short, Ratu Sukuna lived in his unique world while his own people lived in another.

One of the ironies of Ratu Sukuna's life was that, although loyally immersed into British education and cultural life, he was never fully accepted by the British as an equal. At most he would have been accepted as simply a very good imitator of British high-class accent and English eccentricity. The treatment he received by the colonial regime confirms that he was regarded as an honorary European. The colonial discriminatory laws that discouraged the Taukei from fraternising with whites did not apply to him (Norton 2013). Thus, for Scarr to simply state that Sukuna was a man living in 'two worlds' (British and Fijian) was an understatement and a simplistic assessment of the multiple worlds Sukuna encountered and engaged with in various ways and degrees.

Sukuna lived a life of paradoxes. The first paradox was his unrestrained accommodation of British high-class culture through his Oxford education, Oxford accent, acceptance of British decorations including a knighthood and living a life closer to that of the British than to a Fijian. But he was not fully accepted by the British who still saw him as an inferior native. In one instance, it was said that he overheard Juxon Barton, the colonial secretary, referring to him in a Suva club as a 'nigger' (Snow 1997:66).

The second paradox was that while he tried to fit into the Taukei community, he really did not gel in well because he was too well-educated and thus culturally too close to the British and ordinary Taukeis found it hard to approach him. Although Sukuna was not the highest ranked chief in Fiji, his British education and status within the colonial hierarchy easily overshadowed those of higher rank, such as the Vunivalu.

In a way, this position of relative autonomy from both groups worked well to his advantage because it enabled him to oscillate between the two groups with ease and to his convenience. He was able to see the Taukei situation from the British vantage point as well as see the British world from the prism of the Taukei. No one else around his time, British or Taukei, was able to do this effectively. Sukuna's utilitarian and adaptive disposition enabled him to use multipronged approaches to the multiple worlds he engaged with.

The ‘Other’ History

Because Scarr’s biography is too narrowly focused on Ratu Sukuna himself and his immediate circle of kinship and colonial political actors, it provides minimal illumination on the socioeconomic, sociopolitical, sociocultural and cosmological situation of the Taukei community. It would have been a great opportunity to shed light on the dynamics on the ground, but this chance slipped by mutely. A significant historical moment would have been the contestation between competing Taukei ideologies. Around Ratu Sukuna’s as well as his father’s time, political persecution of dissenters such as Apolosi Ranawai, a commoner entrepreneur who wanted to introduce his vision for an alternative development path for Fijians through his *Viti Kabani* (Fiji company), was common.

As Robert Nicole argues, there was a deliberate and systematic cleansing of grassroots expressions of autonomous views and organisations through a collaborative punitive campaign between the comprador chiefs and British colonial state (Nicole 2010). Despite the façade of his humanitarian imagery, Sukuna continued with this ‘pacification’ process to subdue unconventional Taukei views and impose the comprador chiefly views as universally representing indigenous interests. This arbitrary imposition of dominant values, under the ideology of *i tovo vakaturaga* (chiefly way) became the accepted norm. Anyone who acted and behaved in contrary ways was considered ‘un-Fijian’. This process, referred to by Pierre Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron (1990) as ‘cultural arbitrary’ became the ideological cornerstone of the so-called native policy.⁶ Fijian administration was used by the colonial state and the comprador chiefs as cultural leverage to invalidate and silence dissenting views as well as represent and impose chiefly ‘cultural arbitrary’ as universal. Power (in both the Bourdieuan and Foucauldian senses) was reconfigured and reinstitutionalised to serve the interests of the comprador chiefly class and their allies and annihilated the political capacity of those who dared to resist. It was in the context of this process of ‘internal colonialism’ that Ratu Sukuna emerged and thrived as the undisputed champion of the Fijian cause. He benefited immensely from the pacification process of which his father was a champion. He was

6 This term refers to the arbitrary imposition of values and power, while concealing their historical, institutional and ideological sources through construction of universalised discourses, to justify intent.

a person born into the right family, at the right place and at the right time, and that gave him the advantage which catapulted him to uncontested heights.

The failure of the book to highlight the ‘other’ history of Fiji serves to reinforce the myths about Ratu Sukuna and provides an imbalanced view of Taukei history. If Ranawai’s *Viti Kabani* had been allowed to carry out its entrepreneurial endeavours freely, Fijian history would have taken a different trajectory because the Taukei groundswell of support would have shifted, thus changing the balance of power considerably.

As is common in imperial and elite history, the narrative is very male focused—there is little gendered narrative. The colonial world is portrayed as a world of tough frontier men overshadowing the significance of women who only exist as behind-the-scene associates to provide social accompaniment and supporting cast to the husband in public occasions (Knapman 1986). Ratu Sukuna’s wife, Lady Maraia, as she was fondly known, is simply treated as a feminine shadowy figure in the shadow of Ratu Sukuna. In the biography, there is only one ‘substantial’ (one page) encounter with the commoner woman who acted as confidant, wife and servant (Scarr 1980:83). Ratu Sukuna’s decision not to marry a woman of high rank, although raised eyebrows and sent tsunamis of gossip around Fijian villages, was because of his desire to have a woman to serve him in his busy schedules rather than a woman who, due to high rank, may not be in a position to carry out daily domestic duties.

Taukei Voice: Impact on Fijian Politics

The biography does little to situate Ratu Sukuna’s protectionist policies in the context of the broader colonial development strategies. Through Ratu Sukuna’s reform of the Fijian administration in 1940, the paternalistic communal control of the Taukei was strengthened further and more deeply entrenched under the tutelage of chiefly hegemony. At one level, it was a system of social control and at another, according to Nayacakalou, it was:

a system empowered by law to organise some of the activities of the Fijian people for their own social, economic and political development as well as for the preservation of their traditional way of life (1975:85).

Although Ratu Sukuna saw it as a means of creating a more ‘autonomous’ governance system for the Taukei and simultaneously weakening direct British control, the latent impact on the Taukei collective psyche was nevertheless that of gullible dependency on colonial institutions such as the Great Council of Chiefs, Fijian Affairs Board and Native Land Trust Board, on which Ratu Sukuna had considerable influence. The amplification of indirect rule through reform bolstered Ratu Sukuna’s hegemonic clout further as the undisputed Taukei voice.

The reification of the colonial institutions above had long-lasting impact on Taukei self-perception. Originally inspired by Sir Arthur Gordon’s social Darwinian orthodoxy of a dying culture that needed to be saved, the Taukeis were for paternalistic reasons cocooned further into a rigid subsistence life with little opening for social mobility, whether it be in commerce, education or professional life. Although there were semicommercial ventures that Ratu Sukuna encouraged, these operated within the ambit of communalism under the tutelage of chiefs who held supervisory positions as development officers (Ratuva 2013). Some of these ventures included the setting up of the cooperative movement (*Soqosoqo Cokovata ni Veivoli*) under the Co-operative Ordinance of 1947; the Fijian Banana Venture in 1950; the Fijian Development Fund (*Lavo Musuki in Veivakatorocaketaki*) by Ordinance No. 14 of 1951; the creation of economic development officer positions in 1954 (following the incorporation of economic development agenda into the Fijian administration); and more rigid control of the *galala* (independent farming) system (Spate 1959).

Moreover, although he did not have any training in development the same way as Ratu Mara (who studied at the London School of Economics after Oxford), he was still keen on grassroots socioeconomic development, even if his ideas on this were rudimentary:

the village community, more especially the large village community, being of native growth and an attempt to solve the local problems of life in its own way, is the most natural, the most convenient and cheapest unit of administration ... The village system has failed economically not from any inherent weakness nor from maladministration. It has failed to improve materially the life of the people because of the lack of markets for its crops (Scarr 1980:140).

Education was only available to selected chiefs like Sukuna in the beginning, and to other chiefs later, while the majority of the Taukei were deprived of western education and were expected to be loyally subservient to the whims of the colonial and traditional masters. While Ratu Sukuna encouraged technical training for basic skills like carpentry, he was weary of those with higher educational qualification and warned against the potentially subversive influence of the commoner intelligentsia who would be bent on ‘undermining and confusing authority to their own ends’ (Scarr 1980:146). Commoner scholars such as Ravuama Vunivalu and later Dr Rusiate Nayacakalou did not get any government support and had to rely on private sponsorship by Morris Hedstroms for overseas university training.

Rather than nurturing Taukei potential for economic advancement and self-empowerment, the incubation and domesticating strategy by Ratu Sukuna undermined their social mobility at a time when other ethnic groups were making headway into commerce, education and professional positions. Subsequently, when the rigid system of control was lifted and opportunities began to open up after the 1960s reform recommended by Nayacakalou, the Taukeis found themselves lagging behind other ethnic groups in the areas of commerce, education and professional achievement. This bred grievances that were later articulated in more open ethnonationalist expressions and violence. Near desperate affirmative action measures were put in place to address some of the more overt manifestations of ethnic disparity but with mixed success (Ratuva 2013). One of the forgotten ironies of Ratu Sukuna’s legacies was that his great visions and policies to ‘protect’ the Taukei had the effect of disempowering and undermining their potential for progress. The responsibility was left with Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, whom Ratu Sukuna groomed as successor, to disentangle and address the multidimensional socioeconomic and sociopolitical problems nurtured under the Sukuna reign. The obsession with the mythical character of Ratu Sukuna has blinded us from seeing the implications of his social reforms and policies.

While it is unfair to blame Ratu Sukuna for later problems, the circumstances at the time, often invoked by fear of perceived Indo-Fijian political threat and compounded by the British paternalistic colonial designs of making natives politically and culturally submissive, may have provided impetus to his protectionist vision. Nevertheless, rather than emancipating the Taukei from the excesses of colonial domestication, Ratu Sukuna’s ideas and policies simply reinforced colonial hegemony.

Colonial Fiji was an apartheid-type colonial state with Jim Crow-type laws that kept non-whites away from public spaces such as swimming pools, private clubs and other European-designated places; fraternisation with ‘natives’ was a social sin to be avoided.

Ratu Sukuna was no Gandhi to fight off the scourge of colonialism nor a Martin Luther King to clamour for civil rights; he was intent on assimilating the Taukei into the British legal and political regime while making himself their dominant voice within the rubric of the colonial political paradigm. This was reflected in his scorn for democratic elections and preference for the system of nomination of Taukei representatives for legislative council membership. Unlike the fully fledged democratic election that the Indo-Fijians had demanded and achieved by 1931, the system of nomination acted as a social control mechanism that ensured that no Taukei with unwanted political beliefs would emerge and thus pose potential threat to Sukuna’s dominance. Scarr observed that in the legislative council:

when Indian members formally pressed for political equality between three races, Ratu Sukuna, again claiming to speak for all Fijians, had emphasised that they felt they were well-treated under the present regime, and said they looked for the next two, three, even four generations to European leadership. He had no wish to see the communal division broken down, as Indian politicians claimed to want, though he would happily eat curry with anyone (1980:110).

In Sukuna’s own words:

We have come to the parting of ways and looking ahead in the light not only of our own interests but also of those to whom we handed over this country, we choose, with the full support of native conservative and liberal opinion, the system of nomination believing that along this road and along it alone, the principal of trusteeship for the Fijian race can be preserved and the paramountcy of native interests secured (Fiji Legislative Council 1935).

Sukuna had virtually uncontested control over the Taukei voice, Taukei aspiration and Taukei vision for the future. He favoured slow reforms and was always wary of Taukei nationalists whose ideologies ran counter to the dominant chiefly discourse of respectful and subservient engagement with the colonialists (see Norton 2013).

The denial of democratic rights by the colonial state and Ratu Sukuna had profound implications on Taukei future attitudes towards democracy in the context of Fiji's changing multiethnic society. Even after universal suffrage, which allowed Taukeis to vote for the first time in 1965, there was still a perception that Fiji's democratic system was only legitimate as long as it continued to serve the political aphorism of 'paramouncy of Taukei interest'. Although this view continued to be contested and evolved incessantly over the years, the suspicion of democracy being against Taukei interest prevailed in various degrees, as manifested publicly during the 1987 and 2000 ethnonationalist coups.

Furthermore, as Scarr suggested, Ratu Sukuna was not too keen on multiculturalism, perhaps a learnt behaviour from the British, and saw intercultural engagement in simplistic terms such as eating curry together with Indo-Fijians. This is despite the fact that he had Indo-Fijian friends such as Gujarati lawyer S. B. Patel, who had once worked with Mahatma Gandhi before migrating to Fiji where he became a significant player in politics. Ratu Sukuna's position relating to other ethnic groups may have also influenced ordinary Taukeis he came into contact with and possibly inspired some ethnonationalist feelings over the years in explicit or subtle ways. However, there were other forces shaping the lives of the Taukei and many pursued their daily lives with minimal influence by Ratu Sukuna. Amongst these were the emerging Taukei proletariat, such as the unionised dockworkers and mineworkers, whose bread-and-butter concerns and loyalty to their class interests outweighed Ratu Sukuna's cultural and political appeal.

Concluding Remarks

As far as the Taukei community was concerned, Ratu Sukuna was the lighthouse that illuminated history in an awe-inspiring way. He was the model personality to be emulated, the holder of immeasurable wisdom and guiding beacon for Fiji's future. Indeed, his concerns and deeds were beyond reproach at his time. But with historical hindsight, questions need to be asked about the wisdom and implications of some of his ideas and policies.

The protectionist policies he so religiously cherished worked well during his era to maintain a sense of communal solidarity and group security in the colonial environment. The future implications of these on the Taukei

themselves and the country as a whole need serious scrutiny. Some of these policies shackled the Taukei further into colonial servitude and feeble reliance on colonial institutions such as the Great Council of Chiefs and Fijian Affairs Board. By the time of independence, the Taukeis continued to rely on these to determine their future trajectory. The strict communal system Ratu Sukuna cherished helped undermine Taukei innovation and empowerment and was partly responsible for their lack of progress in education, commerce and professional endeavours. The system of nomination Ratu Sukuna vehemently advocated also nurtured a distrust in democracy and modernity. These factors collectively fuelled Taukei grievances in the postcolonial era and contributed to public and violent expressions of ethnonationalism.

Despite these, Ratu Sukuna's legacy will continue to linger and his historical profile will not be easy to overshadow, not in the foreseeable future. The man may have passed on but the myth liveth!

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