Appendix A

Appendix A (i) The matanitū of Bau: Lei, ko Bau na Yanuyanu

Material for this account of the development and structure of the matanitū of Bau is taken from the Native Lands Commission (NLC) records; Deve Toganivalu’s (n.d.) early 20th century ‘History of Bau’; and my own enquiries when I was Deputy Secretary of Fijian Affairs, and when, on behalf of the Fiji Museum, I was carrying out excavations on Bau in the main spirit mound of Navatanitawake (Parke n.d.- b, 1993, 1998).

The present leading polity of Bau is the registered yavusa of Kubuna. Kubuna had its origins in three groups, two of which originated at Verata, which was described by Sayes (1984:8) as ‘the most important power centre in this area prior to Bau’; and one from the Nakauvadra range, an important spiritual centre associated with so many of the myths of origin of Fijian society. This is explained in the following account:

The first of these groups, the Vusa Ratu, came from Verata. This group travelled to Ovalau and Moturiki before settling at Kubuna, a place on the mainland of Viti Levu opposite to the island of Bau. Their leader held the title of RokoTui Bau.

Another group also came from Verata and travelled to Moala and Totoya. Some went on to Tonga and then returned to Moala and Verata. From here some went to Nayau on the Wainibuka river, and thence to Viria and finally to Kaba where they became known as the Tui Kaba. Their leader had the title of Tui Kaba, using a version of the Tongan title of Tu’i. They moved to Oveya opposite to Bau, where they met up with a group from Nakauvadra whose leader was the Vunivalu. They joined together under a paramount leader, with the complex title of Vunivalu Tui Kaba.

Although there are other oral accounts of the origins and development of the Kubuna, this is the account which is generally accepted by the Kubuna themselves. Marshall Sahlins, who has carried out considerable research into the history of Bau told me that he was aware of several versions of the origins of Kubuna but he was not prepared to give credence to any one particular account (personal communication). I agree that there is really no evidence except that of oral tradition to account for those wanderings which are said to have resulted in the Kubuna. Archaeology is not helpful in this case. For present purposes, the account which gives the details of the origins and meanderings of the protagonists is not important. Although the details of accounts may differ, all traditions of origin agree that the Kubuna are of mixed origin. On the other hand, it is the details of the following account of the development of the groups of the matanitū of Bau that are more important from my point of view, and Sahlins, to whom I showed it, regarded this as a reasonable and generally acceptable version of the fortunes of Kubuna and Bau. The account goes as follows:

At the time that the Vusa Ratu were living at Kubuna on the mainland, the fisherfolk of the offshore islet now known as Bau were subservient to the Vusa Ratu. The islet was then known as Korolevu, according to NLC records; or perhaps Ulu ni Vuaka (Pig’s Head), according to Waterhouse (1866), a mid-19th century missionary in Fiji. On one occasion, however, the fisherfolk were derelict in their duties and refused to send, as tribute to Kubuna, a sakula (a large deep-sea fish) that they had caught. This angered
the Kubuna, and the fisherfolk fled, fearing that they would be killed. The Butoni went to the island of Koro in Lomaiviti, where they are still living in the village of Namuca. The Levuka fled to Tui Nayau at Lakeba and then settled in Levuka, Ovalau, where they still live. Both groups still retain their connections with Bau. The Butoni have responsibilities in the installation of the Vunivalu who is now paramount of Kubuna. The Levuka have responsibilities connected with the installation of the Adi Levuka, the wife of the Vunivalu. After the incident over the sakula, the Vusa Ratu together with the Vunivalu and Tui Kaba groups decided to move to the islet and establish a power base from which to expand politically. These three groups decided to join and form one group, the Kubuna, named after the mainland settlement of the Vusa Ratu. They re-named the islet Bau after a yavu or mound at Ucunivanua, Verata. This was the mound associated with Vueti, who according to myth was the original ancestral spirit of both the Verata people and the Kubuna people.

Lest it be thought that this account of the origin of the name of Bau is an ex post facto reconstruction, a more likely explanation is that the Kubuna people were following a common practice when moving to a new place. Not only the name, but also the general pattern of the new village, was based on that of the earlier settlement, and frequently the names of the new yavu or housemounds were the same as those of the old mounds. Previously people used to be buried in their yavu, and by bringing the names of the yavu, the villagers were also bringing symbols of association with the ancestors. Sometimes they brought stones, especially those associated with the ancestors, from the old site to the new. For instance, the Wasavulu people of Labasa, Vanua Levu, brought from their ancestral area on the south side of the mountain range the biggest monolith known to me in Fiji (Parke 1971:265). It would be quite natural for the Kubuna to call their new island home after the name of the mound associated with their original ancestral spirit, especially as a symbol of their connection with venerable and then powerful Verata. The account continues:

There were then two chiefs, the Roko Tui Bau, who came from the senior mataqali of the Vusa Ratu group; and the Vunivalu Tui Kaba, the recognised joint chief of the Vunivalu and the Tui Kaba groups, who came from the Tui Kaba group. When the three groups decided to join together to form the group to be known as Kubuna, the Roko Tui Bau was acknowledged as paramount by the other two groups which were only partial yavusa – for instance, they did not have their own bete (priest), nor a matanivanua (official spokesman/master of ceremony). The bete of the Vusa Ratu who came from the second senior mataqali of the Vusa Ratu group, became the bete for the Kubuna group; and the matanivanua of the Vusa Ratu who came from the third senior mataqali of the Vusa Ratu group, became the matanivanua for the Kubuna group.

So it came about by agreement that the Roko Tui Bau was regarded as the sacred and paramount chief of Kubuna. Whereas the chief of the Tui Kaba and the Vunivalu was acknowledged as the second senior chief, the secular chief, of the Kubuna. At first, Kubuna’s territory of influence was restricted to the islet of Bau and a modest area of land on the mainland (the tailevu) of Viti Levu. This territory lay between the powerful and longer-established polities of Verata and of Burebasaga (Rewa).

Kubuna had established itself firmly on the islet of Bau. The stage was now set for the ambitious chiefs of Kubuna to expand their sphere of socio-political influence over their neighbours by marriage, by alliance for mutual convenience, by offering protection or by war – acting with the assistance of their associated spirits, of whom the most important were known as Ratu Mai Bulu and Cagawalu. In expanding their spheres of influence or imposing their powers of leadership, they had to beware lest they show undue arrogance. They also had to beware of the jealousies of rival relations, exercised either physically by assassination, or spiritually through draunikau or witchcraft. These sorts of general factors are relevant to the consideration of the development of any of the major polities. The account continues:
Typical of these early diplomatic marriages was that between Ratu Raiwalui, the Roko Tui Bau and Adi Salauca, a high-born woman of Cakaudrove. Later a canoe from Rewa which was going to Verata for a woman who was to marry a chief of Rewa, sheltered off Bau. The Rewans were invited to come ashore and take a Bau woman instead. So it came about that there was a marriage between a lady of Bau and a chief of Rewa, and in exchange the Rewans sent a woman of Rewa to Bau.

Archaeological evidence can be integrated with that of the oral accounts. When Banuve was the secular chief of Kubuna (traditionally towards the end of the 18th century), Bau islet was increased by reclamation; and from this time, canoe docks were built. Further, the population of Bau increased when fishermen from the island of Beqa (part of the Rewa federation), and craftsmen from Soso, Kadavu (also allied to Rewa) who had been brought over to assist in the developments of Bau, were settled there in the villages of Lasakau and Soso respectively. Indeed, as the improvements to Bau were carried out, so the prestige of the secular chief, the Vunivalu, increased. The account continues:

As his prestige increased, so did the ambitions of the Vunivalu. Matters came to a head when the chiefs of Cakaudrove came to Bau for a solevu or ceremonial exchange of gifts. These chiefs had earlier murdered the brother of Adi Salauca, the Cakaudrove wife of the Roko Tui Bau. Her children planned to kill the visitors out of revenge. The Vunivalu’s sons heard of the plot and sided with the Cakaudrove chiefs. This led to a violent quarrel between the Vusa Ratu (the Roko Tui Bau’s group) and the Tui Kaba (the Vunivalu’s group). The Vusa Ratu fled, but were pursued by the Vunivalu, and the Roko Tui Bau was killed. As a result of this tour de force and the political ambitions of a more junior chief, the paramountcy of Kubuna was transferred from the sacred chief, the Roko Tui Bau, to the secular chief the Vunivalu.

Symbolic evidence for such a transfer of paramount power comes from two sources, archaeological and ceremonial. One of the main structures on Bau was the spirit house of Navatanitawake. At first this was the spirit house of the Kubuna’s sacred ancestral spirit, Ratu mai Bulu. When the paramountcy was transferred to the Vunivalu, Navatanitawake was increased in size and magnificence, and became the spirit house of Cagawalu, the secular war-spirit. Archaeological investigations into Navatanitawake showed that the mound was indeed built in two phases. Further, this transfer of power was symbolised through the yaqona or kava-drinking ceremony which had earlier been a method of communication between the bete or priest on behalf of the sacred paramount and the spirit, Ratu mai Bulu, but which then became a socio-political ceremony aimed at proclaiming and maintaining the person holding the secular title of Vunivalu, as the paramount leader of the Kubuna group. The account continues:

In this case, the leader of a polity, the Kubuna, was deposed and replaced by a strong and ambitious leader from a group other than the traditional dynasty of sacred leaders. His power base was dependent not only on his secular strength but also on his spiritual power flowing from the war-spirit Cagawalu. His leadership continued to be acceptable. In another case, the Vunivalu, Ratu Naulivou, showed himself to be tyrannical towards the Kubuna, and some conspired to kill him. The plot was discovered, and the conspirators fled to Verata, a centre of power and so already a target of the Vunivalu’s ambitions. As a haven for the conspirators, Verata now became a target of the Vunivalu’s wrath. This led to war between the two polities.

It is important to note that the early development of Kubuna was indeed characterised and influenced by almost incessant warfare waged between this polity and one or other of the neighbouring federations of Verata and Burebasaga. When it was observed that Bau and Verata were about to indulge in warfare, a number of independent chiefs and of towns allied to Bau joined Verata. This was presumably because they considered that it was safer from their own point
of view to support the polity that in the past had been so powerful. Bau had not yet proved itself in such a contest of strength. The development of a major polity was characterised by an interplay of loyalty and expediency. The account continues:

Bau then attacked Verata, with the aid of ‘the Vunivalu’s white man’, Charlie Savage. He used his musket to good effect (its novelty value and the noise of its explosions may have been as effective as his shooting) and the Verata warriors panicked and fled. An attack on neighbouring Nakelo, also with the aid of Charlie Savage, was equally effective. Later on, Verata became preoccupied with the outliers of her sphere of influence, especially on the island of Vanua Levu, and came into conflict with Cakaudrove as the increasingly ambitious chiefs of the AiSokula acted to extend their sphere of influence. Kubuna (Bau) took advantage of this situation, and destroyed the supremacy of Verata. In this way, additional territory including the island of Viwa came to be included in Kubuna’s sphere of influence. During these campaigns, Burebasaga (Rewa) came to the assistance of Kubuna, because of the so-called vasu relationship which had been forged through the chiefly intermarriages to which I referred earlier.

Relations had been generally good between Bau and neighbouring Rewa. This state of affairs had been cemented by judicious intermarriage, ceremonial exchanges and, for instance, the presentation to the Vunivalu by the Roko Tui Dreketi of Rewa of thirty-nine canoes which became the nucleus of the Bau navy. Once, however, Bau had defeated the erstwhile paramount power to the north, Verata, the Bau matanitū was now in a strong enough military and political position to devote its expansionist ambitions to facing its greatest rival for power, Rewa. It so happened that during the first part of the 19th century there were signs that the power of Rewa, based on its internal unity and its developed socio-political relationships with its neighbours, was on the wane. The account continues:

The chiefs of Narusa, the family of the Roko Tui Dreketi, fell out among themselves, and Burebasaga was internally divided. As Burebasaga became divided, so its allies and tributaries became divided in their loyalty. The ambitious Vunivalu of Bau took advantage of this situation, and in the course of a decade, fought and defeated or won over a series of Rewa supporting polities and especially the bati or allies of Tokatoka and Nakelo. Nakelo was won over by a promise by the Vunivalu that he would give his sister to the Tui Nakelo in marriage—a promise which was never kept. A bitter and bloody struggle lasted on and off for more than a decade from 1843 to 1855. During this time, Bau could take full advantage of the fleet which ironically Rewa had given to the Vunivalu as a gift of good-will. Finally, Bau burned the Rewa capital and Rewa villages including Noco. The Roko Tui Dreketi was killed, and the power of Rewa was broken. At the same time, the Vunivalu of Bau had overcome his internal problems which had come near to overcoming him, when his warriors defeated the rebels with the help of the Tongans at the battle of Kaba.

Bau in the early 1850s was at the height of its power. With its determined and able leaders, its army and its extensive fleet, Bau had absorbed the Lomaiviti islands which were referred to as Qali vakaBau or tributary to Bau. Bau was also disputing with Tongan immigrants the suzerainty over the Lau group. On the northeast coast of Viti Levu, the influence of Bau was felt in the eastern parts of Ra, where the polities of the Gonesau, the Ratu ni Natuya and the Ratu ni Natokea came under her sphere of influence. Bau exercised political influence over the chiefs of AiSokula at Somosomo, Cakaudrove; and they received tribute from the island of Vanua Levu, especially Macuata, from Taveuni and from Northern Lau, although the ties were loose and relationships were unstable. This position was achieved in spite of internal problems and rebellion on Bau due mainly to dissatisfaction on the part of minor chiefs and jealousy between sons of different mothers of the senior chiefs. These internal problems were, however, becoming very serious and threatened the very being of the matanitū.
Particularly interesting was the interrelationship between Bau and Tonga. Tonga came close to conquering much of Fiji, and was threatening the paramountcy of Bau. After a semi-threatening diplomatic exchange between Cakobau and the King of Tonga, Cakobau had virtually been ordered by the King of Tonga to accept Christianity in exchange for military assistance against his internal rivals. Indeed Bauans only succeeded in overcoming their internal difficulties when they were forced by circumstance to accept the help of the King of Tonga in exchange for promises to adopt Christianity, and the Tongan and Fijian forces jointly defeated dissidents and rebels at the Battle of Kaba in April 1855. The Tongans eventually ceased their military expansion over Fiji but remained a significant element of the eastern Lau archipelago where they settled. There are still Tongan settlements in Lau, which is in fact closer to Tonga than it is to Viti Levu. The Vunivalu of Bau, by virtue of his defeat of Verata and Rewa and having forced his own house to come to order, now considered his position to be paramount in these areas. Following Cession, the Vunivalu of Bau was regarded, at any rate by the Government, as *primus inter pares* among the paramounts of the three major polities at the time—Bau, Rewa and Cakaudrove.

At the time of Bau’s greatest development as a socio-political complex, the major socio-political complex of the *matanitū* could be analysed into what I refer to as the core groups and the periphery. The core groups were based on the islet of Bau itself and included the Kubuna *yavusa*, based on three groups, of which two originated from Nakauvadra and two from Verata. Associated with the Kubuna were the Vunivalu, the war leader who was currently paramount; the Roko Tui Bau or sacred chief; the Masau or personal *matanivanua* of the paramount chief; the Tunitoga or *matanivanua* of the Vusa Ratu generally; the Takala, responsible for maintaining law and order; the Tui Rara, responsible for helping the *matanivanua* to divide up feasts presented to the paramount chief; the Naitaka, who was principal *bete* or priest of the war-spirit, Cagawalu; and the Bouta, who were the personal servants of the paramount chief. The other core groups on Bau were the specialist craftsmen, the Lasakau fishermen (whose duties included the providing of *bakola* or victims for the cannibal ovens) and the Soso craftsmen, who had come originally from Beqa and Kadavu.

The periphery included the specialists such as carpenters and potters, the allies (the *bati*), the tributaries (the *qali*), and the weak and insignificant neighbours sometimes referred to as the *kaisi* or persons of very low rank. The specialists included the *bete* or priests of Daku, the potters of Waikete, the craftsmen of Matanico, and the canoe maintainers of Kaba. The allies (the *bati*) included the Namata and Namuka (to the north), the Dravuni just opposite on the mainland, and the Navuloa at the base of the Kaba peninsula. They also included the Viwa islanders under Tui Viwa, the Waimaro under Tui Waimaro, and the eastern Ra groups known as the Gonesau, the Natauya and the Nasese. These *bati* were groups who would come to the help of Kubuna in times of war, provided that they were properly treated with appropriate presentations in order to retain their alliance. If not, they were liable to change their alliance to a chief who would pay them proper respect for their services. The tributaries or *qali* included those people of Lomaiviti who were referred go as the Qali vakaBau, the people of Macuata, the people of Lau, and the people of Cakaudrove. These were people of significance in their own immediate neighbourhood who either sought protection by Bau from ambitious nearby major polities, or who had been conquered by Bau. In exchange for such protection or in recognition of being conquered, these people were required to provide tribute regularly to the Vunivalu of Bau. If they failed to do so, they were liable to suffer retribution at the hands of the warriors of Bau. The tributaries of Cautata and Daku had a special relationship with Bau. Renowned for their loyalty, they provided both military assistance by way of large and strong warriors and also spiritual assistance by way of powerful and respected *bete*. Finally there were the *kaisi*, neighbours who were people of little account. They had been forced, as groups who were very weak, to come under the protection
of Bau and rely on Bau for their very survival, or they had been conquered by Bau and perhaps rendered landless. They included the Buretu, the Namena and the Kaba people. The kaisi were subservient to the will of the Vunivalu in whatever menial task he might impose on them. Indeed they could well provide for the basic needs of the cannibal ovens, if the fruits of war or of the hunting expeditions of the Lasakau people were not forthcoming.

The overwhelming of the Verata matsatitu, the killing of the Roko Tui Dreketi and the collapse of the Rewa matsatitu, and the defeat of the Bauan rebels at the battle at Kaba, resulted in the matsatitu of Bau attaining a position of paramountcy, at any rate in the areas described earlier. What happened next illustrates what I have found to be a characteristic of Fijian polities. This is the potential element of instability that can be activated by internal jealousy or external ambition even in what appears to be the most stable of Fijian polities, be it a descent group or a socio-political construct. I emphasise this point because the nub of my study of the structure and development of Fijian society may be interpreted narrowly as assuming that development refers to an increase in complexity of a polity. Development can however be interpreted more widely to refer to any change in the structure of a polity, including the fragmentation of the unity of the component building blocks. A development within this wider meaning is what happened in the case of Bau and a description and analysis of the salient points of what happened is therefore relevant to any study of the structure and development of Fijian society, as being illustrative of the processes and principles at work.

In considering the development of Bau in this wider sense, it is necessary to realise that for some time fresh winds of external influence had been blowing over the islands of Fiji, especially in the Natui Cake (the Eastern Parts)—particularly through visits and, later, settlement by Samoans, Tongans and Europeans including Christian missionaries. This led to the realisation by Fijians that Fiji, for better or worse, had a position in a much wider world than its interaction zone of Tonga and Samoa (and, though perhaps to a lesser extent, Rotuma and Uvea/Futuna). Traditions and archaeology suggest that there had been interaction between Fiji and Tonga for perhaps a thousand years. By the 1840s, there were said to have been about 1000 Tongans in Fiji, ambitious to spread Tongan influence beyond their immediate settlements in the Lau group. This they proceeded to do under the guise of ‘spreading the true religion’. The Tongan Church militant fell upon parts of Lomaiviti, Vanua Levu and Kadavu, under the leadership of, at first, Lausike of the Ulukalala house of Tonga. Later Siaosi Taufa‘ahau of the rival house of Tu‘i Kanakopoulo, who became King George I of Tonga, appointed Ma‘afatuitoga to be governor of the Tongans in Fiji. Ma‘afu consolidated his position in Fiji, and continued to spread the influence of Tonga, together with the teachings of Christianity. He became so strong and powerful that Lau and Cakaudrove tended to associate with him rather than with the Vunivalu of Bau who was relatively far away. The position of Kubuna was being gradually but forcibly undermined by the Tongans, and Cakobau, as Vunivalu, realised this.

On the other hand, some European settlers with an eye to their own ambitions and fortunes tried to convince Cakobau that he had paramount powers over all the polities of the islands of Fiji and that he qualified for the spurious title of Tui Viti. This they followed up with a coronation at which he was crowned King of Fiji, Cakobau Rex. In symbolic recognition of this new royal status, postage stamps were issued bearing his head together with the letters CR. There were, however, insufficient traditional grounds to validate such a position, because Fiji, unlike Tonga, had never been a socio-political unity. Not all Europeans could see the advantage of a king who was unable to solve their problems, including ones involving murder or landholdings which arose in relation to their Fijian neighbours. With the spread of the influence of the Tongans over Fijians hitherto allied to Bau and the growing realisation that Bau was not as omnipotent as was once thought, chiefs of other polities challenged the position of Bau.
All was not well in the lands of Fiji, and some Europeans realised it, and sought the formal protection of the United States or Great Britain. Perhaps influenced by the views of those Europeans whom they relied upon or respected, some powerful chiefs also saw that not all was well. They however realised that the solutions to the problems lay not in the judicious use of clubs (or muskets) or of internal diplomacy as heretofore. A number of chiefs agreed, allegedly willingly and wittingly, to resort to taking a traditional step along quite unfamiliar lines and to heed the authority of a paramount chieftainess across the water. They signed the Deed of Cession, ceding Fiji to Queen Victoria. Only in 1874, at Cession, did Fiji become an administrative unity as a British Crown Colony. In recognition, however, of his conclusive victories over Verata and Rewa, the Vunivalu of Bau and the matanitū of Bau were recognised as primi inter pares among the chiefs and polities of Fiji. In situations involving seniority among leaders of recognised matanitū, the Vunivalu was recognised as the senior chief. For instance, he was presented with the first bowl of yaqona at yaqona ceremonies, as an outward and visible symbol of such recognition.

How much of this situation was due to what was acceptable to the Fijian chiefs as according with traditional processes and principles, and how much was due to the influence of the first substantive Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, who is often reckoned to have regarded himself as an expert on such matters, is not clear.

Appendix A(ii) The matanitū of Rewa: Se ni Misi misi mai Rewa

This account of the development and structure of the matanitū of Rewa is based mainly on the works of Thomson (1908) and Routledge (1985) as well as my own lengthy discussions with the then Vunivalu of Rewa, Ratu Etuate Namoea, and, after his death, with his knowledgeable and interested daughter, Ro Rejieli.

The present leading polity of Rewa is the registered yavusa of Burebasaga, which had close traditional associations with Verata and indeed probably originated from there, as a separate polity, following a political split. The main sphere of influence of Burebasaga was based on the vast Rewa Delta. An account of the origins and development of the groups of the matanitū of Burebasaga is that:

Both Burebasaga and Verata recognised the same original ancestor, Vueti, who came from the Nakauvadra Mountains; and had spirit houses dedicated to the same spirit.

The very name of the yavusa, Burebasaga or split spirit-house, may be indicative of its origin from a political split. The name is multi-faceted. It has the social meaning of the overall name for the descent group or yavusa comprised of the descendants of the original ancestor, Rokoratu, who came from Verata to the Rewa delta. It has a political meaning as the ceremonial name for the socio-political complex of Rewa, of which the Roko Tu Dreketi, the chief of the Burebasaga, was the paramount. It also has the geographical meaning as the name for the first main settlement of the Burebasaga descent group.

Thomson (1908) recorded the tradition that the first settlers in the delta came from higher up the Rewa River, having been driven down ‘by internal commotion among the tribes that inhabited the mountains’. Present tradition does not record who these first settlers were, but there seems to be no doubt that the delta was already inhabited either by these people or others (whose names are recorded and will be discussed later), before the arrival of the ancestors of the Burebasaga chiefs. Indeed Jackson (1853) who lived in the area in the first half of the 19th century indicated that ‘the proper Rewa king and chiefs’ were still alive, including, so he said, the Vunivalu of Rewa. Routledge (1985) referred to present traditions about the arrival in Rewa of Ro Melanisiga, also known as Rokoratu. He sailed down the coast from Verata in his canoe, the Namako (meaning
‘the shark?’) and settled at Dreketi. Routledge said that Dreketi was on the south-west coast of the delta, whereas Parry (1977), with whom my own informants agree, indicated that it was on the south-east side. The title of the paramount chief of Rewa is Roko Tui Dreketi, presumably derived from the name of this first settlement and its inhabitants. The Dreketi people had, by John Jackson’s time, been relegated to what he described (Jackson 1853) as a position ‘of low status and kept for human sacrifices and for food upon any public occasion’.

The early inhabitants of the delta may not always have been so treated. For instance the Vanualevu people who provided a feast at the installation of the son of Rokoratu as Roko Tui Dreketi were referred to as the Qalitabu, the sacred tribe, according to Thomson (1908). They had special responsibilities for the *yaqona* ceremony in later installation ceremonies. Thomson considered that their special status was dependent on their being descended from the same ancestor as the chiefs and perhaps from a senior branch. They lost their right to lead because of some internal disturbances, but they maintained recognition of their previous status by being closely involved in the installation ceremonies. Equally the Vanualevu people may have been earlier inhabitants of the delta, whose position was respected by the newcomers. After their initial stay at Dreketi, the group from Verata moved to the east side of the delta, to their first main settlement, Burebasaga, on the banks of the Rewa river. Here they were surrounded by those subservient to them, as reflected in the settlement pattern. Later they moved to the new site of Rewa and through an application of military force and judicious marriage, Rewa expended its sphere of influence to the island of Beqa, the northern part of the island of Kadavu, and the south coast of Nadroga (south-east Viti Levu).

At the time of its greatest development and expansion, the core groups in the major socio-political complex of Rewa were based at first on the senior settlement of Burebasaga and then at the main settlement of Rewa just south of the Nasali creek. The main settlement is at Lomanikoro, near the junction of the main Rewa River and the Nasali creek. The core groups included the Burebasaga *yavusa*, of which there were two leading families, the Narusa and the Nukunitabua. The holder of the title of Roko Tui Dreketi, the sacred or spiritual chief, was a member of the senior family, the Narusa. The holder of the title of Vunivalu, the secular or temporal chief, was a member of the second most senior family, the Nukunitabua. The supreme power (both the *mana* or spiritual power, and the *kaukaua* or physical power) of the polity was vested in the holders of these two titles. The traditional head was the spiritual chief, the Roko Tui Dreketi. Below these two ruling sub-groups of the Burebasaga *yavusa* were six sub-groups known collectively as the Sauturaga. Their responsibilities and functions were limited to those of leading the army into battle and of providing *matanivanua*. They owed no other service to the chiefs, nor did they provide them with produce. They were the landowners and received rent (covacaki) from their tenants. Included among the core groups were three groups known collectively as the Kaso (descendants of junior wives of chiefs or of junior sons of chiefs). The senior of these were the Kai Nalea from whom were appointed the hereditary priests. The next were the Kai Buli, and they had the Kai Nalea as tenants. Reference has already been made to the Kai Vanualevu known as the Qalitabu, who were either descendants of earlier inhabitants of the delta or were members of a junior branch of the descendants of Rokoratu. They played a special role in the installation ceremonies of the Roko Tui Dreketi. Among core groups again were the specialist craftsmen who owed service to the chiefs by exercising their crafts in return for grants of land. These included the fishermen of Nukui and Nasilai, the potters of Vutia, the carpenters of Nadorokavu, and the Tongan sailors of Nabua and Sigatoka. Finally, the Kai Batikeri (a collective name for the Kai Nadoi, and the villagers of Nakuru, Drekena and Veiniu), the Muainasau, the Qalivakawai (a collective name for the those whose lands were in the mangrove swamps, namely the Kai Narocivo, Kai Tavuya and Kai Natoni), and the virtually landless Kaiokia and Kai Nadoria were also regarded as elements
in the core of the Burebasaga polity. The nature of their services and responsibilities was not recorded. These groups were regarded as vakarorogo, or owning direct allegiance to Burebasaga, and the settlement pattern of these groups is roughly elliptical with the main settlement of Rewa on the northern focus.

The periphery included those who were tributary (qali) to Burebasaga, and those who were allies (bati). Among those with a tributary relationship were three vanua-level polities of the island of Beqa. These were the vanua of Raviravi comprised of four yavusa under the paramountcy of the Tui Raviravi: the vanua of Sawau comprising three yavusa under the paramountcy of the Tui Sawau; and the vanua of Rukua comprised of the single yavusa of Rukua. These people paid tribute and provided services on demand to the Roko Tui Dreketi, and suffered if they failed to heed the command of the chief. Not all the island was tributary to Rewa, and one small group living at Naceva on the south-west coast heeded the authority of the Vunivalu of Serua whose matanitū was based on the islet of Serua off the south coast of Viti Levu to the west of Navua.

Also on the periphery were those groups who were allied (bati) to Burebasaga. These included the important vanua polities of Tokatoka and Nakelo. Tokatoka had seven associated settlements which formed a more or less equidistant pattern on the levée between the Wainibokasi River and the Nasoata swamps. Except on the south-east where it merged with the lands of the settlement of Burebasaga, Tokatoka had natural boundaries. The leader was originally the Roko Tui Tokatoka; but following later migrations, a Vunivalu was appointed, apparently by Rewa, to take over leadership of Tokatoka, in recognition of its status as bati to Rewa. The Vunivalu replaced the Roko Tui Tokatoka as head of the vanua and the Roko Tui Tokatoka took the lesser title of Malo Sivi. The vanua of Nakelo lay on the north side of the Wainibokasi River. It had twelve settlements, all of which were larger than those of Tokatoka. Its leader held the title of Tui Nakelo. Also regarded as bati to Rewa, though subject to Nakelo, were the people of Kuku. They came from an independent polity in the interior of Viti Levu, having been 'forced towards the sea-board through intertribal wars' (Waterhouse 1866:148). These bati, as explained, would come to the assistance of the paramount chief on request. They would continue to do so until they considered that they were not properly rewarded for their services, or until they were made greater offers of reward for their services, or until they considered that it was against their own interests and safety not to continue to do so. Then they would not hesitate to change their allegiance to the paramount of the polity against whose warriors they had previously been fighting.

Rewa is of particular interest as a polity which reached its peak not only with demonstrations of strength with the aid of tame Europeans, but also through judicious marriage between the Roko Tui Rewa and the daughter of the Vunivalu of Bau, thus achieving the most vital social link of vasa. At any rate in theory the Bauan paramount family could not now refuse any request except for land by the Rewan family. By the 1820s, the Roko Tui Drekeri, Tabaiwalu, had governed firmly and fairly, and Rewa was at its zenith. However, his sons by two women of Bau each strove for power, and this led to a lengthy and bloody struggle, in the course of which Tabaiwalu was murdered. Rewa came then to be ruled by three sons of Tabaiwalu: Banuve, described by Jackson (1853) as ‘fat, lazy and rendered effeminate by luxurious living’; Qaraniqio, a fearsome warrior; and Cokonauto, who was well-known to Europeans. There was, under these circumstances of division, envy, and jealousy, little hope of decisive or cohesive action in the face of external threat from an expanding and ambitious Bau. This culminated in the Bau-Rewa war of 1843–1855 and the realisation that Rewa, so divided and at enmity within itself, would have little chance of survival against Bau, once Bau had beaten its rebel elements at the great Battle of Kaba on 7 April 1855 and become solidly unified under the Bau Vunivalu, Ratu Çakobau and his fleet and troops. The case of Rewa is of such interest because it is a study of how a once mighty matanitū under a firm and undisputed...
paramount such as Tabaiwalu could become permanently weakened until Pax Fijiana after Cession. Much of this was due to the curse which so often affected Fijian polities—internal rivalries between sons of the paramount spurred on by jealous wives of differing ranks.

Appendix A (iii) The matanitū of Cakaudrove: Na Se ni Makosoi mai Vuna

Evidence for the development and structure of the matanitū of Cakaudrove is taken from the NLC records, from Sayes’ investigations and from my own enquiries into individual accounts on and off over a period of two years when I was Commissioner Northern. The origins and development of the matanitū of Cakaudrove are described in detail by Sayes (1982, 1984), and my own findings and conclusions generally accord with her description and analysis of Cakaudrove.

The present leading polity of Cakaudrove is the registered yavusa of Cakaudrove. Close examination of the account shows that this yavusa is not a single descent group in origin but rather is a political construct of several groups who migrated from time to time to the area now known as Cakaudrove. They were held together by political allegiance to the Tui Cakau, the paramount of the matanitū of Cakaudrove. The development of these various groups into a recognised yavusa is characterised by a series of power takeovers. The ranking of these various groups within the yavusa changed from time to time as the result of internal rivalries, although the basic structure of the yavusa remained the same. The matanitū of Cakaudrove provides an excellent example of the constant changing of the structure of Fijian society. An account of the origins and development of the groups comprising the matanitū of Cakaudrove is as follows:

The earliest known inhabitants of Cakaudrove were the Nakorovou people. They consider themselves to be the original itaukei, or owners of the land, and do not (purposely or otherwise) remember if they came originally from elsewhere. A sub-group of the Nakorovou known as the Mataikadavu claim, however, that their original ancestor, Mai Nukusemanu, came from the west. He travelled from Bau to Nakorovou, through Vunilagi to Vunisavisavi on the east bank of the Cakaudrove River on the south coast of Vanua Levu. The Nakorovou accepted the leader of the Mataikadavu to be their leader. He was duly installed as the overall leader of the people living in Cakaudrove, and held the title of Tui Cakaudrove. It is still debatable whether the Mataikadavu were migrants who became accepted as leaders by the possibly autochthonous Nakorovou, or whether they all came together from the west.

The next to arrive in the area were the Mataikoro people who claimed to come from Tiliva, Bua. This was evidently part of a more general eastern migration from Bua, which included the Wailevu and in due course the AiSokula. The Wailevu remained on the borders of the present provinces of Bua and Cakaudrove, while the Mataikoro headed on east until they came to the west bank of the Cakaudrove River. They settled there on some land which they had obtained, by conquest or subordination, from those already there. Their leader had the title of Vunivalu—a title of significance suggesting eventual connection with Nakauvadra, because descent groups (such as one of the components of the Bauan yavusa Kubuna) whose original ancestors can be traced back to these mountains are often associated with the title of Vunivalu. The leader of the Mataikoro became leader of all those who had settled on both sides of the river, including the Nakorovou and Mataikadavu. He became the new paramount of Cakaudrove and was installed with the title of Mai Nakamakama.

To the east of the Mataikoro lands were the Korocau people whose chief was the Ratu of Korocau. They owed allegiance to the Mataikoro people and were responsible for building the house of installation for Mai Nakamakama. Korocau bordered on Natewa, and the Ratu’s strength was increased when two Natewa groups known as the Nabuco and Nadaraga people joined with the Korocau as subordinates.
The next group to arrive in Cakaudrove were the AiSokula people who came from Bua and earlier from Rakiraki, Ra. (See the Rakiraki account on the origins of the AiSokula.) On reaching Cakaudrove, the AiSokula settled by the Sawaimosoi swamps up the Wakavu River.

At this time the matanitū of Verata was influential in the area, but the Mataikoro people who were becoming increasing powerful and ambitious, were planning a rebellion against Verata's representatives there. The Mataikoro invited the AiSokula for help in this rebellion against Verata's representatives and hence against Verata itself. At this stage, the AiSokula were acknowledged as the leaders of Cakaudrove; and the head of the Mataikoro, titled Mai Nakamakama, lost the leadership of Cakaudrove to Rokevu, the head of the AiSokula. The latter was duly installed as leader of Cakaudrove, and was given the title of Tui Cakau.

Rokevu was installed by the Mai Kavula people whose origin is uncertain. The reference in the name to Kavula suggests some connection with the Gonesau people of Nabukadra, Ra, where Kavula is a place name. They may have arrived at the same time as the more general migration of the Gonesau who came from Nabukadra to Cakaudrove at the direction of their chief, Naboutuiloma.

The Wailevu people to whom reference was made earlier claimed a common origin with the AiSokula and were content to help them as the western borderers of the Cakaudrove sphere of influence. A number had also accompanied the AiSokula to Cakaudrove and they became a mataqali in the Cakaudrove yavusa.

So it was that oral accounts explained how the structure of the Cakaudrove yavusa was developed. The most recent newcomers to the area were accepted as leaders on the basis of their reputation of strength and their assistance in the rebellion against Verata. In the leading chiefly mataqali of Vale Levu, the AiSokula were given pride of senior place as the sacred chiefs.

The Nakorovou were the mataqali sauturaga (the chief executive officers of the Tui Cakau, and his secular chiefs). The Mataikoro were the bati or warriors responsible for the personal safety of the Tui Cakau.

The Mai Kavula who installed the Tui Cakau became the mataqali mata ni vanua with the name of Cakaudrove. There were three main mata ni vanua for Cakaudrove, namely Mai Kavula (the most senior), Mai Nanukurua (the personal attendants of Tui Cakau), and Mai Nayala (the Tui Rara with ceremonial responsibilities for the division of feasts presented to Tui Cakau). Each was installed at the same time as the Tui Cakau.

Finally, two other mataqali were duly included in the yavusa of Cakaudrove. These were the Welitoa and the Mataitoga, Samoans and Tongans who were especially welcomed by the Tui Cakau because of their skills as craftsmen and carpenters.

Such outsiders would usually be absorbed into an already existing mataqali, but their status as vulagi or kai tani would be remembered and drawn to their attention if they became too arrogant or spoke about matters which really only concerned the true members of the descent group. The status of the Samoans and the Tongans as members of their own two separate mataqali indicates the special regard with which they were held by the Cakaudrove people. The inclusion of these people in the yavusa as separate mataqali may also reflect the wishful thinking, embodied in an origin myth which is sometimes related, that the AiSokula were really descended from high-born Tongans and not from relatively low-born people of Rakiraki.

So the yavusa Cakaudrove came to be composed of the following mataqali:

- Vale Levu, of which AiSokula was the senior element;
- Nakorovou;
The cohesion of the *yavusa* Cakaudrove was derived not from common descent from a single recognised original ancestor, but through a close loyal subordination to a common head, the Tui Cakau. The ranking of the *mataqali* reflects not genealogical hierarchy but power seniority. It is also noteworthy that the three main ancestral spirits of the Cakaudrove polity, Natavasara, Koroiru and Veidole, are associated with early Tui Cakau. Perhaps deliberately, these three are not associated by current myth with the Nakauvadra Mountains of Ra from where so many of the original ancestors of Fijian polities are said by myth to have originated either directly or indirectly. This again may be an attempt to conceal the relatively humble origins of the mighty AiSokula, but it may at the same time be an attempt to equate the status of a dead chief of Cakaudrove with the same status and powers of the culture heroes from those mountains. In course of time, the chiefs of AiSokula split up. Some remained on Vanua Levu and others moved across the straits to the island of Taveuni. By 1820 all the chiefs had moved to Taveuni, leaving some *lewe ni vanua*, or commoners, on Vanua Levu. Most of the commoners, however, accompanied the chiefs to Taveuni, which now became, and remains to this day, the headquarters of the Cakaudrove *matanitū*.

The development of the *yavusa* Cakaudrove shows how the introduction of new groups within the *yavusa* is related to the constant changing of political and military power balances. The change in leadership from the Mataikoro to the newcomers, the AiSokula, at the invitation of the former, should not be seen by the purist proponents of the socio-political model to be an irreverent upsetting of an immemorial principle of leadership based on order of rank. Nor should Cakaudrove's expansionist activities be seen as contrary to recognised, acceptable and time-honoured practices.

At the time when Cakaudrove's sphere of influence was confined to a relatively small area around the Cakaudrove River, the sphere of the *matanitū* of Verata included southern Vanua Levu. This influence waned and indeed ceased following, first, a rebellion by the locals against Malodani, the Verata representative in the area; and secondly, Bau's successful aggression against the Verata homeland, whereby Bau eclipsed the power of the more venerable *matanitū*. Cakaudrove took advantage of this situation to extend its own sphere of influence by filling the local socio-political vacuum that resulted from Verata's withdrawal from southern Vanua Levu. Then Loaloa, son of Rokevu, the first Tui Cakau, was sent to Tunuloa, a strong independent *vanua* in southeast Vanua Levu, to marry the daughter of the chief of Tunuloa. Their son became the chief of Tunuloa and an ally of Cakaudrove through his father's blood. Cakaudrove went on to extend its martial and diplomatic tentacles up to Udu Point at the eastern tip of Vanua Levu, and here came to clash with the northern Vanua Levu *matanitū* of Macuata.

The development of the *matanitū* of Cakaudrove has features that can again be regarded as generally characteristic of the development of major highly complex eastern polities. One feature was the alliance based on judicious marriage. Much of the political power of the *matanitū* of Cakaudrove was based not only on strength of arms but also on alliances brought about by polygamy, involving marriages between the Tui Cakau and daughters of powerful neighbouring chiefs. There were, however, fearful struggles for leadership among the members of the AiSokula family itself, and jealous and ambitious rivals relied for support on their relationships through their mothers with Bau or other powers such as Vuna, at the south end of Taveuni. Jealousy and
ambition may indeed have been stirred by the respective mothers wishing to assert their own status in relation to their roots of origin. A Bauan mother would consider herself superior to a Vuna mother, even if the Bauan were the junior wife in order of marriage.

Another feature of the development of polities was the use of *vere*—cunning, plotting or treachery. The expression ‘*vere vakaBau*’, or plotting in Bauan style, is illustrated in the case of Cakaudrove when Cakobau, the Vunivalu of Bau, heeded with concern the ever-increasing expansion and political influence of Cakaudrove. He proceeded to resort to cunning strategies in coming to help Cakaudrove against Natewa, which had earlier revolted against the Tui Cakau. He thereby succeeded indirectly in crippling Cakaudrove, which incurred severe losses at the hands of Natewa in the war of suppression. At the same time he gained an ally in the Cakaudrove heartland at Natewa, which transferred its allegiance from Cakaudrove to Bau.

A third feature of the development of polities as illustrated by the case of Cakaudrove was interaction with other polities to mutual advantage, either by exchange of goods or services. Cakaudrove interacted with the Tongans, who by the beginning of the 19th century had established themselves in the Lau group and were seeking to expand their sphere of influence westwards. Indeed, tradition and increasing archaeological evidence provided by Frost (1974, 1979) and Best (1984) indicate that people had been coming from Tonga to eastern Fiji for perhaps a millennium. Later, Cakaudrove had experience with Tongan craftsmen who came to the area to build canoes because the necessary timber was not available in Tonga. Tongans also came to Taveuni to obtain red feathers, which were then traded to the Samoans for use with their ceremonial attire in exchange for fine mats. Perhaps in exchange for such feathers, Tongan artefacts such as whale tooth figurines and breastplates appeared and were spread around from Cakaudrove, possibly as objects of appreciation for services rendered in times of war.

A fourth feature of the development of polities as illustrated by Cakaudrove was the instability which could be introduced into a powerful polity under a strong paramount, if a relation such as a brother or half-brother himself had ambitions for the paramountcy. Although the Tongans and the Cakaudrove fought against each other, this reflected not only the expansionist ambitions of the Tongans but also leadership struggles between the Tui Cakau and his ambitious younger brother, Ratu Kuila. These struggles ended at the battle of Wairiki in 1862, when the Tongan leader, Wainiqolo, who had supported Ratu Kuila, was killed by Tui Cakau’s youngest brother. Peace between the Tongans and the Cakaudrove chiefs was restored, and relations improved within the AiSokula family.

A fifth feature of the development of major eastern polities as illustrated by the case of Cakaudrove was the very respectful relationships that developed between the polity and the Tongans. Samoan and Tongan craftsmen were formally included as an integral part of the Cakaudrove *yavusa* by being given *mataqali* status as the Welitoa and the Mataitoga. Further, a myth duly evolved to the effect that the Tui Cakau was of Tongan origin, implying that Tongan origin was as important a form of legitimisation of leadership and a basis of secular power as was association with the culture heroes of Nakauvadra as a basis for spiritual power.

**Appendix A (iv) The matanitū of Verata: All except her sun is set?**

This account of the development and structure of the *matanitū* of Verata relies on Derrick (1950), Sayes’ (1982, 1984) investigations and my own enquiries on and off when I was based in Suva, more especially when I was District Officer Ra, and later when I served as Deputy Secretary for Fijian Affairs.
Verata in eastern Viti Levu is described by Sayes as ‘the most important power centre in this area prior to Bau’. Verata is of particular interest because of its strong mythical links with the spiritual centre on Nakauvdra range as well as with the polities of Rewa, Cakaudrove and part of Ra. The present leading yavusa is the registered yavusa Vunivalu, the head of which has the title of Ratu of Verata.

The matanitu of Verata provides an excellent example of the origins, expansion and decline of a polity which once had a major highly complex socio-political sphere of influence over a wide geographical area. The decline may have started when Verata over-extended its lines of communication on Vanua Levu and failed to maintain an adequate administrative infrastructure in its outposts there. No polity could afford to do this, especially in the face of the ambitions of powerful neighbours such as the upstart Bau that was determined itself to expand. An account of the origins, expansion and decline of the groups comprising the matanitu of Verata is as follows:

The original ancestor of Verata was known as Rokomoutu. A migration from the Nakauvdra range followed the east coast of Viti Levu to Verata. The origin myths of Verata and of Rewa record that one of Rokomoutu’s sons, Vueti, went to Rewa and became the original ancestor of the Rewa chiefly yavusa, Burebasaga; and another son, Manumanu ni Valu, went north to the eastern Ra coast and became the original ancestor of the Gonesau people. Rokomoutu’s eldest son, Buatavatava, quarrelled with his father and was sent to Vanua Levu. He first went to Setura, in Bua, and then moved on to Nasavusavu Bay.

The first known settlement of Verata, known as Old Verata (Verata Makawa), is at the base of the Ucunivanua peninsula in the present district (tikina) of Verata in the province of Tailevu. In the present chiefly village of Ucunivanua at the top of the peninsula, the Wakanivugayali, the roots of the myrtle tree, symbolise the spirit path linking the spiritual centre on the Nakauvdra range in Ra with Verata. The path ends in a cliff, where I was shown what were described as the roots of the mythical vuga tree which appeared as markings in the cliff. Such myths of origin symbolise Verata’s attempts to validate her claims: first, to a close connection with Nakauvdra, from where came the spirits of origin of so many of the Fijian polities and secondly, to a close paternal (hence superior) connection with Rewa, Vanua Levu and Ra. These myths need not be regarded as historical accounts, nor need Buatavatava be taken as a historical figure but rather as a culture hero symbolising Verata and her expansionist ambitions and activities. He and his companions may represent Verata’s expansion to and settlement in Vanua Levu perhaps over an extended period of time. Coupled with these myths of origin are what purport to be historical traditions of how the people of Verata divided up.

One group went on to Burebasaga in the Rewa delta, and founded the ruling family of Rewa. Another group went to the island of Moturiki in the Lomaiviti group and a third to the Yasayasa Moala, which now form part of the province of Lau. This third group settled first on the island of Totoya and thence spread to the other islands. Of this group, some went on to Nayau in the Lau archipelago and were founders of the Lauan chiefly yavusa of Vuanirewa. From here, some went on to Tonga where they settled for a while. They then returned [it is not clear whether some stayed in Tonga, where Fijians had been living for many years] to Viti Levu. Here they joined up with the descendants of the Moturiki group and formed the Bauan chiefly yavusa of Kubuna.

These myths and traditions are put forward by people at present in Verata to show how the chiefs of Verata are related to the chiefs of Rewa, Lau and Bau, and had some affiliations with Tonga. The traditional accounts of many of the groups living along the south coast of Vanua Levu claim that these groups are descended from Buatavatava and his companions.
Thomson (1908) commented that before Bau came to power, Verata, Rewa and Cakaudrove seem to have been the only powers that wielded influence beyond their boundaries. Routledge (1985) recorded that Verata possessed some control northwards towards the Ra coast and southwards to the Rewa delta, as my inquiries in the 1950s had shown. It extended its hegemony to the island of Viwa, and the Roko Tui Viwa heeded the authority of the Ratu of Verata. It maintained a tributary network throughout Vanua Levu, where chiefly families, as in Lomaiviti, acknowledge a Verata origin.

Oral tradition explains how Verata established control over her places of initial contact in Vanua Levu by sending tributary expeditions, and by sending emigrants from Verata and from her spheres of influence in Ra to Vanua Levu in order to found colonies. Because of these traditional ties between Verata and Nakorotubu, Ra, an army under Naboutuiloma, war leader of the Gonesau people of Nakorotubu, went in support of Verata to Vanua Levu to collect tribute and to display the power of Verata. It divided into two parts. One followed the north coast and one followed the south coast. As the army progressed, it left settlers behind or arranged for other settlers to come out to Vanua Levu. Malodani, a chief of Navatu people living on the eastern Ra coast, came out to Natewa Bay in order to settle as Verata’s representative and to protect the settlers. Matawalu, another Navatu chief, came out and expanded the Verata sphere of influence by leaving settlers among the local population along the south coast from Natewa Bay to Udu Point, at the east end of Vanua Levu. At its zenith, Verata’s area of influence extended east of Vanua Levu to the island of Laucala, whose people claim to be descended from Buatavatava, and to the islands of northern Lau as well as the islands of Naqelelevu and Cikobia which were subject to Laucala.

The traditions of the overseas development of the matanitu of Verata provide a good illustration of how an expanding polity with long lines of communication to tributary polities could be organised administratively. Organisation was essential if demands were to be passed down from the paramount to the tributaries and tribute brought eventually to the paramount. My enquiries support Sayes (1984), who recorded that tribute was brought to Verata from Vanua Levu along traditional sala volivoli or tribute paths. One path started from Udu Point at the east tip of Vanua Levu and went along the north coast as far as Labasa. Thence it crossed the dividing range to Wailevu. A second path went along the south coast of Vanua Levu also to Wailevu. Labasa and Wailevu were regarded as tribute collecting centres, and tribute was taken eventually to Verata. It is possible that the island of Laucala was also a collecting centre for northern Lau and other islands subject to Laucala.

Verata’s power was based on its military strength, spiritually legitimised through Rokomoutu and Vueti and their myths of origin in the Nakauvadra Mountains. It maintained its military expansion through a system of settling people from Verata, as well as its relations in Ra, as colonists with chiefs such as Malodani as representatives. Oral accounts up to this point in time indicate how the matanitu of Verata developed into a major polity, of considerable geographical size and of considerable socio-political complexity. Verata’s powers, however, then began to decline; and it may have experienced administrative difficulties in maintaining long lines of communication in Vanua Levu that led in part to the weakening of Verata.

Oral tradition records that there was a successful rebellion by southern Vanua Levu people against Malodani, the Verata representative; and finally Verata’s paramount position in Vanua Levu was negated by superior Bauan military power.

The matanitu of Bau and of Cakaudrove proceeded to dominate the areas previously subject to Verata. From time to time Verata tried to reassert itself, but without success. For instance, on one occasion, Bau was preparing to assist its ally Vuna on Taveuni in a struggle with Cakaudrove, because this would have
been an opportunity to reduce the power of Cakaudrove as a potential rival. Verata tried to take advantage of the occasion to attack Bau but was beaten off.

Eventually the power of Verata was so reduced in the politics of Fiji that the Ratu of Verata was not even invited to join the recognised paramounts and sign the Deed of Cession in 1874. By the end of the century Thomson (1908) commented that Verata then controlled less than ten miles of coastline. Nevertheless, Verata is still highly respected as a polity, and hers is by no means a case similar to that of Greece where, as Byron mourned, ‘All except her sun is set’.