The Tikina of Yasawa

The islands of Nacula and Matacawalevu

The island of Nacula lies about 2 km south of the island of Yasawa and 8 km north of the island of Matacawalevu. It is nearly 10 km long from north to south, and 3 km across at the widest part. It had a total area of about 22 square km. The coastline is indented on both sides. The main ridge roughly follows the west coast, and the highest part is the peak of Korobeka (251 m) towards the north end. There are two other peaks, 237 m and 221m high towards the south end. Near the centre, a transverse ridge rises to 153 m. Along the west coast, streams flow into the sea through flats and mangrove swamps. There is a wide bay in the middle of the west coast. There are at present four villages, two at the north and south extremes of the east (windward) coast, and two to leeward in the western bay, with a total population of over 500.

About 1.5 km to the west of the southern end of Nacula is the freehold island of Tavewa with an area of about 160 ha.

The island of Matacawalevu is about 5 km long from north to south, and over 2 km across at the widest part. It has a total area of about 9 square km. The highest peak is Uluikorolevu (300 m) towards the southern end of the island. Along the windward, eastern coast, streams flow into the sea through mangrove swamps or lagoons. There are at present two villages, Matacawalevu at the north of the windward coast, and Vuake in Nasomo Bay which lies in the middle of the east coast, with a total population of about 200.

These accounts are based on the records of the Native Lands Commission (NLC), checked and supplemented by my own explorations in 1951 and 1953, and on the records of the Lands Claims Commission (LCC) hearings in 1881.

The island of Nacula and part of Matacawalevu

Myths of the Qotuqotu

Ron Gatty, writing in the Canberra Times of 30 July, 1996, said that he had heard from Ratu Dovi Tavutavuvanua, a Nacula chief, that the earliest known inhabitants of Nacula were the Qotuqotu, a very fair-skinned people who had settled directly from the West. Ratu Dovi believed that these ancient people were absorbed, or perhaps mostly killed off. They are remembered as a pre-Fijian priestly, religious people who composed music. Their singing or chanting is still heard occasionally, and the people, mostly women, are still sometimes seen in the countryside, outside the village. They disappear when approached. He discussed this with me but I had not heard of these people.
The myths of Revo and of the progenitor nitu/spirits

Revo

Revo is a nitu or spirit, regarded as the ivakatawa or guardian spirit of the island of Nacula and of that part of the island of Matacawalevu occupied by the Vanuakula people.

Progenitors: Tavutavuvanua and Leka

(a) Tavutavuvanua at Drola

The NLC recorded that the original ancestor of the Kai Drola people was Tavutavuvanua who came from the Nakauvadra and established a village at Drola on the windward side of the island of Nacula facing Viti Levu. He had four sons, who agreed among themselves that the second son should be the leader.

Tavutavuvanua’s descendants became known as the yavusa of Kai Drola, divided into five mataqali.

(b) Leka at Vanuakula

The NLC recorded that the original ancestor of the Vanuakula people was Leka who came from the Nakauvadra and settled at Vanuakula on the island of Matacawalevu. He had two sons.

His descendants became known as the yavusa of Vanuakula, divided into two mataqali, Vanuakula and Nabuya.

Tavutavuvanua’s descendants (the Kai Drola yavusa) and their settlements

Malakati and Nacula

Because of water problems, the descendants of Tavutavuvanua all moved from Drola to Malakati. Later the second son, the leader, decided that he should stay at Malakati and the others should go and establish other settlements.

So the other three moved to three sites near the present village of Nacula, and then joined together at Nacula where they installed the son of the firstborn to be chief with the title of Masibuli.

Meanwhile the second son, the leader at Malakati, had died and his son was installed as chief with the title of Ratu Mai Drola.

The Kai Drola at Nacula: new settlements

The NLC said that after the Kai Drola at Malakati had been there for a long time, two groups left to occupy new land. One group went to Cobe and the other to Navotua, and both continued to heed the authority of the Masibuli of Nacula. I was told that the first group were descendants of the firstborn son of the progenitor and the second group were descendants of the youngest son.

Origins of different groups comprising the Kai Drola

The NLC registered the Kai Drola as a yavusa, divided into the mataqali of:

- The Yavusa Ratu and Vunikavika who lived at Malakati. I was told in 1953 that the Yavusa Ratu came from Verata, and the Vunikavika came from the island of Malake, Rakiraki.
- Those divisions of the Vatia who lived at Nacula included the Nabuya, the Rakiraki and the Lasakau. I was told that the Nabuya (of whom Leka was the progenitor) were the original inhabitants of Nacula. The inclusion of a division called Lasakau (the name of a yavusa on Bau) is interesting and will be considered later when I discuss the overall origins and development of the polities of the islands of Nacula and Matacawalevu, and outside influences on these polities.
• Those divisions of the Vatia who lived at Cobe, including the Cobe and the Navatu. I was told that the Cobe came from Rakiraki, and that the Navatu came from Ra (presumably from Navatu, west of Rakiraki).
• The Navitabua, most of whom lived at Nacula, though some lived at Cobe. I was told that some now live at Navotua. I was also told that the Navitabua all came from Rakiraki.
• The Nacokobasaga, some of whom were living at Nacula. I was told that the rest were living at Navotua. I was also told that the Nacokobasaga all came from Ba, except for the Qelema, the division of the bete or priests, who came from the island of Vatulele, Nadroga. These different places of origin for the Qelema and the rest of the Nacokobasaga are reflected in their icavu described below.

**Attack by Roko Dinono**

The NLC recorded that the Kai Drola and the Vanuakula people kept killing each other, and the latter asked the Yasawa people for assistance. Roko Dinono, chief of Yasawa i rara, brought an army of Yasawa and Nadroga warriors to attack Nacula, and the Kai Drola left Nacula and sought refuge on Naviti.

Later the Kai Drola returned and settled in their old villages, where they were at Cession. By the time of my visit in 1953, the village of Cobe had been abandoned and the people had moved to Nasisili.

**Kai Drola: development of chieftainship**

At first, the Kai Drola had two chiefs, the Masibuli at Nacula who was descended from the second son of the progenitor, and the Ratu Mai Drola at Malakati who was descended from the firstborn son of the progenitor. They were both regarded as of the same seniority and were independent of each other.

Later the chiefs of Malakati and Nacula agreed among themselves that they should all follow the leadership of Sovatabua, a descendant of the original Masibuli, and they installed him as paramount of all the Kai Drola with the title of Tui Drola. He must have been an exceptionally strong and energetic leader; he was later appointed to be the Governor of the Yasawa group under the Cakobau Government and is generally referred to as Ko Koya Na Kovan. Later, the Tui Drola were appointed, apparently in turn, from the descendants of the sons of the progenitors, though it may simply have been that the most appropriate person was appointed irrespective of his ancestry.

At present, no one has been installed as Tui Drola and the two groups based on Malakati and Nacula take joint decisions.

**icavu**

Both the Kai Drola of Malakati and those of Nacula have the same kai or tree, the yabia or arrowroot. This is the same for the Vanuakula people on Matacawalevu. This may indicate that at an early stage they were one group. Their later differences may have been manifested in different ika or fish, the salala or mackerel (described as the ika ni tobu mai Malakati) for the Kai Drola at Malakati; the sulua/kuita or octopus for the Kai Drola at Nacula; and the warua or kikio for the Vanuakula.

Although the Kai Drola at Nacula have as overall icavu the yabia and the sulua as symbols of unification and identity, some of the component mataqali or divisions of mataqali have also their individual icavu which they respect. For instance, the Nacokobasaga, except for the Qelema division, have the vadra as their kai, whereas the Qelema have the vudi or plantain as their kai as well as the lewamatua or kasewa, the stonefish, as their ilava or concomitant. The Koroinamoli
division of the Nacokobasaga have the *dalo* as their *kai* as well as the *tave* or *kai*, a kind of bivalve, as the *ilava*; and this suggests that they may have had an origin different from that of the Nacokobasaga other than the Qelema. The Navitabua have the *yega* or *yaga* as their *ilava*. The retention of these individual and different *icavu* in addition to the acceptance of overall ones recognised by the Kai Drola generally at Nacula reflect their different places of origin and their desire to retain some symbolic linkage to indicate their individuality as well as their unity, symbolised by the common *icavu* shared by all the Kai Drola at Nacula. A close and detailed exploration of *icavu* can tell much about the origins and development of a *yavusa*, and the evidence can usefully complement that of oral traditions and also serve as a check on such traditions.

**Spirits**

I was told that if the people were troubled by shortages of food or by threats of war, they would go to the Qelema, as *bete*, and the *bete* would seek help from Vanavana, the *nitu ni bete* or spirit of the priest who was a spirit of the Kai Drola. His place, called Vale ni Siga, is on the island of Tavewa; and his *wagawagaga* or manifestation is the *moko vulavula* or white lizard.

I was also told that a *nitu* called Rokoolu has a place called Baloui at Malakati, the village of the *Yavusa* Ratu. I was told that these people came from Verata, and that they associate Rokoolu with Rokomoutu, the progenitor of Verata. Indeed they say that Rokoolu is another name by which Rokomoutu is known. This may reflect the claimed connection between the *Yavusa* Ratu and the people of Verata.

Ron Gatty (personal communication) was told that people of Nacula recount that in the bush, usually by a stream, they had seen very small non-Fijian spirit women with long hair carrying babies. They are called *yalewa soro* because they beg to retain their freedom. Another name for them is *na nitu mata qwa*. These are not apparently connected with the Qotuqotu referred to at the beginning of this account of Nacula, its people and spirits.

**iVilavila ni Yalo**

Not recorded.

**Yasawa and outside influences**

The LCC investigated a claim (1056) for the purchase in 1869 of Tavewa island by W. Doughty who planted cotton there. He had planted about 60 acres of coconuts on the island by the time of the Commission enquiries in 1881. The island is still held under a freehold title. It remains to be determined whether there is still an association with the *nitu ni bete*, or whether Vanavana has left the island.

**Leka’s descendants (the Vanuakula yavusa) and their settlements**

The settlements at Vanuakula and Matacawalevu

The NLC recorded that when the Vanuakula people comprising the *mataqali* of Vanuakula and Nabuya, were at Vanuakula, they chose as their leader a person from the Vanuakula *mataqali* and installed him with the title of Ratu. I was told that the Ratu of Vanuakula heeds the authority of the Tui Drola of Nacula. After the Vanuakula people had been at Vanuakula for a long time, there was not enough planting land for their increasing numbers and they moved to the present village of Matacawalevu.

I was told that the Kai Nabuya were the original inhabitants of the island of Nacula. Though most of them live at present at Matacawalevu, some still live at Nacula as part of the *mataqali* of Vatia.
According to the NLC, the kai or tree of the Vanuakula is the yabia or arrowroot, and the ika or fish is the wakua or kikio.

Not recorded.

The LCC considered two claims (1060 and 1062) based on purchase in 1869 by the firm of Evans and Sandiman of areas of land known as Nakeli (or Melbourne Plantation, about 150 acres) and Navunigalaka (about 1 acre) from chiefs other than Ratu Semi, chief of the Vanuakula.

Evans and Sandiman wanted to buy the land of Nakeli, but the owners were only prepared to lease it. A house was built for them and they started to plant cotton. Evans then asked Ratu Epeli for the lease to be converted to purchase. Ratu Epeli sailed to Matacawalevu and when Ratu Semi resisted the sales and defied Evans and Ratu Epeli, he was seized by the crew, put in the hold, and told that if he tried to escape he would be shot. He was held on board Ratu Epeli’s boat while Ratu Epeli forced the other chiefs to sign. Ratu Semi was then taken ashore and was told that the land had been sold and he was not to interfere. Ratu Semi may eventually have signed under such duress, but the original documents were lost at sea when Sandiman disappeared between Matacawalevu and Levuka, while taking them to be registered.

At the same time as they purchased Nakeli as a cotton plantation, Evans and Sandiman also purchased a nearby coastal area of about 1 acre where they erected a large store, a ginning house for the cotton, an engine and a windmill. The position was favourable for the landing of goods for the store and the taking away of ginned cotton. It served as a landing place near Nakeli known as Navunigalaka. Ratu Epeli had evidently told Ratu Semi that the cotton was to be planted in one place and was to be shipped at another which he was to indicate to the purchasers. This was after Ratu Semi had been released from the hold of the vessel. Ratu Semi as the authority over the land had evidently signed the deed after he had suffered violence in the hands of Ratu Epeli and had been subjected to further threats. The original 1869 document was lost at sea, but the 1871 deed was signed by Ratu Semi. As in the case of the purchase of Nakeli, Ratu Semi had evidently signed the deed under duress.

Evans and Sandiman planted about 75 acres of cotton, cutting down breadfruit trees to the fury of the locals who asked Evans to plant up to the trees and not cut them down. Evans told them not to interfere since the land had been sold to him by Ratu Epeli, and he flogged some of them. His overseer, Cowper or Cooper, was a drunkard and kept firing into the village so that, as a result of his behaviour, the people were in a state of constant terror. The cotton crop was destroyed in the 1871 hurricane and the store and ginning machinery were destroyed by the accompanying tidal wave. The estate eventually fell into financial difficulties and James Hillyard was sent by the creditors to look after it. Hillyard left in 1873. A smaller store had been erected but was destroyed in the 1874 hurricane. The estate was abandoned, partly because of financial difficulties incurred but also because of the general state of violence prevailing and the atmosphere of terrorism induced by Evans and Cooper.

Ratu Epeli may have been influenced in his treatment of Ratu Semi by the fact that Ratu Semi was one of the leaders of the movement by which it was intended to bring the Yasawa Group under the influence of Bua and not under Bau. This account is relevant to an exploration of the interesting and perhaps unexpected relationships that were developing between these little western islands and the mighty polities of the east, including the Tongans. This will be discussed elsewhere.
The LCC also considered and allowed two claims (1065 and 1066) by John James Frew and G.J.P. Gore Martin separately for the islands of Nanuyalevu and Nanuyalailai respectively. Nanuyalevu had been occupied by Frew between 1871 and 1881. About 60 acres of cotton had been grown until the complete destruction of the plantation by the 1874 hurricane. After that 70 acres of nuts were planted in the small bays. The island of Nanuyalailai was bought in 1869, and after the 1871 hurricane perhaps 35 acres of cotton had been planted. After the 1874 hurricane, coconuts were planted and there were 50 acres of nuts in 1881.

Part of the island of Matacawalevu: Ketekete

The myth of Ravokavoka

The NLC recorded that the *nitu* or ancestral spirit of the people of Ketekete who occupy part of the island of Matacawalevu is Ravokavoka who had two sons. The NLC did not record where he came from and I have no independent information about the origins of the Ketekete people.

Development of the Ketekete yavusa

Ravokavoka’s descendants became the *yavusa* of Ketekete, which was divided into two *mataqali* of which the chiefly *mataqali* was the Nasivitu.

The leader was installed with the title of Ratu, and he was independent.

After a long time, the Ketekete people left Ketekete because of a shortage of water and moved to Vuaki. Here they stayed until Cession and were still there at the time of my visit in 1953.

iCavu

Part of the Nasivitu *mataqali* was the Bau division or *kausivi*. They may be people of different origin from that of the rest of the *yavusa*, because the *kai* or tree of the Bau people is the *vurai*, a kind of yam, whereas that of the rest of the Ketekete is the *tiri tabua* or kind of mangrove, *Rhizophora mucronata*; and the *ilava* or concomitant of the Bau is the *tave* or *kai*, a kind of bivalve, but that of the rest of the Ketekete is the *ogo* or barracuda. The implications of this matter will be considered later when discussing the overall origins and development of the polities of the islands of Nacula and Matacawalevu, and outside influences on these polities.

iVilavila ni Yalo

Not recorded.

Vuaki and outside influences

The 1881 LCC considered one claim (1061) based on the purchase in 1869 by the firm of Evans and Sandiman of two lots of land at Vuaki from the Turaga ni Koro and others at Vuaki for five guns each. Then they leased the lots to Marsh and Barnett for ten years, and the latter planted cotton which was destroyed by the hurricane in 1871. They moved to Yaqeta from where they continued to manage the land which was occupied by James Vernor, one of the firm. He planted about 75 acres of cotton which was destroyed by the 1874 hurricane. He continued to live there, planting and gathering a few nuts and making a little copra. What rights he had are not clear because the ten-year lease had expired and the original document was lost at sea together with Sandiman who was taking it and other documents to Levuka for registration.

The Commission also considered a claim (1068) for the islands of Kubulau and Nanuyaiyata which had been purchased by J. Bennet, and was told of a number of goats on Nanuyaiyata. Kubulau was not occupied.
The islands of Yasawa and Sawa i Lau

The island of Yasawa is the northernmost of the inhabited islands which from the chain of the Yasawa Group, the Natu Yasawa. It is about 22 km long from north to south, and 1.5 km across at its widest part. It has a total area of 28 square km. A volcanic island, it has a main ridge running for three-quarters of its length close to the west coast, with the highest summit of Taukake (230 m) at the south end. The western slopes are generally steep, whereas the eastern slopes are longer and gentler. Another summit, 194 m high, rises above the present village of Bukama. From this summit, the ridge veers towards the east coast and ends on the island of Yawini which lies just off the north-west end of Yasawa. In this northern part, the eastern slopes of the ridge are steep and the western slopes are gentler. The present six villages of Yasawairara, Bukama, Teci, Dalomo, Tamasua and Nabukeru are on the coast below the gentler slopes of the ridge and have a total population of about 700.

The uninhabited island of Sawa i Lau, with the islet of Nanuya, lie immediately south of the village of Nabukeru. Sawa i Lau is the only limestone island in the Yasawa group and has sheer rock faces rising above steep slopes covered with dense bush. There are caves there with their entrances on the western side of the island.

The island of Yasawa

The yavusa of Rara, Yasawa, Tamasua and Natubasa: minor socio-political complex

The four yavusa of Rara and Yasawa (based in the village of Yasawairara), and Tamasua and Natubasa (based in the villages of Tamasua and Nabukeru) formed a minor socio-political complex, of which the paramount holds the title of Tui Yasawa. In each case, the original ancestor came from the Nakauvadra to the island of Yasawa. The first to come was the progenitor of the Rara people who settled at Rara. He was followed by those of the Tamasua and the Yasawa people who were brothers and settled at Tamasua and Yasawa respectively, and by the original ancestor of the Natubasa who came from Nakauvadra together with the two brothers and who settled at Natubasa.

Myths of origin

According to the NLC, Raiboto was the first to come from the Nakauvadra to Yasawa, and he settled at Yasawa at the north end of the island. Later the two brothers, Tabusua and Sawa, and Momo arrived together on the island. The two brothers went to Tamasua on the south-west end of the island, and Momo went to Natubasa just down the coast from Tamasua, at the south-east end of the island. Tabusua remained at Tamasua, and he sent his younger brother Sawa to the north end where he settled at Sawa, next to Raiboto at Yasawa. Sawa had a son, Momonibawaqa or Chief of the Bawaqa. There is a stone on the beach near the present village of Yasawairara called Bawaqa or Canoe Fence which, having the sau or spiritual power of Momonibawaqa, is regarded as the ilati or defence screen for the village.

The myth as related to me was that Tabusua and Wasayawa were two brothers who came from Nakauvadra and rode on a shark to the north end of the island of Yasawa where they built a house at Manuqila on the east coast. One day they noticed the hill called Iesue on the west coast, and they went there and built a house. One day the people went fishing when the tide was out. By the time they were ready to go back, the tide was so high that they could not do so. So some went to Nacula, some to Waya and some to other islands. When they failed to come back, Tabusua told his younger brother to wait at Iesue, and he would go and look for them. He followed the west coast to Taukake near the present village of Tamasua. He saw smoke rising from the neighbouring islands and realised that the fisherfolk must have gone to stay there. He went back to Iesue...
and told Wasayawa to remain there, and he would go and settle at Tamasua. He remained at Tamasua with his two sons, Ratu and Momo. Momo then went to Natubasa to settle, whilst Ratu remained at Tamasua.

The two myths differ in detail especially about the connection between Momo and the brothers, and about their places of first settlement. However, there are no significant discrepancies in the myths, which serve to account for the origins of and connections between the four yavusa.

**Development of settlements and yavusa: Yasawa and Rara**

The descendants of Raiboto (the Yasawa yavusa) lived separately from but adjacent to the descendants of Wasayawa/Sawa (the Rara yavusa) at Yasawa and Rara respectively. However, in the time of the chieftainship (sau) of Rokomatanivai, the great-grandson of Momonibawaqa, the Yasawa people decided to join with the Rara people, to establish a joint village called Yasawairara, to heed the authority of the Rara people and to install the head of the Rara as their paramount with the title of Tui Yasawa.

At a later stage, these two yavusa formed an association with the yavusa of Bukama, but only during the sau or chieftainship of Savutini, a particularly strong chief of the Bukama, who was installed as Tui Yasawa (see under Bukama).

**Development of settlements and yavusa: Tamasua and Natubasa**

The descendants of the elder brother, Tabusua, became the yavusa of Tamasua and lived at Tamasua village; and the descendants of Momo became the yavusa of Natubasa and lived at Natubasa.

I was told that the head of the Tamasua was chosen in consultation with both yavusa who gathered to discuss the matter at the mata ni sava or ceremonial site at Namoli. On reaching agreement, they would inform a rock at Namoli which would indicate to those who had the power to hear if it approved of the choice. If the groups could not agree on an appointment, they would consult the stone at Namoli, which would indicate to those who could hear how to determine the new appointment. The new appointment was installed with the title of Tina Levu.

The head of the Natubasa was installed with the title of Ratu who heeded the authority of the Tina Levu who in turn heeded the authority of the Tui Yasawa.

The main settlement remained at Tamasua until the time of the wars. Then those at Tamasua and at Natubasa went to Nadela. After peace was resumed, most of the people went to Tamasua, although some went and settled at Nabukeru, where they were during my visits in the 1950s.

**Spirits**

Each of the four yavusa respects the spirits of their respective progenitors. For instance, the Tamasua people respect the spirit of Tabusua whose place is at Taukake near Tamasua, and whose mata ni sava or ceremonial centre is at Namoli where there is the consultation rock and the yavu of his spirit house.

In addition, each yavusa has its own nitu or guardian spirit: Sesetia for the Rara people; Nauleti for the Yasawa people; Naika for the Tamasua people; and Nataleqailagi for the Natubasa people. Each has its own form of manifestation whereas the spirits of the progenitors do not appear to have such manifestations.

It was not clear at the time of my visits in the 1950s and 1990s who was the spirit of the rock of Bawaqa, though it may be that of Momonibawaqa. It is likely that the spirit of the rock at Namoli is that of Tabusua.
iVilavila ni Yalo

I have not recorded the ivilavila ni yalo of the Yasawa or the Rara people. That of the Tamasua and the Natubasa people is on the island of Vava, to the north-west of Tamasua. The spirit of the deceased goes first to the beach at Liku near Tamasua where it leaves a footprint in the sand. Liku is the ivodovodo ni waqa or embarkation place, where the spirit embarks on a canoe, represented by a rock or vatu waqa, and then sails to Vava to Vai i Savasava. It climbs a hill and from there plunges over a cliff into the sea.

iCavu

At the north of the island of Yasawa, the two yavusa do not have a kai or tree, but both have ika or fishes. The Rara people have the ika ni vatu or stonefish; and the Yasawa have the vai or stingray.

At the south end of the island, both yavusa have a tree and a fish. The Tamasua have the moli/ wi or Spondias dulcis, and the moci or urau, the shrimp or prawn (the NLC recorded the former, I recorded the latter). The Natubasa have the ivi or niu, the Inocarpus edulis or the coconut (the NLC recorded the former and I recorded the latter), and the tuace or kai koso, a saltwater bivalve. These are symbols of the male and female genital organs respectively.

Yasawa and outside influences

In 1881 the LCC considered and allowed a claim by the Wesleyan Mission for an area of land at Muana which was occupied by the Mission at the time of the Commission.

The independant yavusa of Bukama

The yavusa of Bukama formed an independent polity consisting of the single yavusa. The original ancestor, Tuiwedre, came from the Nakauvadra to settle at Vanuakula, beside the present village of Bukama. He had three sons, and the eldest was installed as leader with the title of Ratu.

The descendants of Tuiwedre established the village of Bukama, but they kept giving their land away to people from elsewhere. It is presumed that these strangers were absorbed into the yavusa of Bukama but I have not recorded this.

The great-grandson of Tuiwedre, Savutini, was a strong and energetic leader. When he was installed as Ratu, he united the Bukama, the Yasawa and the Rara people into a single vanua or polity, and was also installed as the Tui Yasawa. After his death, this association came to an end and Bukama became once more an independent polity consisting of the single yavusa.

The yavusa of Bukama remained at Bukama and were there at the time of my visits in the 1950s.

Spirits

Apart from the spirit of Tuiwedre whose ceremonial place or mata ni sava is at Vanuakula where he first settled on coming from Nakauvadra, the Bukama have a nitu or guardian spirit called Momodro whose place is at Nakorodamu on the peak near the village of Bukama.

iVilavila ni Yalo

Not recorded.

iCavu

The Bukama have the dovu or sugar cane as their kai or tree, and the balolo or sea-worm/annelid and the daniva or sardine-like fish as their ika. The inclusion of two kinds of ika suggests that the yavusa includes more than one group of people.
The independent yavusa of Bouwaqa

The yavusa of Bouwaqa formed an independent polity consisting of the single yavusa. The original ancestor, Savase, came from the Nakauvadra to settle at Korokoro, Vavau, near the present village of Tec. From there he moved to Bouwaqa on the edge of Tec. He had three sons, of whom the two eldest remained at Bouwaqa and the youngest went to establish a new settlement at Dalomo. They then installed the great-grandson of Savase as leader with the title of Tui Tec. He was independent and did not heed the authority of any one else.

As they increased in number at Bouwaqa, they spread out to Tec where they were joined by some from Dalomo. As strangers arrived, they were given land by the Bouwaqa people and presumably included in the yavusa. Two of the leading chiefs of the Bouwaqa married women from Bila, Tavua, and this suggests that there was some established connection with Tavua, perhaps through the arrival of some Tavua people who settled at Tec. Also one of the divisions of one of the mataqali was called Nadua, suggesting an origin either from Yaqeta or from Votua, Ba.

On one occasion that I was told about, the people of Macuata came over to Yasawa to help the people at Tec to fight the people at Yasawairara. The people of Viwa came to assist Joni Cakautavatava, the Tui Yasawa, with whom they were related. He was Tui Yasawa at the time of the NLC. The Macuata and Tec people were defeated.

The Bouwaqa people remained at Tec and Dalomo where they were at the time of my visit in the 1950s.

Spirits

Apart from the spirit of Savase, the Bouwaqa had a nitu or guardian spirit called Mateanitani whose place was at Nakorodamu on the peak overlooking Bukama and Tec. This was also the place of the nitu of the Bukama people.

iVilavila ni Yalo

Not recorded.

iCavu

The kai or tree was the balawa, either the screwpine or the wild pineapple. The ika or fish was the galau or kawakawa, the grouper.

Yasawa, Tec, Nacula and Matacawalevu interrelationships and outside influences

I referred earlier to quarrels between Tec and Yasawa i rara. Tec had evidently sent messages to Macuata, seeking assistance, at about the same time as Yasawa i rara had sought help from Tui Bua. The Macuata party (presumably that led by Gigi of Galoa referred to above) while on its way to Tec, was passing the Naivaka peninsula just west of the island of Galoa, towards the west end of Vanua Levu, when they met up with and drove away the Tui Bua’s party on its way to Yasawa. However both parties reached their destinations and Tui Bua was able to warn the Yasawa people that the Macuata party was approaching and that they should put up their defences.

The Tec and Macuata people advanced on Yasawa i rara and laid siege to the village. Meanwhile Tui Bua, who was in the village, sent a party of five to Bua to say that in the event of his death his wives were not to be strangled. On their return, the messengers were caught at sea by the besiegers and were killed. The siege lasted for six months, after which Tui Bua went home. From this time forward, the people of Yasawa i Rara used to visit the people of Bua and became connected with them through intermarriage. They never had a qali or tributary relationship with Bua.
Three months later, Tui Bua returned to Yasawa i rara for the magiti ni valu or feast of thanks for his military assistance. At that time a war was going on between Matacawalevu and Nacula. The Matacawalevu people sent tabua and madrai vudi or fermented bread made of plantain to the Yasawairara village of Tamasua and asked the Yasawa people for help against Nacula. Meanwhile the Nacula people had gone to Teci to seek help. Teci was still quarrelling with Yasawairara. On the way, they met the people of Tamasua who were going with Tui Bua and the Matacawalevu people to attack Nacula. They fought and the Teci people were worsted and eight were killed. They then went on to Nacula, and Tui Bua and the Matacawalevu people burned the houses of Nacula outside its ditches. They then all went home.

Sometime after this, Nayagodamu of Bau visited Yasawairara and Teci, where the people asked for his assistance in getting back the bodies of the eight people slain by Tui Bua and the Matacawalevu people. Nayagodamu passed Nacula and went on Matacawalevu where through a trick, he succeeded in killing two of the Matacawalevu people and took their bodies to Nacula. He returned with the Nacula people to Matacawalevu and attacked the village. One Bauan was killed, and Nayagodamu went back to Bau taking one woman and two men. The Matacawalevu and the Nacula people continued their quarrels, and eventually the Matacawalevu burned Nacula. The people fled to the island of Naviti and took refuge in the various villages there.

When Nayagodamu next visited the Yasawa group, he went to Naviti where the Nacula people were. They made a feast for him at Kese, asking for his assistance in attacking Matacawalevu. They went off but when they reached Matacawalevu, they found that the warriors were with their associates at Teci, and only old men and women and children were left behind. So they killed the old men, but the women and children escaped. One lad brought the news of the attack to the warriors at Teci. By night, the Matacawalevu returned to their village, put up their defences and gathered together the fugitives. Then they waited for the attack but Nayagodamu never came because he had returned to Bau. Some time later he returned to Nacula with Ratu Epeli, son of Cakobau, to receive the magiti ni valu. The war was over and peace was restored. After the death of Nayagodamu, Ratu Epeli used to visit the Yasawa group, mainly going to Nacula, but he did not assist in any wars.

It was only later in the time of the Cakobau Government that the Yasawa group became administratively integrated under Sovatabua, a Nacula man who happened to be at Bau at the time of Cakobau’s coronation and who was made lieutenant governor. He had no high rank and no authority over local affairs. The Yasawa group continued up to the present time to comprise a number of independent polities without a paramount chief. Indeed, as in so many parts of Fiji, the existing polities in the case of Tui Waya were internally divided and continued to be divided on the question of leadership and loyalty. They tend to disguise such differences, especially in front of strangers, but undercurrents of feelings of jealousy and rivalry continue to throbb through this beautiful string of islands. The spiritual element does not appear to be so significant in these communities of varying origins that it can be regarded as a binding force stronger than the divisive secular forces of rivalry and jealousy. This may reflect the very tough imposition of Tongan Wesleyanism and the equally tough determination to accept Roman Catholicism as symbolic of opposition to Bua and Tonga.

The island of Sawa i Lau

The island of Sawa i Lau is owned by the people of Nabukeru. It is currently uninhabited and there is no evidence from oral tradition or from my own explorations on the island that it has ever been permanently inhabited. It is, however, an island of great importance for its associated myths which relate to connections between features and spirits associated with the caves on the island and with other places in Fiji which are distant from Sawa i Lau. One of the main myths is
centred round the activities and fate of a *manulevu* or eaglehawk, and another relates to the fate of a female *nitu* or spirit who once lived there. It is also important for the archaeological remains in one of the caves, the origins and significance of which are still debatable. I am aware of three series of caves that occur at various levels in the western face of the island.

**Na Qwara ni Manulevu**

The uppermost of the cave series is known as the Qwara ni Manulevu or Cave of the Eaglehawk, and may be approached by a fairly difficult climb up the cliff face. This is an extensive complex of passages and caverns, in which there are some impressive stalagmites. The entrance is shaded by a *baka* or fig tree usually associated with spirits. Curei, a *manulevu* from Vasilele (Vatulele, Nadroga), used to live in the cave, living on turtle and porpoises and on men; and used to go out far and wide to seek them and take them back to the cave. One day the women of Naicobocobo, a spiritually important headland in Bua from which the spirits of the dead used to jump into the sea at the west end of Vanua Levu, were out fishing. Curei appeared and seized one of the women and took her back to his cave. The other women went back to Naicobocobo and told the husband what had happened. The husband and Rokoua, one of the chief spirits of the area, went to look for the woman. Reaching the island of Yasawa, they went to Dalomo and were told that the *manulevu* came from Sawa i Lau. Taking a roundabout route so as not to be seen by the bird, they sailed towards the cave and anchored nearby. They climbed up into the cave, carrying one spear, and found it empty, though they saw an arm in the cave with certain tattoo marks (*qia*). They recognised the *qia* as those of the missing woman and so realised that the *manulevu* living in the cave was the one that had seized her. They were hiding inside the cave when the *manulevu* came back with turtle and porpoises which it started to eat. Rokoua told the husband to spear the bird, but he had urinated in his barkcloth and was afraid. So he asked Rokoua to spear the *manulevu*, chanting:

O na coka lau, daru sa toki; (Spear and hit, and we will leave;)
O na coka cala, daru sa mate. (Spear and miss, and we will die.)

Rokoua prayed for a wind, and the wind blew the tail feathers of the *manulevu* up around its head. Rokoua then struck its windpipe and killed it and threw it into the pool down below. It made such a big splash that the resulting wave divided Votua in Ba, and Tamasua which until then had been connected. On the wall of the cave there is a wet patch indicating where the husband had urinated, and those who know what to look for can still see the bones of the *manulevu* lying at the bottom of the pool called Tobukabuasali.

This myth may reflect connections between the people of Tamasua/Nabukeru and Bua, Vatulele and Votua, and also between the Tecí people of Dalomo and Bua.

In part of the cave complex there is a narrow passage known as Oso na Bukete. If a woman in the village tries to deny her pregnancy, she may be taken to this passage for testing. If she is at any stage of pregnancy, she will not be able to pass through this passage. When I went I was accompanied by, *inter alia*, the local doctor who was famous for the size of his stomach. His attempts at the passage were watched with considerable interest.

**Na Qwara ni Sisili**

The lowest of the series of caves is known as the Qwara ni Sisili or Cave of the Bathing Pool. It is divided into two chambers connected by an underwater passage. The outer chamber may be approached on foot directly from the beach and is easy of access.
The outer chamber is full of water, and in the deep pool there are a gwadru or small shark and a damu or red fish. These are said to be the waqawaqa or manifestations of nitu or spirits. Also in the chamber are what are described as yams turned to stone. There is a series of steps carved into the side of the chamber which lead up to a small cavity in the wall in which a person can sit and overlook the pool.

On the walls of the chamber approach there are many petroglyphs of unknown prehistoric origin and significance, although they are referred to as the ivakatakilakila or signs of Lewaqoroqoro. Lewaqoroqoro was a female nitu or spirit who lived on Sawa i Lau. People claimed to hear her singing meke or chants until one day when she was heard no more. On that day she was standing on the rocks (her footprints can still be seen on the rocks) while she urinated. Tutusilo of Malolo smelt this and his penis stretched and stretched until it reached Sawa i Lau. It then penetrated Lewaqoroqoro and lifted her up and carried her off to Malolo. She never returned to Sawa i Lau and her singing has not been heard since.

The approach to the inner chamber is along a short passage below sealevel. In the inner chamber there is said to be a shoal of ururu fish, the significance of which was not known to my guides. Derrick (1950:219) recorded a legend that a young chief used the cave as a hiding place for his intended wife, a woman of rank whom the elders wanted to marry to someone else, until the two were able to escape to friends on another island.

Lewaqoroqoro is a spirit famous in the west, and I find the myth interesting as reflecting a possible socio-political connection between Malolo and Yasawa islands. It is very difficult at this stage to comment on the petroglyphs. Petroglyphs in large numbers have been found engraved on a large rock at Dakuniba, south Vanua Levu, and on a large rock and a series of nearby smaller ones found by me in 1996 at the spiritual centre at Edronu, at the west end of the Tualeita near the coast bordering Saboto and Vuda (see Vuda and Sabeto). There is no obvious resemblance in the design between those at Edronu and those at Sawa i Lau, but there are similarities between the Sawa i Lau petroglyphs and those at Dakuniba.

The middle cave has not yet been explored, to my knowledge, and the people of Tamasua and Nabukeru know nothing about it. I simply record its existence for posterity.

Northern Mamanuca group

Islands of Eori/Ori, Navadra and Narokorokoyawa

The island group of the Mamanuca lies between the island of Malolo and the southern islands of the Yasawa group and Waya Sewa/Kuata. The group is divided into Mamanuca i ra or Leeward Mamanuca and, to the south, Mamanuca i cake/yata or Windward Mamanuca. Of the Mamanuca i ra islands, only Tavua and Yanuya are inhabited, with a total population of about 275 people. The most northern of the Mamanuca i ra and those closest to Waya Sewa/Kuata are Eori/Ori, Navadra and Narokorokoyawa which belong to the people of Tavua. Whilst they may be uninhabited, they are nevertheless of importance in the spirit world. The first two are of local spiritual significance, and the third island, that of Narokorokoyawa, is well-known and of wider significance in the Fiji spirit world, especially in the west.

Eori is an islet with a raised rocky interior and an area of flat land to the west now planted with coconut palms. The spiritual owner or caretaker of Eori and the adjacent sea is Mudumudu, who can be approached for assistance through suitable ceremonial presentations made on the flat land. In the grove there is said to be an old lali or wooden drum and a village site associated with Mudumudu. His actual settlement is known as Tukunamanulava and is situated under the sea near the island of Navadra.
Navadra is a much bigger island with several groves of coconut palms near the sandy beaches. No information has yet been recorded about sites on Navadra.

Narokorokoyawa lies about 45 km west of north-west Viti Levu, Fiji. It is one of the most well-known and spiritually significant sites of Fiji. By its very geographical position, it has been difficult to access; and because of its spiritual significance, it is not easy to obtain permission to visit, and Fijians are generally too frightened to go there anyhow.

The island is also known as Ra, Vanua Levu and Vanuasagasaga. Just over 1 km in length, the island has a white sand beach with rocks, a steep-sided rocky interior and a flat area between the beach and the interior. It is steep sided and more or less covered with bush, and is home to a few goats. There are coconut plantations, and areas of vudi or plantains and bananas have been planted for those who come to cut the copra. To the west, the beach extends as a tombolo to a separate rocky islet. Nearby lie the other islets known as Eori, Navadra and Tavuriba.

Over the years I have managed to record some accounts, albeit tantalisingly inadequate, of the myths and beliefs associated with this and nearby islands. Fortunately one of those who could help me was a bete or priest, now deceased, who though he was a man of Vuda (one of my research areas on the mainland opposite to the island) was related to the traditional owners of the island and had a developed interest in the place. Two series of myths are associated with Narokorokoyawa and the nearby rocks. The first are associated with the Rogovoka, described to me as nodra waqa na vu or the canoe which brought the first spirits; and the second with the Kaunitoni, described to me as nodra waqa na turaga or the canoe which brought the first ancestors. Myths well-known throughout Fiji relate how these canoes came to Fiji from far away to the west.

Associated with the Rogovoka, the rocky islet joined by a tombolo to the west of the island is called Na iRaviravi ni Karikari ni Rogovoka or ‘The Support for the Spars of the Rogovoka’; and there is another rock out at sea called Na iMusimusi ni Karikari ni Rogovoka or ‘The Refitting of the Spars of the Rogovoka’, where the Rogovoka anchored at times to get its spars refitted. There is no hard wood on the island but sometimes people find demanu or hardwood leaves on the rocks. Demanu is a kind of hardwood favoured for spars. Between the islands of Monu and Yanuya which lie to the south there is a rock which is said to be the ashes from the miqa or fireplace on the Rogovoka.

When the Kaunitoni anchored here, Tui Revurevu’s mother came ashore, and he was born and slipped into the sand where he was partially buried. His place is a pool called Nubunimoala, after which a burial ground at Viseisei, Vuda, and the yavu or house mound of the present Momo Levu or paramount chief of Vuda are said to be named. No one should remain upright on the island, out of respect to Tui Revurevu who is a spirit held in great awe in the Mamanuca group.

Narokorokoyawa is also of particular importance as the ultimate place to which spirits of the dead from many places in Fiji are said to go. The name is the same as that of villages in Saboto and in the middle of Viti Levu, all connected through the myth of a person who journeyed from place to place, starting from the island.

So the island is spiritually significant, first, as the initial place visited by canoes with original spirits and mythical progenitors of many descent groups throughout Fiji, and secondly as the last place visited by the spirits of the dead. From this originates its name of Narokorokoyawa or ‘The Place of Reverencing from Afar’.

If a vessel from Nadroga or Yasawa wants to visit the island, it should go first to the rocky islet of Yavuriba where spiritual sentinels are stationed. It waits here and the crew tama or respectfully call out to Narokorokoyawa. If the reply is favourable, the vessel proceeds to Narokorokoyawa.
If a person wishes to go fishing in the area or wants a boat of the enemy to capsize, he should first make an isevusevu or formal presentation of yaqona to Tuirevurevu at the mata ni sava.

Also on the island are yalewa wedewede or sirens known as Na Yalewa Sekula who try to seduce fishermen.

My first opportunity to visit the island was in 1954 when I was in the area as District Officer looking for shipwrecked victims and small craft reported missing after a hurricane. I was warned that if I should ever go ashore at Narokorokoyawa, I must keep my head lowered out of respect for Tuirevurevu, the spiritual caretaker of the island. Following this warning, I was most careful to keep my head down, and I covered most of the island without incident. Maybe I was getting a neck ache or just becoming sceptical, but I then raised my head and walked straight into a hornet nest.

In 2004, I had an opportunity to return to the island, remembering only too well my first painful visit. After yaqona or kava had first been presented to Tuirevurevu to seek his permission, my wife and I went ashore where the sandy beach was overlooked by a large rock. Here was the present mata ni sava or site where offerings or isevu of yaqona are now made to Tuirevurevu, asking for his permission to visit the island or seeking his assistance in any particular venture. The site comprises two parallel lines of stones, starting from two terminal monoliths of beach sandstone and leading to a dolmen-like structure with a capstone of sandstone resting on clamshells, and a wooden ‘roof’ on which clam shells and a large trochus shell had been placed. Our offering of yaqona lay on the capstone. In the large rock overlooking the mata ni sava is Tuirevurevu’s rock shelter known as Qwaranitubunitoga.

Proceeding inland across the flat area to the rocky interior, and keeping my head well lowered, I visited a series of rock shelters facing the sea. Some were faced with stone walling which had been constructed on the flat area. These, as well as the beach shelter, appeared to have a considerable depth of sand or soil. In the flat area itself had been constructed a rectangular feature, about ten paces by fifteen paces, comprised of two rows of stones leading in one case, from a terminal monolith, to a length of low free-stone stone walling. The opposite side of the rectangle was delineated by a row of scattered stones. This was probably the old mata ni sava before the construction of the one on the beach. A few sherds of typically late period Fijian pottery and a white ovulum-type shell with side-piercing were found on the surface. Time constraints, alas, prevented further exploration of the island, but I was fortunate to have had this opportunity to revisit the island, a visit from which this time I escaped unscathed.

I believe that this little group of islets, the Mamanuca i ra and especially Narokorokoyawa, are indeed an ethnology-inclined archaeologist’s dream. A fascinating project awaits someone who is prepared to locate and survey the sites and to record the myths and oral history associated with this group, and to relate them to those of the neighbouring small islands and the mainland of Viti Levu, whither the two canoes are said to have sailed after leaving Narokorokoyawa. Formal permission for such a project would have to be sought not only from the Fiji Museum authorities but, naturally, from the iTaukei Motu, the chief of the area which includes the group. He lives on the island of Yanuya. Either he or the bete or priest, if there is one, or whoever is regarded as the expert on the traditions of the islands should be invited to accompany the researchers, and to help locate the sites and explain the myths and traditions associated with them. Excavation in the rock shelters, if permitted, could be very worth-while, especially as Lapita pottery has recently been found on Waya, to the north of the group.