

NEITHER CARGO
NOR CULT

Ritual Politics and the Colonial

Imagination in Fiji

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INTRODUCTION:
CULTURE, HISTORY, AND
COLONIALISM



Agency and Meaning in Colonial History

What shapes the lives of colonized people? Is their agency a product of indigenous cultural systematics, rejecting, encompassing, transforming external change? Or is colonial power the prevailing force in their lives; do they respond to, react to, resist incursion, in an agency already therefore shaped by colonial hegemonic structures? How are anthropologists to understand encounters, conjunctures, domination, asymmetries of power, beyond first contact moments into the complex societies of a connected colonial and postcolonial world? How, in particular, can we rethink a part of Fijian colonial history previously called a cargo cult?¹

In establishing our rapprochement with history, it seems to me that anthropologists have used three analytic strategies to write about agency, meaning,

1. For readers unfamiliar with the very term “cargo cult,” consider these quotations from a famous essay by F. E. Williams, an administrator-anthropologist in New Guinea in the 1920s and 30s.

During the latter months of the year 1919 there began in the Gulf Division that singular and really important movement known as the Vailala Madness.

Originating in the neighbourhood of Vailala, whence it spread rapidly through the coastal and certain of the inland villages, this movement involved, on the one hand, a set of preposterous beliefs among its victims—in particular the expectation of an early visit from their deceased relatives—and, on the other hand, collective nervous symptoms of a sometimes grotesque and idiotic nature. . . .

and colonial history. One strategy insists on the priority of cultural difference. Here the concept of culture and cultural difference, the preeminent contribution of anthropology to the social sciences, is invoked to shape accounts both of indigenous change and of indigenous apprehension of external incursion. One leading example is Marshall Sahlins's "structure and history" including his recent work on the multiple cosmologies driving the capitalist world system (1981, 1985, 1988, 1992). Another example is David Lan's (1985) account of the agency of spirit mediums in the guerilla war to liberate Zimbabwe. This approach produces narratives which insist upon local categories of meaning and local agency for an understanding of encounters with the world system or colonizing peoples.

In contrast, a second analytic strategy sees colonial power as the overwhelming tension-charged historical watershed forever changing the world of the colonized. Here colonial societies are understood to be products of the agency of external transformative dominators, and colonized people can emerge again as agents in their own right only as colonized, local, already transformed, resisters. Instances of this approach include world system scholars such as Eric Wolf (1982) who find transforming agency in capitalist penetration, and also studies which, influenced by Foucault or Gramsci, focus on discourse and particular (here colonial) systems of meaning and practice beyond the realm of political economy narrowly defined — law, literature, sexuality — that dominate and transform (see, e.g., Cohn 1987, Said 1978, Stoler 1989). For many such scholars the emphasis is on colonial constructions of others, especially those accounts which find any scholarship concerning "others" so intricately implicated in western categories or in the mechanisms of colonial domination that concepts of "culture" and "cultural difference" themselves become artifacts of colonial categorizing (Said 1978, and see, e.g., Clifford and Marcus 1986).

A third strategy finds a space in between insistence on cultural continuity and insistence on colonial transformation. As figured in Michael Taussig's (1987) recent work on terror, that space is chaotic: neither indigenous nor

Perhaps one of the most fundamental ideas was that the ancestors, or more usually the deceased relatives, of the people were shortly to return to visit them. They were expected in a large steamer, which was to be loaded with cases of gifts — tobacco, calico, knives, axes, food-stuffs, and the like. (Williams 1977:331-41)

From such depictions came the general term "cargo cult." In this book it is my intention to challenge the very idea that this is a general phenomenon or a useful analytic concept (see preface, this volume).

colonial but an "epistemic murk" in between. The epistemic murk extends from participants to chroniclers. In Taussig's view such spaces almost defy portrayal, since even counterrepresentations and counterdiscourses risk replicating colonizer's discourses; montage and incompleteness are the techniques he uses to represent the chaotics he finds.

Establishing a strategy for writing a colonial history — as an anthropologist — is not a hypothetical question here. I want to begin with four narratives out of Fiji's past and present: a colonial official's essay, a present-day Fijian's recollection of an ancestor, a brief reconstruction of what I think Navosavakadua might have intended, and a cosmological history by an Indo-Fijian² visionary mystic. In their disjunctures and interrelations lie the problems I want to address.

Intersecting Narratives: Navosavakadua or the Tuka?

A Colonial Officer's Narrative of Tuka

In 1891 John Bates Thurston, British colonial governor of Fiji from 1888 to 1897, asked A. B. Joske,³ irrepressible memoirist and commissioner and magistrate in the hill districts and Ra province, to summarize "the movement" in an article for *The Australasian*, a Sydney-based newspaper. I excerpt from this article:

Superstition in Fiji

In the country round about Kuvadra, the Mount Olympus of Fiji, there seems to have been always prevalent a superstition called by the natives the "Tuka," the priests of which professed to possess an elixir of life. . . .

The first historical knowledge of it was about 30 years ago, when, owing to the spread of Christianity, the natives of different districts became able to have freer intercourse with one another [due to the cessation of warfare]. About then Saro Saro, a high priest of the "Tuka," gave a good deal of trouble to the late King Cakobau . . . [and was eventually] put to death by his tribal chief.

2. In different historical periods the people of Fiji descended from South Asian indentured laborers have been known as "Indians," "Fiji Indians," and "Indo-Fijians." I follow historian Brij Lal (e.g., 1992) in using "Indo-Fijian."

3. Adolph Brewster Joske later changed his name to A. B. Brewster, and as Brewster published *The Hill Tribes of Fiji* (1922) and other works on Fiji.

However, Saro Saro left a descendant, said to be his son — one Dugamoi — who, engrafting his native legends and superstitions on the Biblical narratives compounded a new Tuka. . . . [Dugamoi] established a great reputation among the followers of the “Tuka” as a high priest and prophet who gave him the title of “Na Vosa va Ka dua” [sic] literally, the man who speaks only once and must be obeyed. The Chief Justice of the colony . . . holds this title of honor amongst Fijians.

Dugamoi first came prominently into notice about the end of the year 1877. He then made a tour through the least civilized portions of Viti Levu [the main island of the Fiji group], predicting a millennium when all who died as faithful votaries of the faith would rise again, and aided by divine powers sweep all unbelievers from the face of the earth. . . .

The people of the eastern highlands of Fiji, partially conquered under King Cakobau's reign, closely related to those of the eastern highlands, who in 1876 had been in revolt against British authority, and who during that trying period had been with great difficulty kept steady, became very uneasy and excited, and to secure absolute peace Na Vosa va Ka dua had to be . . . deported to one of the eastern islands of the group, but after a short period of detention he was allowed to return to his home.

Again he started to preach his new and improved version of the “Tuka” supplementing native legends with what he found in the Bible. These doctrines have gradually spread over the northern coasts and eastern highlands of Fiji. . . . In the year 1885 Na Vosa va Ka dua began to have men drilled. Although the new reign of the “Tuka” was to be ushered in by the miraculous assistance of the gods, probably soldiers were thought to be a useful, if not necessary adjunct. No doubt Na Vosa va Ka dua aimed at the overthrow of the British Government in the group and the extinction of the Christian religion and of the white settlers. The drilling of troops speedily came under the notice of the authorities and warrants under the English statute prohibiting illegal drilling were issued. At first, these warrants were resisted, but after a brief period of anxiety to the authorities the ringleaders were secured without bloodshed. The chief prophet, Na Vosa va Ka dua, was exiled to Rotumah [a small island outside the Fiji group, which the British colonized and administered from Fiji] and others were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

With the removal of the leader and prime spirit of this movement it was thought that the fanaticism would die out a natural death, but there remained many priests of the “Tuka” who found that the steady spread of Christianity and progress of settled government interfered materially with the revenue they formerly derived from the simple credulity of their fellow countrymen. These men during the present year stirred up a vigorous revival of the “Tuka.” They predicted the re-appearance of Na Vosa va Ka dua exalting him into a divine personage whom the foreign Government had in vain endeavored to kill. . . .

A village called Drau-ni-ivi and a few of its outlying hamlets have been the centre from which this disturbing movement has radiated. Whales teeth, answering to the Chupatties [sic] of the Indian Mutiny have been sent out from there calling upon the faithful to rally and be united for the overthrow of the Government.

It is a foolish, fantastic and fanatic movement. This is now its third outbreak, and it became absolutely necessary that it should be put down with a strong hand. The votaries of it mainly dwell in the glens and valleys of a rugged and almost inaccessible district. Knowing nothing of the power of the Government and seeing but little of the symbols of authority, they consider themselves all powerful and important. In time the delay of miraculous aid must have been explained by their priests, to whom but one explanation would have been possible unless they confessed themselves powerless impostors. This would have been the non-satisfactory propitiation of their tutelary gods and ancestral spirits. . . . To those cognisant of the traditions and inner thoughts of Fijians it is well known there could be only one satisfactory offering to Fijian gods, and that is human sacrifices, the burnt offering alike of Assyrian and Druidical superstitions.

The foregoing is a brief summary of the origin and progress of the “Tuka” superstition, which has been to the Government from the first a source of trouble and uneasiness. Its recent vigorous revival induced the Governor to personally investigate the matter, and for this purpose . . . he made a three weeks tour through the central mountainous districts of Viti Levu. . . . His Excellency deemed it the wisest and most merciful course to remove [the people of Drauniivi] at least for a while to a more civilised portion of the group where there would be little likelihood of their pernicious doctrines gaining credence . . . to prevent the spread of the “Tuka” superstition among the simple, yet wild, half-Christianized, half-civilized tribes living in the ranges at the back of Drau-ni-ivi. . . .

The Drau-ni-ivi people have therefore been removed, and are now located on good fertile Crown lands in the island of Kadavu. . . .

The Kadavu Islanders, possessing a large intermixture of Tongan blood, are perhaps the most advanced and intelligent . . . of our Fijian population. There is therefore no fear of the “Tuka” doctrines being received by them otherwise than with ridicule and it may reasonably be hoped that finding themselves among a strong but law-abiding and civilised community the Drau-ni-ivi people will profit by their association with them by qualifying themselves for what they will certainly long for — a permission to return to their own mountain district. (17 October 1891, attached to Colonial Secretary's Office minute paper 94/2036)⁴

4. References to minute papers in the Colonial Secretary's Office series, held at the National Archives of Fiji, will henceforth be by number only. The first two digits indicate the year, and the last digits the number in the series.

This narrative reveals central themes in the colonial imagination of “the Tuka.” Joske finds no paradox in the topic: he presents an account tracing the origin, diffusion, alteration, and consequences of a doctrine of “Tuka.” Joske’s Tuka is either an autonomous phenomenon, a superstition which spreads like a disease in a receptive population, or an ideology perpetrated by its charlatan-priest author on a credulous faithful. By contrasting rebellious hill and interior people, prey to their charlatan leader, with the “advanced and intelligent” (and lighter-skinned) Kadavu islanders under “King” Cakobau, he constructs Tuka as marginal, deviant, and criminal, in the face of a developing colonial order on a British model. The article itself is a product of the colonial concern with self-presentation and legitimation of the colonial project, in the face of a wider, sometimes critical, audience of many factions in the larger Empire. It expresses as well much about colonial British concepts of society, order, religion, and legitimacy that I will explore in later chapters. Here, I want to note that in this British imagination of these Fijian events Tuka was construed to be a named doctrine leading to rebellion and disorder, and to note as well that this British imagination was no fanciful contemplation. Constructions of Tuka such as these would lead to arrests and deportation for Navosavakadua and the people of Drauniivi.

Narratives by Some of Navosavakadua’s Present-Day Descendants

In contrast, when I sought to discuss the topic constructed in such colonial accounts with Fijian informants, a differently bounded narrative emerged.

Nowadays Fijians do not generally know the meaning of the word “Tuka.” In Drauniivi village, among the people who call themselves Vatukaloko (a kin group and ritual name), those older people who do know it say, for example, “It was a thing of the devil, practiced by a heathen priest, who was not our relative. The people of Rakiraki knew it, we did not. Navosavakadua led the faction who rejected this thing of the devil which did not go in accordance with the ways of God, nonetheless we were blamed” (my summary and translation of a longer statement by a Nasi man). One informant added, “there is a law against it.” This was all they had to say on the subject of Tuka, not, I believe, because they were afraid to tell me more, but because the word is not a focus of practice or concern to them. Moreover, the word is not used nowadays to describe any of the other practices (e.g., local healing, “witchcraft,” and invocation of Fijian deities) which are sometimes classed as “things of the

devil.” Attempting to investigate “the Tuka movement” I drew a blank.⁵ But Navosavakadua, his life, and deeds are a vast indigenously constructed topic, subject of discourse in at least two important indigenous genres: oral accounts (both formal narratives related by elders with specialized knowledge and gossip and anecdotes told by younger people and the less knowledgeable) and written accounts in Fijian-language newspapers. And then of course there is the role of Navosavakadua in the lives of his living descendants.

Here is a narrative of Navosavakadua by one of his descendants. In the 1980s this man was the elected headman (*Turaga ni Koro*) of Drauniivi village. (The administrative office of *Turaga ni Koro* originated in colonial indirect rule; the office is rarely held by Fijians of chiefly rank.) This gentleman is a historical and genealogical specialist. In particular he is heir to the knowledge of kin groups and relationships of the Vatukaloko people that was compiled by the village’s representatives to the Natives Lands Commission in 1918, about which much more will be said in chapter 6.

He [Navosavakadua] was a shy man who did not speak much. He didn’t know evil paths. What happened to him was that he was given a task. He was a man of the *mataqali* (ritual kin group) Nakubuti, of the Makita subdivision. His hereditary standing (*itutu vakavanua*) was “*bulibulivanua*” [literally “maker of the land”; people of this standing install the Vatukaloko chief]. His father was Rareba Vunisa, whose third name was Tavakece. He was Navosavakadua’s true father. His mother was Namasala, a lady from *yavusa* (ritual kin group) Navisama, from the village of Narara.

His daily work was as a farmer. When our ancestors left the old village of Nakorowaiwai they lived at Waisai. In the mornings he used to go to bring his crops from the gardens at the old village.

At the hill inland called Varunisauka he went and met with the *mana* (miraculous or effective power) or the word which was given to him. He heard a voice, he didn’t see any people. I don’t know if it was a devil or God who spoke, he heard the voice say to him, “Mosese Dukumoi” (for that was his true name, the name given to him

5. Once while visiting in the interior district of Tokaimalo I asked an elderly gentleman about Tuka. Impatient and bewildered he turned to his son and the schoolteacher who was my escort. “She wants to know about dirt (*duka*)?” he asked. Any notion I might have had that embers of Tuka were smoldering in this community in the shadow of the Kouvadra range was considerably diminished as I was called upon to define Tuka. After I explained it as the British name for the beliefs and practices of Navosavakadua, I asked whether he knew any stories of Navosavakadua, or of the old days before the raising of the colonial flag. These topics he discussed without needing a gloss.

by his father and mother). . . . the echo of the voice said to him "Mosese, I want to take you, I anoint you to be my servant." And Mosese answered "what am I to do for you?" Then the voice said to him "I want you to spread the news that you can make people live [*vakabula na tamata*, literally make people live, sometimes also save people, in the Christian sense]. Do you want this power? If you want some other thing, wisdom, or to live peacefully, or anything you want, I will give it to you." Then Mosese Dukumoi said "I don't want anything, I only want you to give me the power to make people live." Then he heard the voice again, "If I give you the power to make life, will you achieve every task I set you?" He answered, "yes, I will try." Thus the task was given to him. . . .

And his religion, it was not Seventh Day Adventist, nor Wesleyan, nor Church of England, nor Catholic. Before they arrived, he had a religion, and it was the religion of God, he served God, he preached about God, before these other religions came. . . .

And when the power had been given to him, the people of the Twelve Tribes [Biblical twelve tribes, the term used now to name the indigenous confederation of peoples whom Navosavakadua led] then they called him Navosavakadua. He would speak once, then the command would be fulfilled. I don't know what kind of power it was, whether from devils or God, but I know that the God he served is the God we worship today.

There are many stories of the "miracles" of Navosavakadua, but the following one is probably the most important to Fijians, and, for different reasons, was important (in earlier versions) to European colonial officers as well.

A man died. He was baked with the food. His name was Arunaisa Sega, he is an ancestor of the people of the Wakalou kin group here in the village. Navosa told all the Twelve Tribes to assemble so that they might see the work he did. When the food (root crops) and the pig had been buried in the earth oven, then Arunaisa was brought. He didn't come in fear or refusing, he just came the way Jesus came, so that they could bury him in the earth oven. . . .

When the earth oven was ready it was dug open. It was steaming. The pig was cooked and the rootcrops were cooked, the man remained. He was bent over, there was no sign of a wound on him. Then Navosavakadua called three times "Atu, Atu, Atu, these people are here watching you. The pig is cooked, the food is cooked, the man is there. But how is the man?" He said to the people, "Now you will see the power I have been given, to make to live." Again he cried thrice, "Atu, Atu, Atu," and our ancestor stood up. "Brush the dirt off of your body so that you may see the ability of making to live that has been given to me." And he said, "You all can now tell the story. I don't know where the ability came from, whether from God or the Devil, but

it is just the work given to me, to make men to live. See here. It is roasted, the food is cooked, the pig is cooked, but the man lives. All of you see it. Sit here and eat."

The food was brought. And no matter how many tens and twenties of them ate, and there was only one pig, and a set number of baskets of root crops, but however many ate there was still food left. And then he did another miracle following this. He told them, you put together all the bones of the pig, not leaving one aside. And they did this, then he called, and the pig got up and ran off.

But then there was trouble. The news of this was heard by the government. Then he was arrested. This occurred at the old village site here. The flag of the colonial government had been raised at the time. They said he did "*cakacaka vakatevoro*" (heathen works) or that he did *tuka*. Then he was taken away. There was not yet a road, he went overland. . . .

Then he arrived in Suva, where they imprisoned him in jail. They didn't give him food, yet he lived. They put him in a bag, weighted it, and put it in Beqa bay, in the middle of the water. Yet when the officer returned, he was standing on the wharf. This man and these works, they were not heathen works. If this was the work of the devil, he wouldn't have been able to do this kind of thing. He would just speak, and the thing would be done. I don't think a devil could do this. This is God's work.

Then they sent him to Lau island, and they tried to shoot him. This part of Navosa's work concerns Ratu Mara [a high chief of Lau and the prime minister of Fiji in 1984 when this story was told]. Ratu Mara's power is going strong now. Navosa was shot three times in Lau. When the King of Lau shot him twice, the third time he said "don't shoot me." But the government had made the decision. Then the King of Lau said "it is not possible for me to kill this man." Then Navosa said to the King of Lau, "Here is my present to you. One of your descendants will bring light to Fiji." This is Ratu Mara today.

All these things happened, then it was said that he be sent to Rotuma. He got married there to a lady named Mereseini Namoce. They had three children the oldest, a daughter, the second a boy named Timoci Nagata (Timothy the snake) because he was born twin with a snake. Their descendants live at Rabulu village and Varusekiyasawa village, and in Drauniivi today.

That is the story concerning his life. If someone asks about your research, about Navosavakadua, you explain all this to them, and you tell them that "the explanation was given to me by the Turaga ni Koro (village headman) of Drauniivi village."

I have not heard any story of his competitiveness, or his giving a bad order. His possessions were left here, his *tanoa* (kava bowl) and his *kali* (wooden headrest). They are not weapons of fighting or destroying people or war. These are the goods of life. (Mr. Jone Tuiwai, Turaga ni Koro of Drauniivi village, 29 October 1984, my translation)

On the surface the Turaga ni Koro's account portrays his ancestor as a biblical martyr, utterly opposite to the "charlatan leader" portrayed by Mr. Joske. As we shall see, his insistence on Navosavakadua's devotion to Jehovah and his peaceful life affirms a current Varukaloko-Christian cosmological system, which has taken shape over the last century in the dialogue between the nineteenth-century Navosavakadua's intents and actions, the Christian conversion of the coastal kingdoms, and the British interpretations and punitive reactions detailed in Mr. Joske's account.

Navosavakadua's Narrative?

Also revealed in this account, however, are continuants to a narrative that we can only begin to imagine: the narrative that Navosavakadua and his nineteenth-century followers might have told themselves about themselves as they carried out their history-making project. When the Turaga ni Koro tells us that Navosavakadua knew God before the European religions came to Fiji, he interprets what I take to be an aspect of the nineteenth-century Navosavakadua's insistence that Jehovah and Jesus were Fijian gods and that true power in Fiji was inherent in gods and people of the land. Further, when the Turaga ni Koro gives Navosavakadua's hereditary standing as *bulibulivanua* (literally "maker of the land" or installer of the chief) he avoids saying that Navosavakadua was a hereditary oracle-priest (*bete*), but also suggests the important connection between Navosavakadua's hereditary standing and the notion of "making the land." (In this case Mr. Joske was right in calling Navosavakadua a hereditary priest, as older Fijian sources show, though he does not know their full meaning in a Fijian context.) For all that Navosavakadua's deeds may now be constructed as peaceful, in the context of nineteenth-century Fijian society the ability to raise a man alive from the cannibal oven would betoken a mastery over fertility and creativity in spheres of war, the ritual-politics of leadership, and the fruitfulness of the land. His *mana* (miraculous effective ability) here demonstrated as his ability to *veivakabulai* (save, or make to live) could be understood both in its nineteenth-century forms as an indigenous Fijian principle of effectiveness and power, and as it is now constructed and combined with a Christian concept of miracle-working.

We will return many times to these three narratives and their relations to each other. But we should also consider an example of the power Navosavakadua's memory has now for others as they frame new stories about Fiji's

history. Navosavakadua's memory and reputation are powerful, and one new invocation of them gained particular notoriety in the 1980s.

Navosavakadua as Avatar

Not only "Fijians" live in the Fiji islands. There are two major groups in the post-colonial nation. "Fijians" or "ethnic Fijians" are considered to be descendants of the indigenous Pacific Islanders of the nineteenth century (about 48 percent of the population). "Fiji Indians" or "Indo-Fijians" are descendants of indentured laborers from South Asia who came to work British sugar plantations from 1879 to 1920, and other immigrants from South Asia (currently about 48 percent). Long kept separate by the British, since 1970 ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians have been faced with the task of together making a nation. The task has been complex and most recently tragic. In 1987 military coups replaced a "multiracial" Labour government with new thoroughly ethnic-Fijian chauvinist governments and constitution. Fijians are very close to 100 percent Christian, Indo-Fijians 80 percent Hindu with small Muslim and Christian groups. There is little history of intermarriage or explicit cultural syncretism. This fourth narrative, an explicit syncretist project, presents one of the very few exceptions.

Utterly atypical of most Indo-Fijians, and with little or no support from either Indo-Fijians or Fijians, an Indo-Fijian visionary mystic propounded his own vision and version of Navosavakadua. In 1984 this gentleman traveled to Drauniivi to raise Navosavakadua's flag and to prophesy in his name. He said of Navosavakadua's place in Fiji's cosmology and in world history:

The King of Kings began as Krishna of the Mahabharata who when he had finished his work in India disappeared and changed his form. He sent a snake to Fiji, then went to Fiji himself and became incarnated as Navosavakadua, there he performed miracles and was deported. . . . Navosa said to the people of Drauniivi "Don't worry if I am gone for long. My flag will be raised." He pushed two stones into the ground, saying "When the stones rise it will be time." Those stones are now two feet above the ground. Then he went to Germany and became Hitler, he shaped the world, it was growing fast at that time. At another time he was incarnated as Jesus Christ. He returns each time in different forms. His next incarnation will be as a Fijian to found the new Kingdom on Maqo island in the Lau Group. The living God will arise from earth, flowers will sing, dogs will speak like humans. Fifteen

thousand flyers have been distributed prophesying this. (From my notes of a conversation with Mr. Harigyan Samalia in Suva, 1984)

We will return to this narrative, the late Mr. Samalia's visits to Drauniivi, and his vision of a unified nation of Fiji, in which all gods are one, in chapter 7.

Approaches to Culture, History, and Colonialism

So as not to be disingenuous, I must begin by saying that I have never considered these to be simply four narratives. There is a history already to the relation of these accounts (and the many other accounts from which I have selected these few), a history of interactions—of subjugation, incitement, construction, and powerful creativity, both official and hinterland—between these peoples, the Fijians, Europeans, and Indo-Fijians of the nineteenth century and the present. But how to narrate such a history? Is it one of cultural difference, indigenous transformation? Or of colonial hegemony and resistance? Of epistemic murk? Or is it a history that cannot be told, the very project itself misguided?

The Pacific has long been part of western scholarly proofs of plural "societies" and "cultures," at least since the days of Malinowski and Mead. One analytic strategy continues the theme of cultural difference as the defining force in anthropological and historical analysis. Insisting on cultural difference, the structure and history approach (Sahlins 1981, 1985, 1988, 1992, Hooper and Huntsman 1985) writes histories of Pacific people already with history, chronicling internally generated transformations in Pacific societies, and demonstrating the power of Pacific people to encompass novel agents and actions within existing categories and practices. Most radically, this approach makes the claim that not just structures (systems of categories) but also ways of making history are culturally different and irrevocably plural. These plural structures, histories, and agencies are seen as real, recoverable, and ongoing.

To adopt this analytic strategy to tell the story of Navosavakadua and Tuka would be to insist on the reality and the precedence of a non-western history, to write a narrative dominated by Fijian kingdoms, chiefs, warrior allies, and oracle-priests. Such a narrative would privilege Navosavakadua's own project, and its continuants and continuities into the lives of present-day Vatukaloko people of Drauniivi and environs. Considering British colonialism in Fiji it would stress the projects of Fijians as they shaped the system of "indirect rule" and the genealogical and structural continuities between pre-colonial, colo-

nial, and post-colonial leaders. Its priority would be the reconstructive project, the search for Navosavakadua's own narrative. Here, the structure and history approach would be quite close to the otherwise dissimilar Subaltern Studies movement (see Guha et al. 1982 and subsequent volumes), seeking a hidden other's narrative, believed to have a superior reality and moral force.

To emphasize colonial power instead would create a narrative that replaces indigenous avoidance, encompassment of, or triumph over the novel, with the story of the brutal or subtle workings of external incursion. Such narratives find agency and the real in the transformations wrought by capitalism and colonizers. If the ground of analysis is the connected world system, then capitalist penetration with its global logic would be the key agent of change. In such a narrative Tuka, far from reflecting an "untouched" indigenous culture, an island of history, might owe its impetus and its form to Navosa's experience as a laborer on a copra plantation (cf. Keesing 1988). If hidden transcripts are still to be sought (as in Scott 1990) they are bound to speak to the colonially made world, even if ironic or resistant.

Another narrative strategy finds colonial power infiltrating the lives of "others" in realms beyond the political economic, but equally real. Meaning itself is the ground of manipulation, and of contest. Foucault, and Gramsci and Williams, from whom are drawn the current, almost omnipresent tropes of "hegemony" and "resistance," have laid the grounds for seeing in western politics and colonial societies the power of discourse and disciplinary practices to remake people's lives, to define the natural, and to constrain their very vision of the possible. Such a story would insist on following contact moments into routine colonialism (see Asad's (1973) use of the term) and the "post-colonial" nation itself. It would analyze the colonial apparatus—legal, economic, medical, educational, sexual—for the explicit and subtle transformations of meaning that created of Fijians a new and colonized sort of people. Most subtly we might find in Tuka, in the very resistance of a Navosavakadua, the terms and categories of the colonizers, indeed turned back upon them but operating nonetheless to expand a powerful and inescapable colonial discourse.

A third narrative strategy finds neither colonial hegemony nor indigenous encompassment, but rather a confused, disorderly space in between. Contemplating contradictions, chaos, and terror in the colonial terrain of the Columbian rubber plantations Taussig (1987) finds no coherent systems, old or new, but rather a jungle in which practices and images of terror (colonial and indigenous) reinforce each other. In such colonial spaces, the colonizers and the colonized seek meaning and agency, but their possibilities for agency are of the most brutal sort. Acting on the basis of fears, projections, fantasies,

rumors, and fragments of information, they dwell in terror and make the most horrendous images real. To write such a narrative of Tuka we would look to the chaotic, the incomplete and unknowable aspects of both colonial and Fijian powers and practices, highlighting the cruelties and the colonial and Fijian images of the wild and powerful. But though some colonial places and times may indeed be terrains of epistemic murk (and Taussig is most convincing in the history he tells) not all are so chaotic. If we write of Tuka as neither indigenous nor colonial, but novel, must it be chaotic? Calling Tuka chaotic might even be complicit with colonial discourse, which relied on the trope of disorder to describe it. Could it not be systematic, in a novel way?

Most radical (at least in self-depiction) is that version of the narrative of colonial power that finds no reality beyond the contingency of narratives themselves. The epistemological argument that all narrative truths are partial, each limited by its narrator and context and genre of narration, comes from Said, from Marcus and Clifford, as well as from Taussig, and of course from Geertz (1973). The question is not what can we know of Tuka or Navosavakadua, but, why do we ask? Uncomfortable but important questions can be asked from this perspective about the genealogy of our curiosity leading us back to A. B. Joske. What is the relationship between his two personae as colonial official and amateur anthropologist? Are the theorists of cargo cults his scholarly inheritors? Am I? Is interest in "others" simply a vehicle for construction of the self? Is anthropological knowing, objectifying, codifying, describing simply a further exercise in colonial power-knowledge? Can we know anything of others past or present, and is our interest in knowing hopelessly, colonially compromised? Joske's own story is a fascinating tale of self-transformation, from suspect German-named merchant into Kipling-quoting official of the British Empire through the mechanisms of administration and publication. Would it be wiser to follow this narrative strategy and to write only of Mr. Joske? And of the nonexistence of cults? Wiser? Or safer?

In this book I want to argue for one possible resolution to the question of analytic and narrative strategy. First of all, I want to insist on, to privilege the premise that there is reality to this Fijian colonial history — a reality we cannot ever fully know or write that is nevertheless a ground irreducible to trope or audience for the estimation of truth. We do not need to seek a unitary true narrative of Navosavakadua and Tuka in order to acknowledge the existence of this reality. In fact, because audience and rhetorical tropes are also not reducible, there is no one "true" history of Tuka. Each of the narratives I have cited above must be understood as a construction, a partial truth if you will. And

nothing I write is able or intended to reconcile or tidy up the ongoing revisions, contestations, forgettings, and multivalences, the unknowns and spaces and narratives with lives of their own that are the stuff of human history-making — indeed the stuff of the narrative I hope to write. But all is not contingent. There is more to be said of each account than the text itself, a contextualization that can move the uncommitted reader from incomprehension to awareness. (There is nothing new in this argument; it is the old cultural anthropological strategy. To my mind, the crucial break between Joske's "anthropology" and ours today is the Boasian insistence on respect, relativism, and the denaturalization of one's own culture through study of others.)

Perhaps more importantly, I would argue that there have never been simply four (or however many) "narratives" of Tuka. These narratives have been created and expressed, not simply in cultural contexts (to be explicated with reference to categories of meaning) but in ongoing projects — efforts to act, to engage, to contest, support, make, and change things and people. Narratives of Tuka have been expressed within indigenous, colonial, and post-colonial frameworks of discourse and cultural interaction. There have always been motives and consequences attached to the constructions of Tuka. We can know some of these motives and also some of these consequences: ritual spaces claimed and reclaimed, built and rebuilt; floggings and deportations; definitions fixed through documents and through prophecies; flags raised in extraordinarily contested redefinitions.

What I want to do, then, in my narrative, is to find a story of the making of narratives and a story of their fates as cultural systems are articulated, and some systems are routinized. It could be called narratography, this sort of effort to understand articulations, routinizations, and even routinizations of articulating systems. In framing my project in this way, I believe that real history is found both by the analytic strategy insisting on attention to indigenous history-making and that insisting on attention to colonial power. I am hoping to find "contestatory discourse" in Fijian history and "cultural categories" in colonial practice as well as vice versa. These are questions about the operation of cultural power. How do some narratives become official, others "hinterland"? What kinds of agency and practice — oracular, administrative, military, ritual — have given rise to what is real and important about Navosavakadua and Tuka? I hope to explain the importance of some Fijian rituals, and some British officializing disciplinary practices, but also to write of the officializing disciplinary practice among Fijians, and ritual among the British.

Under the perhaps cumbersome rubric of "routinization of articulating

systems," I mean to address the consolidating, resolving processes that follow creative, forceful efforts to establish order by both colonizers and the colonized—the consolidating, resolving practices in which contests are definitively settled, new routines and agencies, meanings and arrangements established whereby people lead their lives. These processes often restrict, but sometimes new possibilities are opened including new spaces for resistance and contestation. From Sahlins's "structure of the conjuncture" I borrow the model of "the practical realization of the cultural categories in a specific historical context, as expressed in the interested action of the historic agents, including the microsociology of the event" (Sahlins 1985: xiv, also 1981). In the structure of the conjuncture of Hawaiians and Captain Cook, Hawaiians make history, in Hawaiian terms, as the British do in British terms. Cultural systems do not monolithically determine agency, for among the Hawaiians there are divisions and contests (as between chiefs and priests, and men and women) as among the British are divisions and contests (notably of class). Over time, in colonies, the structure of conjuncture is the object of multiple interested efforts to routinize or contest. From the analyses insistent on the force of colonial power I borrow Talal Asad's term and insistence on attention to "routine colonialism" (e.g., 1973:115) to focus not just on initial moments but on routinized colonial situations.⁶ For in ongoing colonial societies, the distinction between that which is indigenous and that which is colonial is breached. Rather than indigenes and colonizers retaining separate systems of meaning, and rather than colonizers imposing their system and the colonized either becoming hegemonized or resisting (in indigenous terms or in the colonizers') over time in colonial societies such as Fiji, new articulations are made.⁷ While novel, they are not necessarily chaotic. They are neither indigenous nor colonial, they are both and neither. Some flourish, some fall by the wayside. This book is the story of plural articulations, some defunct, some flourishing, some nascent, in a turbulent history of power, ritual, and history-making.

This narrative therefore moves chronologically to tell a story of a Fijian ritual and political history, the colonial making of a "cult," and the plural versions of past and present that are the consequences. Chapters 2–5 depict

6. As I will discuss in more detail in the conclusion, I am not following Weber's use of "routinization," at least in the sense in which he views it as the attenuation of authentic charisma.

7. Comaroff (1985:153) notes the evocative double meaning of articulation, both "to join together" and "to give expression to."

plural nineteenth-century Fijian and British cultural realities in complex conjuncture, leading to Navosavakadua's project: an articulation of a new ritual-politics for Fiji. Chapters 6–8 turn to the twentieth century, examining the routinization of articulations in the colonial society of Fiji. Focusing on narratives of Navosavakadua, these chapters depict creative articulations (official and private, forceful and quiescent), some of which fail and some of which have been made routinized, made real in peoples' lives.

More specifically, we begin chapters 2 and 3 with some Fijian history, focusing on the social landscape of the area called Ra, and the early life of Navosavakadua. These chapters consider contesting indigenous Fijian understandings of power, autonomy, and obligation, between eastern coastal kingdoms and interior hinterland peoples, between chiefs and "people of the land." The contests are expressed in myth, in the history of Navosa's people in the 1873 massacre at Nakorowaiwai, and at many points in Navosavakadua's own life. Into the ongoing conjuncture of opposing Fijian groups entered the British. In chapter 4 we begin to see the colonial creation of a cult. This chapter interprets the British colonial project, with its optimistic expectations of a natural trajectory of Fijian civilizability, its institutions meant, in various ways, to establish dominance and transformation, and the impact of Navosa's project on the British cultural imagination of themselves and Fijian others. Chapter 5 reconstructs Navosavakadua's 1880s mobilization of hinterland peoples through an articulation of Fijian and British gods, of Fijian and colonial forms of ritual-political power. His land-centered polity was novel, in Fijian and colonial terms, and dramatic though short-lived.

Chapter 6 traces consequences of Tuka in the lives of Navosavakadua's deported descendants and looks more broadly at the routinization of plural versions of power and truth in twentieth-century Fiji. Emphasizing processes of routinization chapter 6 contrasts the making of official and more private local versions of past and present, inscribed both in texts and on the very landscape. Chapters 7 and 8 trace these routinizations into the present, considering current versions of ritual-political power in post-colonial (and now post-coups) Fiji. Chapter 7 examines narratives of Navosavakadua in the 1980s, first his place in an unsuccessful post-colonial nationalist project of an Indo-Fijian visionary, and second in a public debate among Fijians in a national newspaper. Chapter 8 returns to the Vatukaloko and their current, relatively quiescent understanding of their ancestor, their colonial history, and their place today in Fiji and the world.

Finally chapter 9 returns to broader theoretical issues. If we can argue that

“cults do not exist,” should we not also ask “does the state exist”? I will argue that the creation of the very concept of cult is tied not only to the articulations of scholars and other observers, but also to the routinizing effects of official powers making states. If so, how are we to understand the different powers of center and hinterland, and of colonizers and colonized, to make history in a place like Fiji?

EMBATTLED PEOPLE OF
THE LAND: THE RA SOCIAL
LANDSCAPE, 1840-1875



Long before Navosavakadua was born, the Vatukaloko people made their history as “people of the land” in a complex ritual-political field. Here we begin with an event that took place when Navosa was young and then move back to consider earlier histories.

The Battle at Nakorowaiwai

In February 1873 a Fijian man called Koroi i Latikau set out to recruit men as laborers for European plantations in Fiji’s eastward islands. He belonged to the Lasakau people of the kingdom of Bau, but he did not recruit for laborers among his own people along the southeast coast. Instead he came up to Ra in the northeast of Viti Levu island on a European-owned schooner and then went by foot up into the mountainous interior, into the lands behind coastal Drauniivi village (see figures 4, 5, and 6). He arranged to hire thirty men, offering muskets and trade goods for payment, and set out for the coast with the recruited men. But a whale’s tooth had followed him into the interior. Within a few miles of the coast he was killed.

Here are two accounts of the killing. One is a letter written in February 1873 by the captain of the schooner which had brought Koroi i Latikau up to the Ra coast where he had joined the ship that would transport the hired men down the coast. The letter reports the killing to the Minister of Native Affairs.

NAVOSAVAKADUA'S RITUAL POLITY



Navosavakadua made history in a complex Fijian colonial field. He left few statements that we know to be his own; there was and is much said and written of him. He was said to have prophesied that "the world would shortly be *tavuki*, which is the Fijian for being turned upside down, and when that occurred all existing affairs would be reversed; the whites would serve the natives, the chiefs would become the common people and the latter would take their places" (Brewster 1922:237). He set about to effect his prophecies by establishing a new polity, through informing people about gods and power, transacting "*wai ni tuka*" (water of immortality), doing miracles, and bringing the dead back to life. Bearing in mind long-term projects of "people of the land" and the colonial reification and criminalization of Tuka, how might we write a narrative of Navosavakadua and Tuka? How can we come to understand him as simultaneously Dukumoi, Navosavakadua, and Moses? How can we understand his transformation of the old polity of the Vatukaloko into the Twelve Tribes? How can the Twin Gods of the Kouvadra be Jehovah and Jesus? Can we read his mobilization, his attempt to free the Vatukaloko as *both kalou vere* and Exodus? Reading nineteenth-century colonial documents and hearing present-day Fijian accounts about Navosavakadua we can feel the articulation of two systems in the 1880s: Navosavakadua's "Tuka" as an attempt to found a new kind of ritual-polity and Navosavakadua's project more generally as the deliberate assertion of identities of gods and powers in the

world. In the face of a developing colonial-chiefly Fijian orthodoxy, Navosavakadua acted, making a first move in an ongoing alternative articulation.

The "Tuka" in Historical Contexts

Certainly we could read Tuka in terms of indigenous Fijian culture and history alone. Colonial characterizations of Tuka as epidemic aside, in the 1880s and 1890s, Tuka and interest in Navosavakadua's leadership followed the historically well-defined bounds and relationships of the Vatukaloko *vanua*. We can recognize many of these same peoples, from inland to coast with long-term ties to the Vatukaloko polity, as the "Tuka votaries" of the colonial record (see figure 5). Here Navosavakadua follows Sadiri the invulnerable warrior-priest of the battle of Nakorowaiwai, rallying the Vatukaloko once again. In Fijian terms we could read Navosavakadua's project as an attempt to establish an autonomous ritual-polity in opposition to Bauan-European rule. In Fijian terms continuous with earlier Vatukaloko mobilizations, we could see them still insisting on being *bati* (allies not subjects) in the face of encroaching others. Or we might even understand Navosavakadua to be establishing himself as a chief on the eastern coastal model, his *mataqali* (kin group) Naku-butu taking back the rule. Yet, taking Navosavakadua seriously as a hereditary oracle-priest and the heir of Sadiri, we could also read Navosavakadua's project as an indigenous transformation of the eastern Fijian polity, a transformation with antecedents in the land-centered potential of the Ra and interior peoples. Here we would see it as a major, novel mobilization of people of the land, motivated by and on behalf of Kouvadra gods. Within Fijian terms alone, his mobilization established a new kind of Fijian ritual system, a land-centered polity.

But to read Navosa's polity and project in Fijians terms alone ignores the transforming power of the encounters with the colonial administration and Christianity. Navosavakadua did not call himself Sadiri, but rather Moses. In place of the club of a *kalou vere* ritual expert, he was said to possess Moses's staff, the one with which the biblical figure parted the Red Sea. It would be equally easy to read in his movement a form of resistance that was shaped in the encounter with the constructs and practices of colonial top-down power: in the face of the sustained colonial attempt to subjugate the Vatukaloko, he found in colonial ritual doctrine an icon of leadership of wronged people. But that would ignore the fact that colonial power itself was already a chiefly Fijian-British synthesis.

My interest here is to read Navosavakadua's project as neither indigenous nor colonial, but rather its own dynamic intelligence, a creative articulation of possibilities in Fijian and colonial systems. Here, most crucial of all might be the double valence of "Navosavakadua" (he who speaks but once and is effective). It was the name, Joske says, Fijians gave to the colonial chief justice, in awe of his power over life and death in sentencing (Brewster 1922:239). In the case of the colonial official and of Mosese Dukumoi, the name marked a new notion of the potential power of a new state and its gods. Let us explore the synthesis Navosavakadua articulated, and how it was, briefly, routinized.

Navosavakadua's Cosmology

A first puzzle for colonial officials and later scholars encountering Tuka is its mixture of the political and the religious. Some have seen the political (or political-economic) context as prior to the content and cosmology. I think we should put aside these divisions. After all, nineteenth-century Fijian confederations and chiefdoms were ritual-polities. The British state was then and is now headed by the head of a church (see Fields 1985). And the encounters of Europeans and eastern coastal Fijians throughout the nineteenth century joined Methodism and colonizing political order in an ongoing articulation. So, what is puzzling about Navosavakadua is not that he prophesied to set the Vatukaloko free, but what he prophesied. Why foreign gods, the Twins and Jehovah? Why water of immortality?

The Twins and Degei

As Wilkinson described in 1878, it was the Twins, Nacirikaumoli and Nakausabaria, who chose Navosavakadua as their oracle. These two gods of Kauvadra were the grandsons (in some versions sons or nephews) of Degei. The Twins defied Degei by killing Turukawa, a bird belonging to him. They thus precipitated the war at Kauvadra, which Degei eventually won by summoning a great waterspout to the top of the Kauvadra and causing a great flood to drive out the Twins. Accounts from the 1840s to the present detail how this initial unfilial act caused the founding and peopling of the coastal and island polities as the Twins fled from the Kauvadra by canoe. In 1885 Joske juxtaposed an account of the war at Kauvadra with his description of Navosavakadua as an oracle of the Twins. He did not explicitly state that it was an

account given by Tuka adherents, but it seems to me to be a version from the Kauvadra area.

Degei the "Kalouvu" or Fijian Creator, lived in a cavern at Na Kauvadra. He was a gigantic serpent but at such times as he willed assumed the human form. There was also in Naboubuco a gigantic dove called Turukawa. Degei sent for this dove and told him to live in the Baka tree (banyan) that grew at Uluda, the cavern's mouth. It was Turukawa's sweetly cooing at dawn that daily roused Degei from his slumbers and the bird was very dear unto the God.

At that time there also lived at Naraiyawa, not far from Nakauvadra, two young godlike Chiefs named Nakalsabarai [Nakausabaria] and Namakaumoli [Nacirikaumoli]. They were in their way mighty hunters, and armed with bow and arrows ranged the country round shooting birds. Soon they had killed all the birds in the country and only Turukawa remained alive. One night they said "Let us go and shoot the bird of Degei."

The "matasau" or Chief's attendant whose duty it was at dawn to beat the Veitala or big drum of Degei, found Turukawa dead with two arrows in him.

When Degei heard of it he wept and said, "Oh, how I loved my dove, for his dear sake a moon I'll fast and for two more moons I'll mourn."

A messenger was forthwith sent to the young Chiefs at Naraiyawa. He said "You two, you two shot Turukawa," but they denied it. The messenger replied, "Ere a moon be past, submission make, or Degei wreaks his wrath." The chiefs answered, "Come war, come flame and fire, we'll not submit."

The result was that the lands of these young Chiefs and their adherents were wasted and at last their father said to them, "You two are the cause of evil in our land, you have called down upon us the wrath of Degei, build yourselves a canoe and sail away that Degei may be appeased and we have peace." So they built a canoe and hauled it to the sea at Rakiraki, and the gap that they broke in the mountains to haul it through may be seen even unto this day. And they sailed away to the west and the Fijians knew not whither they went.

But in these days has arisen Navosavakadua to whom it has been revealed the place they went to.

In the 1870s, as Wilkinson described in his report on the protest against the Roko Tui Ra by the Rakiraki chiefs, Navosavakadua invoked the Twins, preparing the way for them in an extended *kalou rere* (invulnerability) ritual. At that time the Twins revealed to Navosavakadua the extent of their travels. Joske continued,

He says they sailed away to the land of the white men, who wrote a book about them which is the Bible, only the missionaries in translating it have deceived the

Fijians in talking about Jesus Christ and Jehovah, their real names being Nakalasa-basai [Nakausabaria] and Namakaumoli [Nacirikaumoli]. They are shortly to appear and at their arrival the Fijian Millennium is to commence. All who believe in the doctrine that Navosavakadua preaches, are to have life eternal, and their ancestors are to rise from their graves. They are also to be rewarded with "sitoa" (stores) full of the wealth of the white man. Those who do not believe in him are to perish. (Joske CO 83/43)¹

On the one hand, the story of the war at Kauvadra tells a familiar story about Fijian power. It establishes a version of the interior-coast, autochthon-foreign opposition. The two opposing sides are the unmoving Degei in his cave of stone in Ra and the canoe-voyaging Twins who travel by water out to the coast and beyond. The Twins are sometimes called the "foreigners" (*vulagi*). They were not the *kalou vu* (ancestor gods) of the Vatukaloko people, nor of the Ra and interior people, at least not since 1918, when the Vatukaloko told narratives that traced their lines either from gods senior to Degei, or to more established children of Degei.²

The story of Degei can be read and told from different perspectives. From the point of view of Jovesa Bavou in 1918 the interior people were descendants of an autochthonous Degei, or of lines senior to Degei, and the coastal people were powerful upstarts like the Twins. From the point of view of many coastal chiefs their powerful kingdoms are descendants of active superseding lines who successfully usurp the rule. As these powerful upstarts, the Twins are the war gods of coastal polities.

From either point of view, in the nineteenth century Degei was most fundamentally identified with the Rakiraki people, as their ancestor god. As such an interior, ancestral god, located in the Kauvadra mountains on the spatial and social periphery of centralizing, burgeoning chiefly confederations and hierarchies, he was considered to have control over nature and the fertility of the land. People of the coastal kingdoms recognized Degei's ritual authority. Missionary Joseph Waterhouse (1868:362) reported that during a terrible

1. For further contemporary descriptions of Navosavakadua and "Tuka" see CSO and CO papers, especially Wilkinson (78/550), and Carew, Cocks, Joske, Thurston (CO 83/43), and many other associated papers. See also Brewster (1922).

2. The myth also describes a dual nature to Fijian power. As Sahlins (1985) might put it, Degei, the unmoving central chief, is the *gravitas* figure and the voyaging Twins are *celeritas* gods. They represent two sides of Fijian chiefship, sacred kingship, and active kingship, which were embodied, in some Fijian kingdoms in two chiefly lines (e.g., as in Bau the Roko Tui (sacred) line and the Vunivalu (active) line).

drought in 1838 the Vunivalu of Bau (Tanoa, the father of Cakobau) had sent offerings to up to Rakiraki to be given to Degei to bring rain.

But if Tuka was a movement of people of the land, why was Navosavakadua an oracle of the Twins who were voyaging gods? Why the gods who had rebelled against Degei? I think the answer lies partly in a reading from a very local perspective that sees both Degei and the Twins as gods from the Kauvadra range and focuses on the specific historical and ritual relations between Rakiraki and the Vatukaloko people. The Twins were Navosavakadua's gods of war. And there is a real parallel between the relationship of Degei and the defiant Twins and the Rakiraki kingdom and the defiant Vatukaloko *bati* (warrior allies). The Vatukaloko repeated this relationship of ambiguous warriors versus chiefs in their resistance to Rakiraki, to Viwa, and to Bau over many years. Since 1918, as noted above, the Vatukaloko have represented themselves in their relationship to Rakiraki (and Bau) as more senior, but superseded lines descended from the elder brothers of Degei. But in Navosavakadua's day, I think that he presented a narrative of Vatukaloko power as warrior power, that of rebellious *bati* such as the Twins against more powerful and established chiefs, such as Degei.

The Twins and Jehovah and Jesus

Further, Navosavakadua centered his project on a novel articulation of the Twins and the new Christian god(s). In 1878 Wilkinson wrote that Navosavakadua heralded the return of the Twins "who are said to have fled Fiji in disgust on the people adopting Christianity and other modern innovations" (78/550). But in the 1880s, colonial accounts agree that Navosavakadua identified the Twins with the Christian deities. Joske wrote,

When Navosavakadua was arrested he sent an emissary to Roko Tui Ra saying that if he was sent to Suva, all the glorious things which he foretold of would not come off. He says that unless Nakasabasia [Nakausabaria] and Namakaumoli [Nacirikaumoli] reappear the power of Degei (who is the old serpent) will continue in the ascendant, as those two are they, of whom it is foretold, shall bruise the head of the serpent. (CO 83/43)

Carew wrote at the same time:

He has given out that the return of Degei's two sons, Nacirikau Moli [*sic*] and Nakausabaria, lost at the time of the legendary Fijian deluge, is at hand when the

world is to be upset (*vukica*), and the Lotu and Matanitu (Christianity and Government) driven out.

He also pretends that the teachings of the Christian Bible are altogether compatible with Fijian mythology and heathen practices, but that the people have been shamefully deceived by the substitution of the names of Jehovah and Jesus for those of Degei's sons already mentioned. (CO 83/43)

And Cocks wrote:

On the 29th November 1885 the Provincial Scribe, in the course of an interview with Navosavakadua, elicited from him the following statement:—

What is reported of me is perfectly true. We have the "Lotu" and the "Matanitu" which were originated by the two who drifted from Nakauvadra. They started the Lotu to put down the work of Degei, but finding that it had not sufficient power they established the present Government as an auxiliary to the "Lotu" in the suppression of the work of Degei. (CO 83/43)

If Tuka was anticolonial and anti-Christian, why did Navosavakadua adopt even more foreign gods, identifying Jehovah and Jesus as Fijian deities? This brings us to a second, more complex reading. Returning to the story of Degei, it can be read as a narrative of the Fijian people-chiefs and interior-coastal division, but it is a very different kind of narrative from the origin myths of voyaging chiefs (discussed in chapter 2). In those myths, stranger kings from the sea marry women of the land and found chiefly lines. Here, in this narrative from Ra and the interior, both Degei and the Twins begin as Kauvadra gods. They represent settled and voyaging actors, Degei stays in the mountains, the Twins voyage to the sea, but both are most fundamentally gods of the "land." I think that this is how Navosavakadua constructed the Twins, as pivotal figures who were simultaneously gods of the land and strangers. Their message to Navosavakadua was that the power of foreigners was nonetheless ultimately that of the gods of the land. Thus Navosavakadua preached that the powerful war gods Jesus and Jehovah were to be identified with Nacirikaumoli and Nakausabaria, that they had traveled to the lands of the white men which was the same as the Fijian Burotukula (Paradise), and that they had returned, like Jesus and Jehovah, to vanquish an old enemy, Degei. Thus, also, Navosavakadua's argument that the colonial officers and missionaries were attempting to deceive Fijians on these very points. It was not merely Navosavakadua's claim that Fijian gods were more powerful than foreign gods, but rather that if foreign gods were powerful, then they must be Kauvadra gods.

Chiefly-Centered Fijian Christianity

This Kauvadra-centered and "land"-weighted articulation contrasts with the relations made with Jehovah and Jesus elsewhere in the islands. In the coastal kingdoms the "chiefly" weighting of the great kingdoms enabled the massive conversion to the stranger god. And conversion remade and strengthened chiefly hierarchy (see Kaplan 1990, Toren 1988). In the eastern confederations and kingdoms, conversion proceeded from the top down, especially when Cakobau, ruler of Bau, converted in 1854 (see Waterhouse 1868:223–294). Missionaries proclaimed that false deities were being replaced by the one, true god. In coastal Fiji, Fijians were offered rebirth and life eternal from the foreign Christian god, whose priests were white men and the "native teachers" they trained. Following conversion, the first fruits of the land, due to land gods, were instead offered to Jehovah. Christian chiefs (both self-defined and British constructed) were already linked with European *mana*, when they installed colonial rule at Cession in 1874. They themselves then became part of the emerging Fijian-colonial hierarchy of rule. The majority of Fijians came to portray their conversion in missionary terms as the historical movement from a time of darkness to a time of light (Waterhouse 1868:69), a founding moment also associated with the colonial "*vakarewa na kuila*" (the raising of the flag, the establishment of the colony).³

The coastal chiefly people came to accept the British notion of conversion as civilizing and progressive. Further, they viewed the Ra and interior people as refusing the grace of this conversion. Thus Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, the Bauan Roko Tui Ra, on "Tuka": "Ra is truly a land of black souls. They believe the lies of the devil and even the elders have customs that are like those of little Fijian children" (91/1133). But where coastal Fijians acknowledged the new god to have superseded the old and offered up their land to the Queen, in the hills Navosavakadua denied that the new, more powerful god was new. His assertions baffled and outraged the colonial observers.

Navosavakadua in going about the country used to tell any one he met to leave their work and follow him, saying that immortality was better than any earthly

3. Waterhouse wrote that initially Fijians more generally made the equation Degei = True God, Jehovah = True God, therefore Degei = Jehovah. But the eastern coastal version of "Degei," and chiefly more generally, stresses the foreign, stranger aspect of gods and their earthly instantiations, chiefs. Foreign god and foreign (colonial) rule thus articulated with the "foreign" nature of coastal high chiefs.

possession and that should be the reward of obedience to him. In this he was avowedly imitating the conduct of Christ. Navosavakadua also professes to heal the sick and in payment receives large presents. . . .

They have named the various spots around the Nakauvadra respectively Roma (Rome), Ijipta (Egypt), Kolossa (Colossians), &c. (Joske CO 83/43)

In British and coastal Fijian eyes, Navosavakadua, if not mad, was the charlatan oracle-priest, profanely trying to conflate his own (false) gods with the true Jehovah and Jesus to maintain an increasingly challenged position. Christian missionaries argued that their god was the one, true, and only god (although they often did not deny the power of other gods, ancestor gods now labeled "devils," to act on people in the world). Believing that truth and good order emanated from centralized government under (one) God and the Queen the British and coastal chiefs were bound to construct Navosavakadua's project as claims by an illegitimate charlatan priest, following false gods. But Navosavakadua's "acceptance" of Jehovah's truth was not expected by the missionaries. For them, to accept Jehovah was to reject other gods. Instead, Navosavakadua identified Christian gods as gods of the land, and Christian sacred spots as sites in the Kauvadra mountain range (tenets which continue to shape the sociocosmology of the Vatukaloko to the present). This was a creative reworking of the "land" perspective on the relation of gods, people, and power. Among the Vatukaloko folk, two ideas were confirmed, and even effloresced in the face of the successes of Bauans and white men: first, that there were and are true sources of *mana* (divine power) in the world, and second, that Kauvadra deities and their priests were that authentic source. At the same time, coastal chiefs and their followers were differently persuaded, finding the *mana* of the foreign god to be foreign, and as such, impressive, superior, unprecedented, and useful.

Wai ni Tuka: *The Power of Life*

Well beyond victory in war, what kind of power over life and death did Navosavakadua seek? And why was *wai ni tuka* (water of immortality) the physical form in which Navosavakadua transmitted his power to his people? Of course the idea of a powerful sacred fluid was not new in Fiji. Drinking *yaqona* or kava (the better known Polynesian term), known as the "water of the land," was and still is a central Fijian ritual. By drinking *yaqona* Fijian priests became one with the ancestor gods. In installation, it is the cup of *yaqona* given by the

people of the land that poisons the chief to be, but also brings him back to life, now a living representative of the gods of the land. Once restricted to priests and chiefs, *yaqona* now is drunk by chiefs and commoner Fijians at any and every occasion in which power or sociality are at issue. But water as a vehicle of life was also a Christian form, for baptism. To begin to understand these aspects of Navosavakadua's practice we must consider divine power, in the forms of fertility and invulnerability among nineteenth-century Fijians, in the form of salvation as taught by the missionaries, and in the form of control and discipline exerted by the colonial polity.

In 1885 Joske recorded that "all who believe in [Navosavakadua's] doctrine . . . are to have life eternal, and their ancestors are to rise from their graves" (Co 83/43). In 1891 reporting that "Tuka" had been checked in Nalawa, he wrote, "The movement had not gone beyond the presentation of propitiatory *yaqona* [kava] and feasts to the priests of the 'Tuka,' in return for which the priest had distributed the 'wai ni tuka' or 'water of everlasting life' and had tried to raise the dead." The living received this immortality by drinking the "*wai ni tuka*," or through visits from Navosavakadua's cadre of "warriors" who would tread through a village, entering each house and thus investing the community with Tuka. Further, the dead were resurrected in rituals in which *bete* (priests) stepped on their graves.⁴

In nineteenth-century Fiji "fertility" (or "life") and "invulnerability" were important aspects of divine power, but "immortality" and "resurrection" did not figure prominently in ritual-political concerns. In the great coastal kingdoms, it was especially chiefs, embodying the gods, who controlled the vitality and fertility of the kingdom, people, and nature (Hocart 1970:60). Their projects were carried out in conjunction with oracle-priests and sacrificers (see Quain 1948:229-32) who communicated with the ancestor gods to convey the will of the gods in the affairs of the kingdom, to diagnose the divine causes of defeat, sickness, or drought, and to supplicate the gods through sacrifice.

4. In 1882 a Fijian official at Ba informed the Governor that some people in Tavua had revived *kalou rere* rites, "as they had done lately under Navosavakadua" and had sent a man to stamp upon graves that the dead might rise again. They were led by an oracle-priest who claimed that he could "cure disease, give life to the dead and that the god would soon come and bring the dead friends from the grave again who had died under the maranitu [colonial government]." The people involved also "plotted" against their Buli (Fijian district official), accusing him of adultery (Stanmore papers vol. 41, 1881-1983, "The Tavua Affair"). The Stanmore Papers are held at the British Museum. Microfilm copies are held at the Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

Hocart argues that the entire Fijian ritual system grew out of the urge toward life. In his interpretation the synthetic divine king is the source of all life, of social life (the establishment and flourishing of polity), and of the life, health, and fertility of the people and the land. Chiefs, and sometimes priests too, through their association with the gods, had such excessive fertile power that people were careful not to touch them or to eat their leftover food, lest they swell up or become pregnant. The death of a chief called the sociocosmological system into question, until it could be reconstituted through the installation of a new chief.

It was this notion of divinity as fertility that inspired the challenge of a great Fijian chief (Tanoa of Bau) to a missionary "When you have grown *dalo* (taro) on yon bare rock, then will I become a Christian" (Waterhouse 1868:77). In Navosavakadua's articulation of the Twins with Jehovah and Jesus, these (now autochthonous) Kavadra gods gave him great power over the fertility of the land. According to colonial officials and also his descendants, he grew banana plants on salt sand, and caused them to grow to maturity in a day. He established pots of food that were eternally full. After his followers had eaten fish or pig, he reconstituted the live animals from their bones. These miracles are nowadays likened to Christ's miracles of the loaves and fishes.

As I have described earlier, in nineteenth-century Fiji power over death, invulnerability, and power in war (rather than "immortality") were also granted by Fijian gods through their priests and oracles. Land people controlled the ability to make chiefs, and to make people invulnerable, by invoking the gods of the land, using kava (*yagona*) as their medium to do so. Among the inland hill people, priests, as mediums to the gods, invoked the gods, offered them sacrifices, and as mediums or conduits, were identified with their warlike as well as their fertile power. Nineteenth-century officiants of *luve ni wai* or *kalou rere* or *kalou vatu* rites made young men into invulnerable warriors. The gods entered them to make them invulnerable like stones, so that they would not become dead bodies to be sacrificed to the gods of enemies. The earliest description I have of *wai ni tuku*, "elixir of life," the story told by the missionary Fison quoted in chapter 2 of the Rakiraki priest who expected to be invulnerable even if clubbed, makes it clear that he was transacting Fijian invulnerability, rather than salvation and immortality in a Christian sense. Navosavakadua himself was celebrated for his invulnerability. In the 1880s he was known to have survived British attempts to kill him in Lau (Joske CO 83/43). Later, after his second deportation, the tales of the British efforts to drown, shoot, starve, and hang him and tales of his invulnerability to their attempts

have flourished among followers and descendants from the 1890s (see, e.g., Brewster 1922:245, Sutherland 1910) into the present.

Thus in nineteenth-century Fiji, it was fertility and warrior invulnerability that were granted by the gods, and immortality and resurrection were of little concern. Among Fijians, the boundary between life and death was reckoned according to the passing of the spirit (*yalo*). (Sometimes the horrified missionaries observed the burial of sick but still "living" people.) Spirits lingered by their grave sites for about four days, and then set out on a journey to an underworld. Ancestral deities were still in communication with their descendants, and enabled their social activities. *Bete* were the channel to the ancestral gods. Communication with the gods, by *bete*, in concert with the projects of chiefs, was fundamental to the war and sacrifice system, and equally fundamental to the prosperity of the land.

But "immortality" and "salvation" were concerns of the British missionaries in Fiji. It was no accident that Fison mistook "invulnerability" for "immortality." Beginning in the 1830s, the missionaries introduced to Fijians the idea of eternal life and offered Fijian converts eternal life through Christ's grace, and the resurrection of the dead. They also introduced the figure of Christ who made possible these miraculous blessings. Eventually the missionary concern for the salvation of the soul became a concern for Christian Fijians. For example, the missionary Waterhouse reported that Lydia Vatoa, newly converted wife of the chief of Viwa, "besought her kinsman Cakobau to join the *lotu* which he sought to destroy. She told him how happy the religion of Jesus made her and how it fortified her against all fear of death" (1868:128).

What links the missionary project and the colonial project, I think, is the concern for control over truth and hierarchy. Both insisted on one true god and one true sovereign. For the missionaries truth was moral salvation, for the colonials it was proper civility and obedience to administrative codes. Both insisted on a centralized, top-down organization, with power over life and death flowing from the top. Both found the hinterland disorderly, the possibility of complementarity of ritual roles inconceivable. In the course of his deportation in the Lau islands, among a Fijian community that had been Christian for decades, did Navosavakadua study the Bible and also gain a sense of how one Fijian-Christian polity was organized? Is this where he came to be concerned with truth in a sense rather different than the Fijian idea of *mana* (effectiveness), and to argue that the missionaries were "deceiving" Fijians? And might it have been in the experience of deportation itself that he came to see the link between power over bodies and power over morality that animated the British notion of body politic?

How then are we to interpret Navosavakadua's ritual-political practice? On the one hand, based on his miracles of fertility we might consider that he created a new chiefly polity. Stressing his rites of invulnerability, we might consider that he simply mobilized the land for war. Instead, I think that he created a novel polity, not a chiefly polity but a land-centric polity. In this land-centric polity just as Christian gods were identified with land gods, Christian themes of resurrection and immortality were made continuous with both chiefly fertility and land warlike invulnerability. It was a centralized hierarchy, with a one-way flow of power, on the model of the Christian or colonial top-down forms, but this polity located its central source of power in the hinterlands, the interior country of the Kavadra, which had become the biblical landscape as well.⁵

In the form of "*wai ni tuka*," I think that Navosavakadua combined land control over invulnerability with chiefly constituting fertility and with colonial-Christian control over salvation and morality. On the one hand, the missionaries infiltrated bodies with water in baptism, used other liquids in communion, and offered liquid medicines as well. And, on the other hand, in Fijian usage, kava and other forms of water of the land had their own effectiveness. In the myth of Degei, the water flowing from the Kavadra is simultaneously fertile and dangerous. Degei himself controlled the fertility of the land through his control over rainfall, acknowledged by people throughout the islands. His control of water had also enabled his triumph in the war of the Kavadra. To defeat the rebellious Twins he caused a giant waterspout to flood the land, to wash them down from the Kavadra. This warlike use of water shaped the geography of the southeastern side of Viti Levu. Understanding Degei's control over water, both warlike and fertile, illuminates the link between the miraculous water of life (*wai ni tuka*) and Navosavakadua's mobilization against "foreign chiefs." In the "*kalourere* business" in the late 1870s, Wilkinson tells us young men struck rocks with spears and water sprang forth. In the 1880s Navosavakadua and other *betes*, called "fountains of life" (*va ni bula*),⁶ dispensed "*wai ni tuka*" water (explicitly spring water; see Wilkinson 78/550 and Macnaught 1982). It was power in manifest form, as fertile life, warrior invulnerability, and now also immortality, from the Kavadra gods, controlled to an extraordinary degree by Navosavakadua and his followers.

His miracles reflect a power or fertility not dependent on the "sea" or

5. Nowadays too some of Navosavakadua's descendants can point out biblical sites on the Kavadra landscape.

6. Some accounts say "source of life" (*va ni bula*); both are in CO 83/43).

"stranger chief" aspect of the chiefly synthesis. In fact, they suggested the power of people over chiefs and foreigners. In his system the land controlled the sea (as Moses he had possession of the staff that parted the Red Sea); and even the fertilizing power of the "sea" was derived from the land itself, water spouting from the unmoving rocks of the Kavadra. His one-way, hierarchical polity did not depend on a synthetic relationship of land and sea, because, having constructed Christian gods as Fijian, Navosavakadua could draw his power completely from the land side, from autochthonous gods.

Finally, while his prophecies spoke of the future, it has always seemed to me that Navosavakadua was less concerned with fertility and birth than with communication with ancestors and resurrection.⁷ Adapting the model of Christ's power of resurrection and enlarging upon invulnerability to proclaim it "life without end," the raising of the dead was integral to his mobilization. I think that this vision of the future as return to the past may have emerged because Navosavakadua, like the Vatukaloko more generally, was born and raised in the originating center of all life in the world. He located biblical sites in the Kavadra range and equated biblical gods with Kavadra gods, thus locating them in a spatial and cosmological original past. In seeking to resurrect the ancestors and make his people immortal he sought to reinstate an earlier order, which he now constructed as a polity in which the autochthonous people of the land would triumph over newer chiefs. His desire to return to an earlier order was compelling and innovative, and the past it sought existed only in an imagination that, however persuasive in Fijian terms, reflected on colonial experience.

Navosavakadua's Ritual Polity

Over a decade, Navosavakadua's new polity came into being, and began to be routinized. Fijian sacrifice and colonial criminalization shaped its institution.

The flow of newly constituted "land" power passed from the Kavadra gods through Navosavakadua by means of *wai ni tuka* and ritual to the peoples now called the Twelve Tribes. From various reaches of the old Vatukaloko polity and along networks of alliance, messengers came to Navosavakadua at Vale Lebo or Drauniivi offering *tabua* (whales' teeth) asking for *wai ni tuka* ritual authorization and entrance thereby into this new ritual polity. In response to

7. For example, as I will discuss later in this chapter, he does not seem to have intended to found his own dynastic lineage: apparently the women who attended him were promised eternal virginity.

the requests for “*tuka*,” Navosavakadua sent out groups of men, dressed in *masi* (bark cloth) and painted. The purpose of such visits “was to *butuka*’ (tread) them, that is, to enter into a compact,” wrote Mr. Carew. Joske elaborated:

When a community desired the promised blessings they sent a messenger to beg the *tuka* or gift of immortality. If the request was granted a body of so-called soldiers was sent, who by treading the ground of the place and performing certain ceremonies conferred the boon.

Thus it was at Udu; by treading the ground there and filing through every house in the village, they gave immortality to the inhabitants and the promise of the resurrection of their ancestors.

The latter is greatly desired by all the old Natives, as it is by it they hope to regain what they consider their ancient power and prestige. (CO 83/43)

Much was made in the colonial record of the presentation of goods to Navosa himself. Roko Tui Ra told Mr. Cocks, angrily, that “at a *solevu* (feast) held recently at Valelebo in the Raviravi district where the Bure Kalou [temple] had been erected, Navosavakadua presented 400 whales teeth. . . . Sums of money were also given, as much as 10 s. having been paid by one individual to Navosavakadua or one of his followers. . . . Buli Saivou . . . gave four whales teeth and some mats as payment for ‘Tuka’” (CO 83/43). “Payment” in the European sense is unlikely, reflecting European categories rather than Fijian. Rather, it was sacrifice: pigs, whales’ teeth, bark cloth, kava, money—and women of the land—were offered to Navosavakadua (and in 1891 to other priests). In return, he provided *wai ni tuka*, miracles, and immortality.⁸ Thus sacrifice to Navosavakadua created the ritual and political relations of the new polity hierarchy. Following Navosavakadua’s example at Vale Lebo each new group within the system built or rebuilt a *bure kalou* (temple) to reinstate the gods.⁹ Local priests (Navosavakadua’s “lieutenants”) were renewed in inspiration and tended these temples to receive the messages of the gods, sitting behind curtains or beneath string baskets through which the gods descended.

But in so doing they acted in opposition to the rest of Fiji, where Wesleyan churches were supplanting the temples. And, from 1878 on, they may have

8. Although in the 1878 accounts it is suggested that *tabua* (whales’ teeth) were sent out by the Rakiraki chiefs, and perhaps from Drauniivi as well to enlist the aid of allies, in the 1886 accounts we see *tabua* going to Drauniivi.

9. Not unlike the earlier Fijian practice of refurbishing a much neglected temple and resurrecting a neglected god during mobilization for war (see Williams 1858 [1982]:223).

acted in (to some degree) self-conscious opposition to the colonial polity. Informers were everywhere. They were not simply individuals like the man who freely told Wilkinson of Navosavakadua’s powers in 1878, but Christian teachers, village headmen, district heads, “Native” policemen who, to a greater or lesser degree, conceived these practices dangerous and disaffected. In nineteenth-century Fiji, plans for warfare were covert, but perhaps the colonial scrutiny, searching for *Tuka*, had a different effect on Navosa and his people. Did it, like deportation, create a sense of objectification, of novelty in practice, among the people of the Twelve Tribes themselves?¹⁰ Might they have felt themselves to have the power to baffle or terrify coastal Fijians, missionaries, and colonial officers? Was incitement of Christian and colonial anxieties and imagination an intention, or merely an unintended consequence of Navosavakadua’s practice?

Until 1886 Navosavakadua himself was the focal leader of this new ritual polity. Like the Navosavakadua of the colonial system for establishing truth (the Chief Justice) he sat at the apex of a system of administration and morality. Like chiefs of synthetic ritual polities, he was the central focus of sacrifice and redistribution. The “people” presented him with their virgin daughters to live with him and to be his attendants, like the retinue of a coastal chief. These women chewed and prepared the water of the land, the *yagona* that kept Navosavakadua in a perpetual state of communication with the deities. But unlike the eastern polities, Navosavakadua’s relations with these women of the land would not necessarily result in a line of chiefs. Instead the women were promised that they would remain virgins perpetually (CO 83/43). Unlike a synthetic coastal chief, Navosavakadua did not seek to expand the polity through conquest, nor to create new chiefly lines through his own descendants. Unlike the colonial polity or the old Fijian coastal polities, it was Navosavakadua’s intention that “people of the land” should rule over chiefs. The fertility of his project was inverted and genealogically retrospective, focusing on the preservation of the present and the return of the ancestors.

Sacrifice in the Land-Centric Polity

The principles of sacrifice that underlay Navosavakadua’s ritual system similarly invert those of the stranger chief-centered polity. It is said that Navosava-

10. I do not mean to imply that before the colonial encounter Fijians had never been self-conscious concerning their own practices. After all, I have discussed the indigenous opposition of

kadua's *tanoa* (kava bowl) had two *sau* (the cord with shells attached which is extended toward the ruling chief during a chiefly kava ritual).¹¹ The typical *tanoa* has only one such cord, which extends toward the chief. But according to the story, in Navosavakadua's kava ritual one *sau* was extended toward Navosavakadua and the other was extended to the people who served him. Thus *veiqaravi* (respect, sacrifice, or worship between chiefs and people) was atypically equal between the two sides. This unusual *tanoa* suggests that Navosavakadua viewed his relationship with his people as radically different from that between a "chief" and "people." It would have been even more radically different from the colonial and Methodist hierarchies, where authority, truth, and effectiveness were held to flow only from the top down. Rather, it suggests a land-centered system of relations, in which power passed between gods and people through the oracle-priest.

Even more strikingly, the alleged symbolism of the white pig aside (see Carew's suggestion that it stood for the sacrifice of Europeans in CO 83/43), there was apparently no human sacrifice among the Vatukaloko in the decade before Navosavakadua was deported. Colonial officers, keen to point out the dangers of Tuka, remarked on the "consecration" of the various temples, but they warned only of the future likelihood of cannibalism: none claimed that bodies were buried for the posts of god houses, or that any other form of human sacrifice was involved. Navosavakadua's polity was without *kai wai* (chief's fishermen), the essential third term, representing the chief's sea side, who would provide bodies for the oven. Indeed, Navosavakadua's most important miracle was a complete inversion of cannibal sacrifice. Under his direction, a man was baked in an earth oven along with taro and a pig. But the man emerged uncooked, and was not consumed. Sutherland wrote in 1910: "A man whose name was Atunaisa was baked alive with some food in an oven. All who witnessed it were horror stricken, but not so with Navosavakadua! When the usual time had been allowed for the food to cook, the oven was uncovered and everyone crowded around to see if Atunaisa were dead, but there lay Atunaisa, laughing. All the food with which he had been baked was properly cooked." In 1984 Osea Ravai, a Vatukaloko man of Wakalou *mataqali* (ritual kin group), wrote and published a version of the story:

hill and coastal people and a host of culturally constructed attendant differences; and surely as well some Fijians constructed certain kinds of "Fijian" identity in relation to Tongans, and so forth. Here I simply want to suggest that this was an occasion in which such reflexivity might have taken place.

11. This story was told to me in 1985 by a man of Nakubuti *mataqali*.

What follows here is the second miracle (*cakamana*) Navosavakadua (or Mosese Dukumoi) performed. One day he called together the people of his *yavusa* [ritual-kin group or polity, but he is writing in a biblical mode and would probably chose "tribe"], and told them that they should give one of their *yavusa* to be baked and that they would know the strength of the god he was worshipping and not Degei, Dakuwaqa or Waicalanavanua but Jehovah only.

They then agreed, they would give a man for Navosavakadua to bake, and they gave a man whose name was Atunaisa for baking. . . .

The people then started the earth oven. When the stones in the earth oven were heated well, they took Atunaisa, the man, and they laid him there in the middle of the oven and buried him. The oven was covered at the time the sun was standing right above (noon) and when it was afternoon Navosavakadua ordered that the oven be opened. . . .

When the oven was about to be opened Navosavakadua told them that when the oven was opened they should not open the leaf covering, but should come back to him and call him that he might decide what to do.

Navosavakadua was then called and he went straight to the oven before they opened the leaves and held one more of his prayers.

When the prayer was finished then Navosavakadua called Atunaisa three times. After calling three times the voice of Atunaisa was then heard. Navosavakadua then told him to stand and then to come to him.

Navosa then blessed him and the people of the *yavusa* when they saw this thing that was done by Navosa they touched his hand and didn't doubt.

You, the gentlemen and ladies who read *Nai Lalakai* [the Fijian-language newspaper in which the story was published] this man Atunaisa, we two met and I knew him because he is a member of my *mataqali* (kin group). He died in the year 1944 in the time I went to the war in the Solomon Islands. (*Nai Lalakai*, my translation)

Navosavakadua's power over bodies seems to have rejected Fijian cannibal sacrifice, but it did not transform body disciplines in the way that colonial Christians did. It did not replace power over life (fertility, invulnerability, immortality) and power over death (cannibal sacrifice, conquest, and redistribution of feast and warfare goods) with the body disciplines (from hand-cuffs, hair-cutting, and clothing to road-building, imprisonment, and deportation) that the colonial system employed. Instead, I think, Navosavakadua retained the power of potential cannibal sacrifice, but subsumed it, by offering salvation to the potential victim, just as he retained the warrior power of the Twin Gods, but remade them as Jehovah and Jesus.

Inverting succession, *veiqaravi* (chiefly ritual), and sacrifice, in Navosava-

kadua's polity life flowed from the land gods to the land people, mediated by a priest rather than a chief. His polity did not center on a synthetic chiefly figure combining land and sea, but rather on a land interpreter of the gods, already identified with the land gods. In installation a chief drinks *yagona*, the water of the land, and is ritually "killed" by the installing people and is reborn as a god. Navosavakadua was instead constantly "*mateni*" ("dead" from kava). Through his hereditary nature, and his ritual use of kava he was already of the substance of the gods of the land.¹² The new polity was far less an alternative chiefly polity than it was a transformed version of the power of *bete* and the land side. Like the gods of the Kāvadra, Navosavakadua proposed not simply to reconstitute, but to overturn the world.¹³

Navosavakadua mobilized a polity of reversal, in which the people of the land were to rule the chiefs, driving out all foreigners. This new land-centrality did not simply continue Vatukaloko land-centrism, but also took its form from the new colonial polity as local syntheses and balanced relations between "land people" and "chiefs" were negated by the British chiefly centrism. Facing the new hierarchically absolutist colonial polity Navosavakadua created an opposite to their annihilating sea power. If the colonial polity was to be top down and foreign, his was to be centered on the hinterland and passed-over sources of power, and equally uncompromising.

The Consequences of Intervention

The Twelve Tribes polity differed from the old Vatukaloko polity, as well as from the evolving chief-centered, top-down colonial forms of the big coastal kingdoms. Formed initially, as early as 1878, as a mobilization for battle instigated by the Rakiraki chiefs, Navosavakadua's polity, developing out of the relatively land-oriented Vatukaloko polity, was more radically land-centric. Whether in a noncolonial context it could have emerged as a novel polity or maintained its structure beyond the lifetime of Navosavakadua's leadership I do not know. Nor can we know whether Navosavakadua's ritual system could have mobilized sustained warfare against the colonial government. Perhaps,

12. As Valeri (1985) says of the Hawaiian *kaula*: "[he] really has no need to sacrifice; having a direct relation with the god he needs no mediating term."

13. A man told Mr. Joske: "Navosavakadua, otherwise Degei, is to overturn the world (*vukica na vanua*)."

instead, it would have become protest in ritual form, like the delimited ritualized assertion of authority of the superseded mother's brother's (land) line at the installation of the chief. Perhaps, on the other hand, had warfare begun, human sacrifice would have followed. Perhaps a line of leaders would have followed Navosavakadua, or perhaps another new form of leadership and power would have developed. And in the absence of active British questing after Navosavakadua we would certainly have gained a better sense of how directly Navosavakadua would have sought out and overtly challenged the colonizers.

But Navosavakadua's developing new ritual system was formed in engagement with British projects and was constantly interrupted by British top-down punitive action: the deportation of Navosavakadua to Lau in 1878, his final deportation to Rotuma in 1886, the deportation of twelve *bete* and the entire village of Drauniivi in 1891. The British outlawed Tuka and sought its source in order to excise it. By 1891 they had determined that the source was not simply one charlatan leader, Navosavakadua, but rather, his kin group, the people of Drauniivi and associated settlements, and a group of "charlatan" priests and "ringleaders." What happened to Navosavakadua's ritual polity?

Certainly from his deportation in 1886 to the deportation of the Vatukaloko people in 1891 the ritual polity continued to center on Navosavakadua. His return replaced the advent of the Twins in ritual expectation, says Joske. The organization of prophecy, distribution of *wai ni tuka*, and admission to the ritual polity were still directed from Drauniivi and Vale Lebo. Invocations at *yagona* presentations were directed to the Kāvadra range, and to Navosavakadua's places at Drauniivi and Vale Lebo. Navosavakadua had designated no one successor, but Joske describes a group of priests who carried on the ritual practices,¹⁴ who moved back and forth from Drauniivi on the coast to the ritual center inland at Vale Lebo, and who traveled to stay in the newly built *bure kalou* (god houses) that were being built inland at Nadrau, Nasoqo, and Bobuco. Joske was told that the priests were organized in two divisions, the "*Lawa ni mate*" (which he translates as destroying angels) and the "*Lawa ni bula*" (angels of life). Some were to tend to the interior people, while others were to be active on the Ra side. When Fijian policemen arrested a man called Dresia in Rewasau (in Bobuco) they found a written list of twenty-two place names, with a title at the bottom of the page reading "*Na i wiliwili ni koro e 21*"

14. See 91/2344 (Report of Proceedings for the Suppression of Tuka in Colo East by Joske) for a comprehensive listing of "*bete*" and "ringleaders." See also 91/1852, and CO 83/46.

("A list of the twenty-one villages"). The list, beginning with the name Vatulaloko, included villages from the coast all the way to the interior district of Bobuco.

Even following Navosavakadua's deportation, Fijians still sought to join the new ritual polity. The Nasoqo people, who were the interior border (*bati*) of the Vatulaloko polity, who had been living at Drauniivi from the early 1870s until Carew resettled them inland, became a path to other groups, including the Bobuco people farther inland. As the Nasoqo people reestablished themselves, Raicula their priest oversaw the building of a temple for Tuka ritual. Through Raicula, requests for Tuka were transmitted back to Drauniivi.

In the interior district of Bobuco, a priest named Senileba had been holding conversations with Navosavakadua, and had received letters from him, carried by birds (91/2344). In 1890 the government-appointed Buli (district official) at Bobuco and his brother sent whales' teeth to Raicula, the principal priest at Nasoqo, who took them to Drauniivi. Back from Drauniivi came the word that "Buli Bobuco's services would be acceptable to the Gods" and that he should build a temple at his town Navuniwaiwivula. The temple was presided over by a local priest, Peni Nacolauli. The Buli's brother solicited kin and old allies to help in the building. The *bure* was built and "consecrated" when the Vakatawa (Fijian minister) was away.

Convinced of a spreading phenomenon, the colonial government took action by striking at its core. Joske had begun his reports in 1891 with assurances from local Wesleyans that what appeared to be Tuka was actually proper Fijian ceremonial due to leaders of *matagali*. But by the end of his investigations, he and Carew and Thurston saw a well-orchestrated "revival of Tuka." They determined that Tuka still had a central source, based in Navosavakadua's old village, among his kin, and among the priests who had worked with him. They decided to deport the people of Drauniivi, Vale Lebo, and Vatunisala villages and twelve other "ringleaders" to the southern island of Kadavu.

Two Trajectories of Tuka

Before following the ensuing history of the Vatulaloko folk, in exile and return, I would like to consider what became of Navosavakadua's ritual polity, here noting two trajectories to Tuka. In coming chapters we will look at the history of the Vatulaloko folk deported to Kadavu to chart a history of a continuing but unstable land-centric polity, in which people of the land side in many senses prevented their chief, the Tui Vatu, from returning to the

fore, and in which, throughout colonial vicissitudes, Navosavakadua's land-weighted construction of the relationship of the Christian god and the gods of land continues to be most salient. In this trajectory, Tuka is denied, and Navosavakadua is constructed as a Fijian-Christian martyr. But before we continue this history I would like to note briefly another trajectory of "Tuka" in the Ra and hill areas, the colonial districts of Ra and Colo North, East, and West, which seems to have involved local chiefly-led polity struggles rather than land-centric inversions of the ritual political system.

Despite the colonial hope that the deportations of Navosavakadua, and then the priests and the people of Drauniivi by 1891, would root out Tuka, the local dynamics of Navosavakadua's ritual-political system had become more varied in the years after he was deported. First of all, although Joske was told that Tuka was run from Drauniivi by the two divisions of priests with their delimited domains of influence, in the 1890s various local chiefs, several of whom held colonially designated offices, themselves had begun to make claims to leadership through Tuka. Such chiefs included the previously mentioned Buli Bobuco (government-appointed official of Bobuco district) and his brother, and Navulalevu of Lamisa, who was assistant Buli of the Tokaimalo district. According to Joske, in 1890 Navulalevu came to Nasoqo

attended by five women called "Leba," the usual cortege of a "Tuka" leader. . . . Navulalevu upon his arrival took up his abode at the Tuka bure with the priest Raicula. Raicula assembled the Nasoqo people and said "This is a very great chief of the Tuka who had come over he is senior even to Navosavakadua and Qaluma. . . . You must bring food for him, those who do not will assuredly die." Then yaqona was nightly made by the Leba women. . . . When the yaqona was strained and ready and the customary libation to the gods poured out, the priest Raicula offered up the following dedicatory prayer:

...
This [wrote Joske] I venture to translate as ——

An offering of all we chiefs who are
assembled here. Let the offering proceed
downward/onward. Until it reach
Vale ni Lebo and its house at Draunivi
It is now the offering of the
root of it, who is now with us, he of
Lamisa. A prayer for those who
hold Government Appointments
that they may be punished at

the day of Judgement whether they
 be magistrates or bulis may they
 be turned into pillars of salt. I
 finish this that there may be no rain [?]
 Mana dina — e — dina

(Joske in 91/2344)

In contrast to Navosavakadua's priestly-led system, I think that in Nasoqo and Bobuco in 1891, and in Qaliyalatina in 1914, Tuka became the vehicle for the competing chiefly claims of local leaders, in response to local specifics of indirect rule. Just as in 1878 the Rakiraki chiefs had consulted Navosavakadua, here Tuka seems to have become a means in competition by local chiefs.

In both Nasoqo and Bobuco, local chiefs had quarrels with British-appointed chiefs. Navulalevu "was not a Tuka practitioner," he protested at his trial, but rather he had been prosecuted because "Roko Tui Ra had a grudge against him about some fish" (91/2344). Similarly in Bobuco in 1891, the Buli and his brother were in conflict with Native Stipendiary Magistrate Ro Qereqeretabua. Qereqeretabua's people were historical enemies of the Bobuco people. Even Resident Commissioner Carew remarked on the arbitrariness and harshness of his sentences. The government-appointed Buli of Bobuco and his brother sought to defy him. They proclaimed in his open court that "only the Buli and [his brother] commanded in Bobuco, and that the Government had nothing to do with it" (91/1852). Neither Navulalevu nor Buli Bobuco were priests. They made offerings through locally inspired priests both to the source of power at Drauniivi, and to the Kāvadra gods.

In Qaliyalatina in 1914, Buli Qaliyalatina himself (Joseva Bebe Tube, who had been a clerk to Joske) was identified by officials as a member of the Bai Tabua, a group of men who had continued to pray to Navosavakadua and the Twins, through their priest Osea. Osea had sent ten whales' teeth to Drauniivi in 1892, shortly before the Vatukaloko people were deported. In this case Osea the priest seems to have also intended to assume the rule of the people. Deported by the government, the people converted en masse to Catholicism.

The contrast between Navosavakadua's polity and these other examples is one between a transformation of the synthetic Fijian polity form and a simple variation on it. Navosavakadua's ritual system was an assertion of land priority at so fundamental a level as to invert the chiefly polity totally, by suggesting that the people would rule the chiefs and that the world would be overturned. In contrast, the events in Rakiraki in 1878, and in Nasoqo and Bobuco in

1891, were more simply assertions of local autonomy or enmities, on behalf of competing chiefs.

It is possible that if I had done fieldwork and heard narratives of the past in Nasoqo, Bobuco, or Qaliyalatina I would have discovered that what appear to have been chiefly projects were, as in the Vatukaloko case, a far more complicated matter. But based on the colonial descriptions, it seems to me that in the Rakiraki, Nasoqo, and Bobuco mobilizations, chiefs — as local ruling chiefs — sought relationships with Navosavakadua and the Kāvadra deities, through "Tuka" priests. The priests who were Navosavakadua's heirs could not, or did not, maintain Navosavakadua's dual role as leader and medium. They did not sustain or extend the land-centric ritual system, in Ra and Colo as a whole. Among the Vatukaloko people themselves, as we shall see, the power of the installing group, and the *mana* (power) of Navosavakadua would continue to rival that of the Tui Vatu, particularly through a reinterpretation of Navosavakadua as Christian. I think that there is a real difference between the sort of complete transformation effected, if only briefly by Navosavakadua, and the local, chiefly-led ritual-political struggles which did not fundamentally challenge the prevailing orthodoxy of the chiefly-led polity. In these differences, I think we also see the beginnings of a real plurality of articulations of colonial and Fijian systems, by means of different narratives of Navosa, ranging from the government's demonization, to a local chiefly version in the less controlled districts of the north and interior, to the Vatukaloko versions.

Reconsidering Navosavakadua and "Tuka": Articulating Plural Systems

In these last three chapters I have been reconsidering Navosavakadua and "Tuka." We can read Tuka as a movement of the "land" within the flow of indigenous and contact historical trajectories in Fiji, in the face of a colonial project which never really knew who "land people" were but formed their own constructions and codifications of Navosavakadua and his practice. While it would be possible to write a narrative that stresses only indigenous continuity or a narrative that gives most weight to colonial power, in this chapter it is Navosavakadua's own creativity that has interested me most. And I think that his creativity reflects one of the most interesting kinds of agency possible in colonial societies. Navosavakadua looked at multiple systems of power and created a new articulation. By stressing creativity, I do not mean to

suggest that I read Tuka as a random formulation, or that I think that this colonial society was a fluid chaos. Instead, I think that Navosavakadua's project was the product of structures (the Fijian and colonial systems in a real historical conjuncture). But it is not reducible to, or completely dependent on, any of these structures. I am convinced that creativity is possible in "indigenous" contexts, but I also think that colonial conjunctures create spaces where new possibilities are thrown open. These are rarely happy possibilities, as colonized people face colonial power. But in spaces and arenas such as hinterland Fiji, new kinds of history were and are made by the colonized. And creative making of history did not end with Navosavakadua for the Vatukaloko, any more than Navosavakadua's own significance was fixed by his own acts or intentions. We turn now to the aftermath and consequences of Navosavakadua's career, for the Vatukaloko in particular, and also for others in Fiji.

ROUTINIZING ARTICULATING
SYSTEMS: JEHOVAH AND THE PEOPLE
OF THE LAND, 1891-1940



This chapter and the next two are about the consequences for the Vatukaloko and others of Navosavakadua's project and the colonial suppression of his polity, and, more broadly, about ritual political power in twentieth-century colonial and post-colonial Fiji.

In this chapter in particular, we examine struggles to articulate and wield ritual political power early in this century in Fiji's emerging colonial society, these struggles viewed from the atypical yet revealing vantage point of the Vatukaloko experience. This is a story of competing articulations of gods, chiefs, and people of the land, and how such articulations were routinized. By routinized, I mean that some visions of Fiji's order were established and institutionalized, and became more or less enduring systems in which people led their lives. But these established systems were plural. No single complete colonial orthodoxy has ever emerged, though some are more dominant than others. The means of routinization are also part of our story; they included colonial institutions such as the Native Administration and the Native Lands Commissions and public colonial commissions claiming to authorize the truth. But other forms of routinization existed as well, including privately held manuscripts and ritual relations inscribed on local landscapes, both insisting on potent alternative visions of Fiji's order laid down by Jehovah and the gods of the land.

Within this period there were many resounding historical moments, critical in the history of Fiji, which go unaddressed. But from the Vatukaloko perspec-