PLACE-NAMES OF FIJI 26: More surprises from Qamea

Paul Geraghty

In the last newsletter, we started looking at the island of Qamea (34.5km sq), to the north-east of Taveuni and west of the much smaller Laucala.

Qamea was seen by at least two explorers before even its name was known: Abel Tasman in February 1643 and James Wilson in 1797. A study by Australian historian GC Henderson has identified the islands Tasman sighted, roughly in chronological order, as Nukubasaga, Nukupareti (sometimes spelt Nukubalate), Nukusimanu, Laucala, Taveuni, Yanuca, Rabe, Kioa, Vanualevu and Cikobia (see map). It was not until 1827 that the French explorer Dumont d’Urville both saw the island and recorded its name, as ‘Ongomea’ (misanalysing the article ‘o’ as part of the name).

We have noted that Qamea is remarkable for its flora and fauna, including the nutritious tree *Gnetum gnemon*, known as *sikau*, locally pronounced *siɂau*, the jungle fowl (*Gallus gallus*, locally *toa ni cōcō*), and two introductions: the Australian magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*, *mekepai*) and the American Iguana (*Iguana iguana*).

Summer is a time of great plenty in Qamea, and the seaworm *balolo* (*Eunice viridis*, the same as Samoan *palolo*) is looked forward to every year. The worms rise every November in their millions from the base of the reef to the surface of the sea opposite the village of Dreketi on the east coast of Qamea, and coastal locations on the nearby islands of Matagi and Laucala. They are scooped and either eaten raw or taken home to be cooked in various ways.

Shortly afterwards another treat is anticipated in the form of land crabs (*lairo*, *Cardisoma spp*) who migrate in their millions to the sea to release their eggs every November to December, an event comparable to the annual mass migration of red crabs on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. The month is known in Taveuni and Qamea as the *vulaiyāyā*. While these land crab migrations are common throughout Fiji and the tropical Pacific, Qamea is unusual in that the crabs (it is said) carry a snake in their claws and offer it to their ‘king’. This remarkable event was recorded by a Tongan resident of Vanuabalavu in the nineteenth century who mentioned it to Charles Richard Swayne, a high-raking colonial official, who passed it on to another colonial official, Adolph B Brewster, who published it in his 1937 book, ‘*King of the cannibal isles: a tale of early life and adventure in the Fiji Islands*. Here I paraphrase Haunga’s report (see illustration).

“I went on a light sailing canoe, with Takaiwai, a high chief of Taviuni, to see the annual presentation of the *lairo* (land crabs) at the Island of Nggamea. It was about 1870. We were at Ngeleni when Takaiwai told his people to make ready to go to the carrying of the hundred-fathom bales [of barkcloth, *katudrau*]. We crossed the strait in three *thamakau* (light outrigger canoes) and landed in the afternoon. Takaiwai told the men to plait baskets.

“It was a sandy beach stretching for several hundred fathoms. Takaiwai and I sat on a rock about ten feet high and about a fathom from high-water mark. On our right at a short distance, perhaps twenty fathoms, was a sandy point running out about ten fathoms seaward. At the point of it was a small rock about three feet high.

“The tide was coming in: about half tide. Just at sunset Takaiwai pointed to the grass on the edge of the sand. He spoke very low. I noticed some land crabs coming out on the beach on both sides of us. I could also see several snakes, perhaps twenty, common brown land snakes.

The snakes lay on the sand in front of the land crabs. The crabs were all making for the point of the sand; and each snake was seized by six or eight of them and carried slowly to the foot of the small rock.

“I saw a very large crab crawl from the rock and climb to its top. Takaiwai said, “That is their Chief.” Then I noticed that he made froth on the water, after which he crawled down and went under the rock again.

“Takaiwai then told me that the ceremony was over and that the crabs had made their offering of their hundred-fathom bales. He called to his people to catch crabs and put them in their baskets and they filled about thirty. He told them not to harm the snakes. They were all alive and had not resisted being carried by the crabs. Before leaving I went to the rock and saw that there was a big hole under it and much froth such as crabs make.”

Lairo tui!

paileve

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TIKINA OF LAUCALA (Part Of)** | | |
| 10. Vuanimaba | **Naitauba** | Kocoma - Qamea Island |
| **B. Vanua: Vuna Title “Sau”** | | |
| 11. Vuna | **Vuna** | Nakorovou Village |
| 12. Kanacea | **Kanacea Island** | Kanacea Village (Taveuni) |
| 13. Yacata | **Kakabale** | Yacata Island |
| **C. Vanua: Wainikeli Title, “Tuwei”** | | |
| 14. Wainikeli | **Wainikeli** | Naselesele Village |
| 15. Wainikeli | **Wainikeli** | Qeleni Village |
| 16. Korovatu | **Korovato** | Naiviivi Village (Qamea) |
| **D. Vanua of Bouma. Title, “Vunisa”** | | |
| 17. Vidawa | **Vidawa** | Korovou Village |
| 18. Lekutu | **Lekutu** | Vidawa (Bouma) |
| 19. Naisaqali | **Vurevure** | Waitabu Village |
| 20. Lavena | **Lavena** | Lavena Village |
| **E. Vanua of Laucala. Title, “Tui Laucala”** | | |
| 21. Nasovu | **Nauluvatu** | Dreketi, Diodio & Yanuca Island |
| 22. Qaraniyaku | **Nauluvatu** | Togo Village, Qamea |
| 23. Naqelelevu | **Naqelelevu** | Naqelevu Island |

Veitarogivanua tikina Laucala

y Vuanimaba yt Naitauba k Kocoma Tui Cakau oti valu ni Toga mai Wairiki

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| m | t |  |
| Levuka | Tuilevuka | Filipe Matavesi |
|  | Levukalailai | Tevita Vuniwaqa |
| Raviravi | Raviravi | Akavusi Vatudravu |
|  | Vatukalo | Inia Cosiga |
| Muanaira | Muanaira | Isoa Bativudi |
|  | Nadavui | Ameniasi Tailau |
|  | Nailusi | Alena Tutaki |
|  | Varakui | kawaboko |
|  | Makirikiri | Jone Waqa |
| Muanaicake | Muanaicake | Laisenia Duna |
|  | Lutuma | Ilikana Korolala |
|  | Qaraitoga | Solomone Volauvou |
| Wainikeli | Wainikeli | Kitione Baleaqali |
|  | Ciya | Laisani Latu |
|  | Wainikelilewena | kawaboko |
| Nasau | Tuinasau | Jone Gonedau |
|  | Silatale | Mesake Buka |
|  | Pualevu | Uwate Sauvou |
|  |  |  |

y Korovatu yt Korovatu, k Naiviivi

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| m | t |  |
| Vusaturaga | Vusaturaga | Rt Basilio Vatunitu |
|  | Raviravi | kawaboko |
|  | Vusabete | Rosa Mateyava |
|  | Vunivutu | kawaboko |
| Manute | Sau | Poasa Manabula |
|  | Manute | Luke Rawalai |

vanua Laucala, Tui Laucala

y Nasovu yt Nauluvatu k Dreketi, Diodio, Yanuca

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| m | t |  |
| Nasovu | Lomanikoro | Jese Maimanuku |
|  | Naqaravi | Irinale Natoa |
|  | Nautoqaqa | Eliesa Mataele |
| Wainivava | Wainivava | Atunaisa Tagiwavoki |
|  | Wainiyarova | Paulo Bulimacuata |
|  | Qaoru | Seru |
|  | Canawaqa | Peni Torau |
| Qilo | Napotu | Sekaia Suluka |
|  | Wairivia | Levania Pala |
|  | Vuninuku | kawaboko |
|  | Naigani | Sekaia Suluka |
| Cauleve | Cauleve | Jone Talewale |
|  | Cule | kawaboko |
| Dilikamou | Dilikamou | Josefa Ranamu |
|  | Narocake | kawaboko |
|  |  |  |

y Qaraniyaku yt Nauluvatu k Togo

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| m | t |  |
| Navutu | Navutu | Sakiusa Maqora |
|  | Matavura | Paula Lalakai |
|  | Vuninuku | Viliame Turaganiqali |
|  | Natete | Semi Niu |
| Nasau | Nasau | kawaboko |
|  | Lasekata | kawaboko |

y Naqelelevu yt Naqelelevu k Naqelelevu

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| m | t |  |
| Ra | Ra | Jopili Moceiwasa |
|  | Cake | Leone Rusaaqoli |
| Yatafu | Yatafu | Pelasio Seniloli |
|  | Pono | Sairusi Batiwaci |

Okata 69 Korovatu duadua koro kai Qamea

1957 6 koro le 717 mpe Nadilo Kocoma Dreketi Yanuca Nadiodio Olosega Togo Naiviivi Raviravi

lairo late 11-early 12, ya 2-5 siga

Dumont 27/34 I Ongomea – Qamea Wilkes 45 Kamia I, Hz well-wooded, subject to Somosomo,

Tasman’s Straits

Qamea WilsonH 204; Dav 150; Du 419,22;

LC81:29,A10,B70,C168

81C168 1865-6 sukuna ‘Lizard’ volitaki Tui Cakau 40 tuns oil at ₤20. Veimama sa rawa vula ono soli sukuna. Cagilb seg niu. 10/71 bose

81C168 24/1/1871 Tui Cakau volitaki veimama Qamea (Niubavu, Namata?) ₤450, yl 27 jeini ina rikoso, NNW Toga toba noca i Dreketi toba sauca. cau wili odra koro o Namata kei na iteitei. George Winter sega ni tiko kina, t wq o peterson

7/8/76 vqqai kleim Winter 4400 eka w line Toga Bay to Dreketi bay

15/8/76 Tui Cakau io Winter, Ryder, 2 koro Dreketi Bay. Yl Nacagatulu-(Na)Lali

B70 19/6/76 Blyth rai Korocoma, 10 years ago from Naitauba, le 100-50. This half five towns, smaller than Korocoma, av pop 40-50; other side Winter one small town. All removed from Laucala. Not content, land not suitable for gardens, covered w bush little flat landm no removal is good.

8/79 A10 volitaki vei JG Mitchell 600 eka noca, twn sara

81:29 17/10/81 Frances Pratt Winter withdraws claim, executor of George Winter A10

Wainikeli 1881:695, 1911:493, 1921:412

Buli: 1893 R Isoa Gavidi 8/93.117

Bouma 50H, 80M, 10/96, 4/98, 98-l Epeli, Jotame, 2/99, 1911:109, 1921:90

Kadi 80M (vol Waitbu

Korovatu 10/96, 4/98, 98-l Amenatave, 2/99, 1911:47

Lavena 80M, 10/96, 4/98, 2/99, 1911:46, 1921:29

Nadilo 1921:20

Naivivi 1921:28

Naselesele 10/96, 4/98, 2/99, 1911:65, 1921:74

Qeleni 80M, 10/96, 4/98, 98-l Vakalolo, Setero, 2/99, 1911:152, 1921:96

Vidawa 10/96, 4/98, 98-l Lino, 2/99, 1911:48, 1921:36

Waibula 80M (vol Nvkcoa), 10/96, 4/98, 2/99

Wainikeli 50H

Waitabu 80M, 10/96, 4/98, 2/99, 1911:26, 1921:39

**bunedamu** *n* [manu] m bune damudamu serau se seninawanawa, dau katadigi, kune ga mai Vanualevu, Taveuni kei Qamea; tv **buledamu**; L Ptilinopus victor

**lewaniqamea** *n* [Wainikeli] m wa, tv **wāvuka**; L Rubus moluccanus, Rosaceae

**mekepai** *n* m manumanuvuka levu loaloa vulavula, sere memela, kune ga e veiniu mai Taveuni, Qamea, kei Cicia, kau mai Osterelia rauta na 1900 me kania na mimimata; L Gymnorhina tibicen;

**paileve** *n* [kana, Vatulawa] m kakana, tv **bila**, kedra icavuti na kai Laucala mai Qamea; r **batipaileve**

**vei­kilai na toa ni Qamea** ra lasa vata ga o ira na vei­kilai itovo: ***Sa rauta me lakovi ira nona ilala, era vei­kilai ga na toa ni Qamea***;

**tóaniveikau** 1 *n* [manu] toa tu ga mai veikau, vakaicaqe balavu na kena tamatama, dau tudaitaki me laukana se vakavalataki - sa kawaboko nikua ena veiyanuyanu e tu kina na manivusi, se kune vakalevu ga mai Vatulele, Beqa, Makogai, Koro, Taveuni, Qamea, Matagi, Laucala, Tuvuca, Muala, Kabara, Vulaga &s; kena mataqali eso: **buinimasi**, **qanisigawale**, **seniyaka**, **toabici**, **toadamu**, **toakula**, **toaloa**, **toateri**, **toavula**, **wānitoakula**; tv **manuhegwa**, **toanicōcō**, **toanilekutu**, **toanivīcōcō**, **toanivīkau**, **toanivīkaukau**, **toaniviti**, **tōkai**, **tōraukawa**, **zaqalī muruqā**; r **vakavalatoa**; L Gallus gallus

Like many islands in what was the *matanitū* of Cakaudrove, sold such as Rabe,

Yasawa 32.5

In 1874, an offer of cession by the Fijian Chiefs at that time was accepted, and Fiji was proclaimed a possession and dependency of the British Crown. In 1878, The Island was owned by Frederick Mitchell who at that time owned half of Qamea, laucala island and Matagi island. Frederick Mitchell an immigrant and businessman from Australia used the island as a copra farm and on the island of Qamea used that as a cotton plantation. Mr. Mitchell was at Levuka at the time of the vere vakabau deception and imprisoned of the people of Lovoni Village in Levuka. The people of lovoni was put in inhuman of ways and paraded around Levuka town as barbarians, the captured people of Lovoni were sold to slavery to rich planters around the country out of Ovalau. Mr. Mitchell at this time was in levuka and he bought slaves and one of the ladies was to become his wife. She was the daughter of the Tui Wailevu of lovoni – Adi Matila Nakaiviwa. they had 3 children – Flora Mitchell, Frank Mitchell and Ella Mitchell – When Frederick Mitchell died, all the land was willed to his wife and when she died the land was given to her three children. Frank got Qamea Island, Flora who married Joseph Smith got Silana in Levuka and Ella the youngest Daughter got Matagi island – because Ella and her Husband did not have Children the land was given to Flora's son Stanley who was brought up on matagi and was Ella's husband's namesake Stanley Smith who came from England. Two brothers Smith married the two Mitchell ladies. Over the years, Stanley Smith sold the island to his brother Fredrick Smith who married Zillah Whitcombe and the couple created a copra (coconut) plantation on the island. They had two daughters, Flora and Penelope (known as Chick), who are the current trustees of the island. Flora Smith married Noel Douglas, a 4th generation Taveuni planter of Scottish and Irish descent. In 1986 Noel and Flora discontinued the

plantation and developed the 240-acre [Matangi Private Island Resort](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Matangi_Private_Island_Resort&action=edit&redlink=1).

VULAIYAYA, TAVIUNI

Na Mata 1/1890:4

Na vulaiyaya na vula era dau ya kina na lairo, oya o Noveba, Tiseba, kei Janueri; oni kila kece na veivula oqo e dau yaco beka ena nomuni veiyasana eso na ya ni lairo.

Na tikina o Cakaudrove kei Naweni, e dau ya vakalevu kina na lairo ena veiyabaki. Eda sega ni dau lakova rawa na nuku se gaunisala ni oso ena lairo. E tautauvata kece na veiyabaki sa oti; sa qai duatani sara ena yabaki oqo, ni tekivu sara ga mai na iyalayala ni ua kauta sara yani ina veiulunivanua, i lekutu, e sega na vanua meda butuka rawa nida lako ena nuku. Eda lako me yala sara e noda temo na wai, se da taura voli e dua na kau me da caramaka noda sala eda qai lako rawa.

E dua tale na ka sa qai duatani kina ena yabaki oqo, nira sa vakacacana na iteitei nira katilaka na taba ni dalo me cacavukavuka qai vo wale ga na lewena ena qele, ra katilaka tale ga na qa ni uvi me tiko wale na kena bukebuke. Sa vakaloloma na iteitei e na tikina oqo. Era curuma tale ga na veivale, ke sega nira sogo vakavinaka era moce vakaca ena bogi.

E dua tale e na vukuni lairo era dau yaqa mai veikau i matasawa. E kainaki era dau colata tiko mai eso na gata me ra kauta i wai, e kainaki e nodra katudrau. E dina, ia eda sega ga nida vakadinadina ni nodra katudrau. Oya sa qai nodra vakasama lasulasu beka ga na noda qase eso. Sa qai kune tiko oqo era yaqa mai qai dalaga tiko na batidra qai taqa tiko mai kina na gata. Na gata oya e bula tiko ga qai davo koto e batidra na lairo mera yaqataka mai matasawa.

Sa qai dua na ka ca nira sa kania tale na iteitei. Ke kena itovo tiko ena veiyabaki mai muri, ena sega ni vinaka na iteitei mai na tikina oya.