

HISTORY OF SERUAInvestigator: Milian. RInformant: Ratu Imitai WaqanacevaSerua Is, SeruaTOPIC: THE HISTORY OF SERUA IN OLDEN TIMES.

- Thank you very much, greetings to the man and the woman of Fiji. I will only want to tell what I know about our village of Serua. As our tribe is one of the tribe in this village who arrive very early, but when our forefather arrive in this village then they come to know the village have been occupied already. But I did not know where do these people comes from, because nobody tells me about anything about these people. So I will only tell you what I heard and what I know from our fathers. So when our forefathers arrive in this village then was occupied already. But our forefathers they came from Korolevu in which it was their village before. So on their way down towards the shore then they see one small island which is on the horrizon of Serua. So from then on they moved down until they reach the island and they realised that the island have been occpied already. So when our forefather arrive at this place then they call it Serua. One of its story which I heard from our forefathers that this land was river like in the centre then they have two small mountains on each side that one is on the left and the other one is on the right. So from then on they

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- call it Serua until today. So from then they call it Serua it is like that it really suits the name.

Well as for our forefathers they are some kind of people which they are very smart in the war. Wherever they always go they can not be deceived, they still won the war.

So wherever they go they get it without any help from other people. And they called the Tausara, because nobody can stop them in which they always won the war.

So whenever they go to the war at any place then the people will only hear that they have won the war. So when they moved it is like a very big group who always go to the war but they just only a small group. If it is just a small group but still they won the war, because they are very strong people and very big people. They always use the war club which it is called the Wau. Whenever they receive any asking for help in war they will have to go, with their leader the Vunivalu. As you can see today that the Vunivalu is the chief of Serua, because they were the leader of Serua from before until today. But you can see today that most of the young people of today are do not know their rank in the village because nobody tell them. So from that reason that the people do not know who is their proper leader. So the young people will only can do what they are told to do so, like when they are told to clean the village ground then they do it. But to look back in the olden times we have to much work in everyday like they always do before. From now on then the young people come to

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- know what they should do regarding their respect to the old people of the village. So when there is a village occasion the young people have know who have to drink the first cup of yaqona. And it from there then they know who is their leader and what does it meant to them. So the person who drink the first cup of yaqona is the chief of the village and it is the Vunivalu himself who have to drink the first cup. After that then somebody have to drink the second cup and it is always call the Rabe. So from doing this then the young people come to know their habit towards their tradition culture. So also the old people have to keep on telling the young people at most of their times for their proper habits. So all the things happen before always being carried on from person to person by mouth, because they never know how to write as we are doing today. So all this stories are being passed on from mouth to mouth of the person. Only the person himself have to know whats being said. So the history is being passed like this from before to those of today. So from then it is like that then the people who brighter then us then they write it down, but in olden days the history about the past is only told from mouth to mouth of the person. So it is carried out like this until we were old enough to know what happen before from getting the influence by the old people of the past.

So when it is the time the village people have to do any kind of village occasion they know straight away who they

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- have to listen to and what is their duties for this occasion. So that is how they learned about the past and it will go on that it never ends. So when there is an occasion happen in Serua it is very delighted to see that the people of Serua know their duties in which they show their respect to the chief of the village. From our ways of respect then the people can tell which village you come from, if you behave in a different ways then the people will separate you from them. As I can say that we the natives of Fiji have got good manners and we behave as well. So from this good manners then the people of the outer island comes because they wanted to see the smile faces of the natives. So we must remember that our culture is something that we should throw it away just easily as that. Also before the ceremony occurs then the leader of each tribe have to discuss together what should be done. From then on they will have call the village meeting so that the people of the village will have to come so that will know what they should do and what they should bring. So that it will make it easier for them that they do not have to argue about what they should do. Once they are told to do this from the leader of the clan then it is that nothing more from the voice of the leader. Because as we can see it in the olden day they only one chief they do not have plenty chiefs in one village. Its village should have his own chief and the people should listen to him and they should respect him. But this meeting is organised by the Mata ni vanua, it means

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- that he represent the words of the chief to the people of the village. As we the people of Serua we are known as the Korolevu tribe, well as I have mentioned before even though we came from different times but still we come from the same place from Korolevu. So from then on one group came and they stayed at Vunaniu, and the rest came right down. This shows that they have covered so many places but still they are the same tribe. As I have mentioned also that when our forefathers arrive at Serua then they realise that it was occupied already but they stayed there. So the different times they arrive sometimes can affect the people in the village that everybody wants to take the position of the leader. So they came from the same place at Korolevu but they arrive at different times. Even though Serua is only a very small island but it is very strong people lived there because when they go to war they conquer every places they went. So when our forefathers went to the war we can only hear of good news that they won the war. There is nothing can stop them from winning the war because they are very strong people and they are very big people themselves. So they know pretty well that the people of Serua is a very strong people. Also when they always go to the war they never do anything else or they have to worship anything before they have to go so that it can give them courage, no they do not do that. When they are told for them to go to the war then they just stand up take their weapon and off they went. So this is what they always do in the

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- olden days according to their culture. So when they return from the war then the people who stay behind will only hear of their good courage. So from then on they will have to do their habits, like they have to do their words of thanks to their ancestors. But I can tell you that one of the war club they use in the olden days is still there. This is was one of the club they use in the olden days during their war. This club was used by Ratu Isikeli but he have died and only his son who is looking after this war club. This war club was specially made from the wood and the upper part they tied the Magimagi around. But until today you can see that some parts of the Magimagi have been fallen off because it is too old. Because of their strong people the Serua people does not have to listen to anyone else apart from their chief. They are like this they never have been conquered by any other kind of people during the olden days. Also the chief of Serua knows what he should for his people, in order for the people have to respect him. Their duties for each one they have to attend to it, they do not have to side step because in the olden days they never do that only the people of today's are doing that. As I can say that Serua is only one province because of that, they have their own land and they have their own chief as well. They eat from their own crop the yams and the Doko, they only go when they are wanted from the war ground. So when they come there then they won the war so they came back in good memories and good remembrance.

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- As you have mentioned that when they always go to the war then they come back with good news, can you tell me that the people stay behind in the village do they have to do anything towards that ?
- Thank you very much. as in here for those people who stay behind that they do not go to the war then they have to prepare a small magiti for this people who have come back from the war ground.
- Can you tell me about his asking for help in the war the chief of Bau, can you tell me which place do they have to go ?
- The place which they have to go for war is from the highlands to Bau, but this group of warriors do not call themselves that they are from Korolevu they just known as the warriors of the chief of Bau the Vunivalu Ratu Cakobau.
- Thank you, when Ratu Cakobau ask these people to come and help him in the war, who brought the message and what does he brought ?
- Thank you very much from this island of Bau they call them the Ratu which they always bring the chief's message to any people.
- Does he bring anything in order to give the message ?
- I am very happy to answer that but the only thing I can tell is that because it was during the olden times that it was time of war I do not know what they always use for this kind of message to ask the people to come and help them.
- Does that mean as you have mentioned about Roko Tui Drketi do they do the same thing in order to ask you for your help ?
- Also I do not know what did Roko Tui Dreketi give in order to ask our forefathers to help them at the war. But I can only

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- say whenever they came back from war then the people of Roko Tui Dreketi have to prepare the fujian pudding call the Qalu and it is given to this people who have return from war.
Also they prepare the yau like mats and masi for this people.
- Does that mean that this Qalu is like the traditional food ?
- As for the Qalu it does not taste any other kind of food, because it is specially made and it is mixed with other ingredients. So they only do the Qalu whenever they have return from war.
- Thank you very much Ratu Imitai as you have mentioned that this island of Serua there was a river in the centre then it got twon small mountain on each side. So can you tell me if these two small mountains got names before it is called Serua ?
- Thank you very much, as I can only tell that the one on my left was called the Draunibuli but the one on my right I have forgotten the name. So when this land have been occupied by so many people then they covered the stream and from then on they call it Serua. As you can see the built of the land which can give you an idea because you have might not seen this kind of land before. But this was in the olden days and it was covered by the forefather who came to the island. So it was called Serua from olden days until today and it will never changed.
- As you have mentioned about the good warriors can you tell me do you have any kind of sign so that you may know about your ancestors ?

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- Thank you, well our traditional sign of our ancestors is the Tui it means that it is a very big black dog. Well in our place we can see this very big black dog in our village, or if he comes inside the house then he can just come and sit down if all of us is there then he can just come and sit between us but something he always did to us that when he comes and sit down he will be sitting on one side that he will not sit down properly.
- Does he only come at special times or ?
- I am happy to answer that statement even for me when I feel that my body is heavy then I know that the dog our ancestor have nearly arrive that he wants to tell something. Or even when I lie down then he wants to come and bite my feet then I know that he telling me that somebody is ready to die. As we call this dog the Tui but when he arrives we know what he wants, he can stay for quite a while but we could not see him go back. Also when I am sick but when I see the Tui then my body will be strong again like I did not get sick at all. But if he just come to pay a visit then he just only come and lie down in the house or even he can go around the village like he is looking that the village is clean or he wants to know what's going on in the village.
- Can you tell about if you want something from the Tui do you have to do something or present something to your Tui ?
- Thank you, I have never heard anything like that they worship him, but I can only say that when he arrives in the village and

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- may be it is still time of war then it meant to us that we still are good warriors and we will win the war.
- Does that mean when the Tui appears then you know straight away that you are ready to go to war?
- As for the big black dog is for the men and the big red dog is for the ladies.
- Do you any place where they always lived ?
- Even though you find the dog everywhere , but in here we the people of Korolevu we believed when this dog appears then it means that another war is coming. When this dog always come he will have smell around the village before he goes inside the house. But I can not tell you if they also worship the Tui or not.
- Like some places I have visit I learnt that they sometimes worship their ancestor in order to give them courage for war, or some kind of magic , does that mean for your courage you just get it from yourself or maybe from your own fingers ?
- Yes, the Tui we are just near to each other he is just like the human being. When he comes he knows where to go and we never feel afraid of him, sometimes he can just come during our lunch time or even when we are just going to the house then we see the Tui in front of our door then we know that this is good sign of war that we will win it.
But we never worship it or we do something in order to give us more power. These things was happen before and it is always happen today whenever the Tui or the dog appears

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- then we know that we will get it.
- Is there anything else you want to say according to the topic we are talking about ? Or is there something you forgot to tell me ?
- Thank you very much, I can only say to you the people ladies and gentleman and children on behalf of our village I would like to thank this girl for to come all this way in order to get the right tradition culture about our village. All the things I have mentioned is only what I heard of our forefathers. And it is only tell from mouth to mouth we never write it down, so we just use that system by passing the message from mouth to mouth. But one thing I want to tell you a magica words which our grandfathers always use when they are going to the war ' the food is my net' like ' kequ lawa na magiti ' whenever they have to go to the war and another village call them to come and eat then they will say the prase. Because it is beleived that when they have are enjoying eating then they will forget about the war then the same time the people of that village can just come and killed them. So that is why they never go and eat at any other village. They can wait when they have come back from fight then they can sit down and eat properly.
- Thank you very much, I would like to thank Ratu Imitai for what he have mentioned about Serua in which it will help very much. Once again thank you very much.

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