

FISH TRAP WEAVING WORKSHOP

LASAKAU VILLAGE, BAU ISLAND, TAILEVU.

DATE: 2nd - 6th FEBRUARY, 2004.



**Prepared By: Niqa Tuvuki
Senior Cultural Developing Officer**

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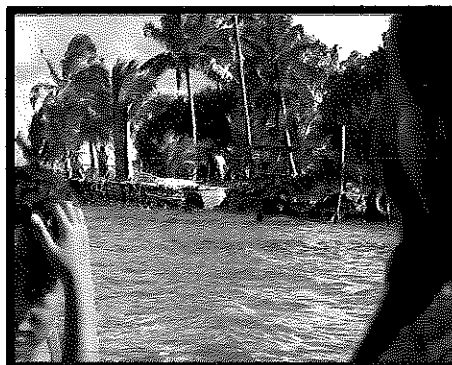
**Fish Trap (Tali Wea) Workshop
Lasakau, Bau, Tailevu
2nd – 6th February 2004**

1.0 Introduction:

Preserving culture epitomizes the safeguarding of traditional knowledge of indigenous people. This is very important, as it is the same as preserving the spirit of a group of people which makes them unique and special.

The village of Lasakau on the Island of Bau is renowned for their status in the vanua as the traditional fishermen clan to the Turaga na Vunivalu of Bau. In the olden days, the Nabou Tribe in the village of Lasakau used fish traps as their fishing gears which were specially woven out of mangrove barks and wild reeds.

The art of weaving wea is restricted to male members of the clan only.



Moreover, women are forbidden to set sight on the actual process of weaving.

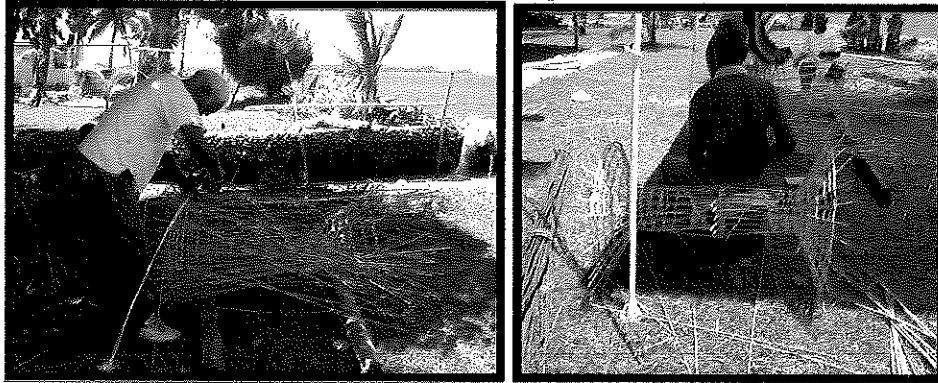
Over the years, both manmade and natural factors have contributed to the disappearance of traditional knowledge unique to our ancestors. This is an urgent problem that needs to be seriously addressed at village level.

At the request of the Nabou Tribe, a submission was made and endorsed by the Tailevu Provincial Office in late 2003, expressing the need to revive the art of *Wea Weaving*. The Fiji Arts Council under the auspices of the Department of Culture & Heritage had requested funding from the existing Cultural Funding Programs allocated in the Ministry of Fijian Affairs to assist the Council in organizing the one week workshop.

2.0 Aims and Objectives:

The workshop was mainly aimed at reviving this almost extinct art from dying and to encourage the Nabou Tribe of Lasakau Village to better serve their traditional obligations and regain their true pride in identifying themselves with their historical legacy.

- Enable the younger generation to learn and experience their traditional way of living so to not let their tradition and skills fade away with modern technology.
- In learning the skills, the Nabou Tribe will continue to foster and preserve their traditional skills that will contribute to the development of talents which will make easier their ways and means of fishing which is also a medium of income generation to the villagers.



- Documentation of tangible and intangible heritage for dissemination prior to its endangerment.
- To maintain the pride of weaving wea amongst clan members.
- Learn to appreciate and utilize their natural resources as means of great potentials and lucrative talent, considering the fact that the raw materials are in great abundance.
- Utilization of traditional fishing gears promotes cost efficiency.
- Enhance the transmission of traditional knowledge to younger generation.

3.0 Official Opening

The Roko Tui Tailevu, Ratu Emori Latitoga was invited to officiate the opening of the one week workshop which begun on 2nd February 2004. Since this was one of the first workshops organized by the Fiji Arts Council in the Province of Tailevu, it was an eye opener for the participants and the provincial office representatives. This coincided, simultaneously, with the establishment of the Tailevu Cultural Heritage Committee.



4.0 Participants / Resource Person:

The eighteen (24) participants (restricted to men and male youths from the village of Lasakau) attended the one week long workshop from 2nd – 6th February.

The participants were fortunate to learn the skills from the only surviving member of the tribe, **Jemesa Ratumaitavuki** who is now 73 years of age and has been practicing the art since his young days. Sharing his skills



and knowledge as taught by his father, to the members of his clan was one of his great desires to achieve prior to his death. It was like a wake up call for the men and youths of Lasakau, but a mission to be accomplished by Jemesa. Just as he lamented: *"A wish that I have to accomplish before God calls me."*



5.0 Materials Used:

Special species of mangrove shoots commonly known as *jiji* (Waka ni tiri) is actually cut out from the plant itself and bark is eventually scrapped and stripped into narrow pieces. The strips are dried in the sunshine before the weaving process is carried out. During the process of making a trap, the weaver either uses eight or nine strips, for this will decide the size of the trap woven.



6.0 Official Closing:

The Director, Institute of Language and Culture, Ro Misiwini Qereqeretabua was invited to officially close the workshop on Friday 6th February, 2004 and presented "certificates of participation" to the 24 participants.

The members of the Tailevu Cultural Heritage Committee were also invited to attend the closing of the workshop. The members included a few high ranking chiefs who showed their full support for the revival of the dying art.

Their presence was a blessing and an encouragement to the people of Lasakau. Later, Adi Finau Tabakauoro who is a member of the Committee and also has the close chiefly ties in the Island of Bau, was requested to give a short brief on the roles and functions of the newly established Committee in relation to Cultural Heritage values.



7.0 Budget:

The Department of Culture & Heritage was able to allocate \$ 4, 000.00 from the Cultural Grants to cater for all expenses incurred for the one week workshop. All expenses details are highlighted in the Financial Statement attached to this report.

FINAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Food for Participants	-\$1,200.00
Fees for Resource Person	- 250.00
Transport cost of Raw Materials & Participants	- 360.00
Printing of Certificates	100.00
Meals & Overtime Allowance	660.89
Hire of tent	200.00
Fuel – Department Vehicle	70.00
Yaqona	65.00
Closing of Workshop	220.00
Stationeries	377.70
Office taxi Runs	44.00
Administration Cost	400.00

\$ 4,000.00

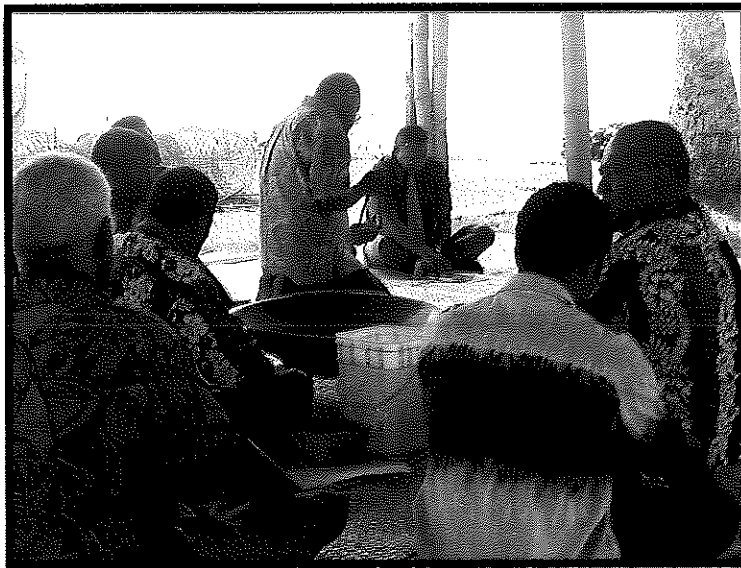
Telephone
Laminating
Photocopy
Electricity

8.0 Conclusion

The preservation and documentation of this endangered knowledge and skills is vital to the well being of the people of Lasakau. It was evident that the Nabou Tribe did not want to loose the knowledge and understanding associated with their past and the use of contemporary mediums to record and store their knowledge will assist in loss-prevention.

The Fiji Arts Council had requested the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture to be part of organization of the workshop. Two officers from the Department were then assigned to collect and document all valuable information regarding the art.

We thank the Institute for their great assistance and their contribution to the organization of the workshop



List of Participants

1. Jemesa Ratumaitavuki
2. Mosese Bocoidrau
3. Epi Ratu
4. Etuate Ratu
5. Lemeki Koroi
6. Josaia Vuetibau
7. Aporosa Vuetibau
8. Lepani Vuetibau
9. Luke Vuetibau
10. Isimeli Cokanasiga
11. Sitiveni Ratumaitavuki
12. Filipe Dulakibau
13. Dausoko Ratumaitavuki
14. Ceguoca Ratumaitavuki
15. Raicebe Waisake
16. Josese Tagicikibau
17. Samuela Bainivanua
18. Mataika Gavidu
19. Josua Tale
20. Emosi Boila
21. Lemeki Raicebe
22. Sevanai Ratumaitavuki
23. Ratu Savura
24. Sailosi Tagicakibau
25. Rusiate Tagicakibau

