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## THE FIJIAN CUSTOM OF TAUUVU.

BY A. M. HOCART.

*Tauvu* is a relationship between two groups, whether tribes or sub-divisions of a tribe. Two groups that are *tauvu* to each other exercise in their mutual relations certain privileges of appropriation and ill-manners, called *veitauvutaki*.<sup>1</sup> These privileges are thus described by Liwake of Lakemba : "It is like *vasu*<sup>2</sup> ; if a man goes to another place, where he is *tauvu*, he can slaughter pigs for his own use without asking leave ; *veitauvu*<sup>3</sup> may abuse each other and not resent it." I draw the reader's attention to the word *vasu* and the use of bad language.

A Lomaloma man says that if a stranger goes into a village and jokes, strokes or ruffles the head of a villager they know he is their *tauvu* because the head is "a respected part" (*tikina vakarokorokotaki*).

Keni Naulu of Lomaloma says *tauvu* use bad language to each other and are not aggrieved by it ; it is just the same between men and women as between people of the same sex ; on meeting they will say : "Where does this son of dead parents<sup>4</sup> come from," or "this dead body."<sup>5</sup>

When the people of the island of Kambara turn up the soil to plant, the water of Oloi in Viti Levu becomes turbid, whereupon the people of Oloi say : A land of low caste (*yavu kaisi*), dead bodies."<sup>6</sup> This is the language of *tauvu* (*vosa vaka tauvu*). If the people of Kambara go to Suva and lack food, they make a trip to Oloi and get it : "The people of Oloi's part is to use bad language."

Enare Ravula, of Namata, tells me that if their men go to Namara, their *tauvu*, the women of that place will pull off their good kilts and appropriate anything they fancy, and for that reason Namatans never put on good kilts when they go to Namara.

It might at first appear that the etymology of *tauvu* settles the origin of the custom at once : *tau* is a vague word of which the general sense seems to be "to fall down quietly in its proper place" : in Dhakaundrove<sup>6</sup> it gives a reciprocal sense to kinship terms, for instance, *tautadhi* = brother and brother<sup>7</sup> ; it has a similar force

<sup>1</sup> *Veitauvutaki* is in form a reciprocal verb, and means "to exercise the rights of *tauvu* towards one another" ; but it also expresses the relationship and the custom. A man says "He is my *tauvu*," but "He and I are *veitauvutaki*."

<sup>2</sup> Sister's son.

<sup>3</sup> *I.e.*, two people *tauvu* to each other.

<sup>4</sup> *luve ni yali, i.e.*, orphan.

<sup>5</sup> *mbakola, i.e.*, man slain in war and destined to be baked.

<sup>6</sup> Dh = th in then, this.

<sup>7</sup> Mbauan : *veitadhini*.

in the word *tauvu*; this makes it likely that the term originated in Vanua Levu or Taveuni. *Vu* means stem, origin, ancestor, and in some parts, such as Naitasiri, great-grandfather. The whole must therefore mean "having a common ancestor."

That is the unqualified theory adopted by Mr. Basil Thomson.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately in anthropology, as in all other sciences, a theory to be true must not merely present itself readily to the mind: the existing facts must be deducible in every detail from its premises: its power to explain is the test of its truth. Now, given common ancestry, we cannot deduce thence the "running riot in the village,"<sup>2</sup> the reckless appropriation of food and clothes, and licensed impudence. Not only so, but the customs of *tauvu* and descent from brothers are entirely repugnant to one another, and therefore the theory must be wrong. Mr. Thomson, it may be said, has actually traced a common descent to "the marriage of the sister of a high chief with the head of a distant clan"; but everyone who is at all conversant with kinship knows that according to most classificatory systems there is all the difference in the world between agnates and cognates, and that the two cannot be interchanged; what is true of descendants from a brother and sister does not apply to descendants from two brothers or two sisters.<sup>3</sup>

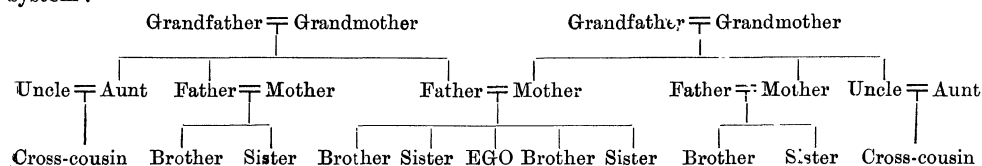
I said the tie of *tauvu* and descent from two brothers are repugnant to one another, for descendants of brothers are brothers and sisters, and insolence is unbecoming between brother and brother, or brother and sister. Waisea of Rewa very properly lays down that tribes using horse-play to one another cannot be of common ancestry (*vu vata*), or they would behave modestly to one another (*veimandualaki*). I have described at length in a paper on Fijian heralds and envoys<sup>4</sup> the etiquette to be observed between brothers; I shall here merely sum up: A younger brother must be very respectful to his elder brother and do his bidding; the elder, on the other hand, must not be too free with his junior but keep up his dignity and not make himself cheap by seizing his property *at random* or joking with him. Even more incompatible with Mr. Thomson's theory are the rules obtaining between brother and sister; as is well known, they avoid each other as much as possible. According to Alipate Vola they may not put on the same clothes (*tauvu* steal them off each other's persons). Ovetaia Mdreketi says a woman may not even use her brother's comb (*tauvu* habitually touch each other's heads). In the presence of his sister a man must study his speech that nothing may be improper (*tauvu* make a point of using bad language to each other).

We are not surprised, therefore, at finding that though Namuka is a colony of

<sup>1</sup> *The Fijians*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> For the less conversant reader the following scheme will be a reminder of the Fijian system:—



<sup>4</sup> See p. 109 *infra*.

Nggalinggali, Kambara, yet the two are not *tauru*. The Oneata chiefs come from Nukunuku in Lakemba, yet Nukunuku is not among the *tauru* of Oneata. The Polynesian population of Ono was displaced by settlers from Wadhiwadhi, Lakemba, yet Ono has its *tauru* in Viti Levu, not in Lakemba, and behaves decently towards Wadhiwadhi as agnates should do. The family of Lawakilevu in Ndravuwalu, Totoya, were so pugnacious that they were driven out and went to settle in Kandavu, calling their new home Ndravuwalu; though they still go to make copra in Totoya, Pauliasi, one of them was careful to state that their common descent did not involve the tie of *tauru* (*vakaveitauru*). Nggarani in Nodho are refugees from Naitasiri, and once lived with the people of Navuso, but they are not *tauru* to them. Naitasiri and Soloira claim to be fellow countrymen (*kaivata*), and their claim must be allowed since a Naitasiri man knows the exact relationship in which he stands to the men of Soloira. Now the men of Soloira may kill fowls, slaughter pigs, and dig up yams; on the other hand, they may not hit each other; they use each other's property, but observe decorum as brothers should do. Simione of Soloira, more precise in distinguishing the relationship between his tribe and Naitasiri, defines *veitaurutaki* thus: "*Tauru* is due to a lady marrying into a place and her son and descendants being consequently sister's sons (*vasu*), and using the right of sister's sons; *kaivata*, on the other hand, are due to civil dissensions (*veisei*), as if two brothers quarrel and part, or if a family grows large and splits up."<sup>1</sup> The people of Viria have both *tauru* (namely, the tribes of Naviti Levu and Dhelia, and the village of Ovea), and *kaivata* (the Soso tribe in Mbau); they are *brothers* of the Kai Soso (*veitadhini*), take their pigs, but do not use horse-play (*veiravu*) with the women; this is a custom of *cognates* (*veivekani*). Below Viria, Natoaika has also *tauru*, Waimaro and Vungalei, and as *kaivata* Navutu. If the men of Navutu go to Natoaika they slaughter pigs and bake food, but if they appropriate anything, they come and say so afterwards (as brothers would do), whereas *tauru* do not; Navutu and Natoaika do not indulge in horse-play.

If we search among degrees of kinship for an analogy with *tauru*, we shall find it in cross-cousins (*veitavaleni*); that is, children of a brother and a sister, not children of two brothers or of two sisters. Here is a description how *veitavaleni* behave:

"Cross-cousins may take each other's property and report it afterwards<sup>2</sup>; . . . Cross-cousins are like persons *tauru* to each other; they may make improper jests. They may take a whole taro field without blowing the conch, as the sister's son (*vasu*) does. If man and woman (*veindavolani*), they may take each other's property without leave. They are impudent."

<sup>1</sup> I must here observe that *tauru* is not a Naitisirian term, and most probably not proper to Soloira either; but Simione is identifying their own *veivekani*, or *veitambani*, or *veikakimatani*, or *veimbatiki* with the coastal institution, and is, I think, justified in so doing when speaking Mbauan, as the differences are rather in the words and in details. I regret that, at the time, I was not aware that *tauru* does not belong to the inland vocabulary. The same applies to the following cases that are all drawn from the Rewa valley.

<sup>2</sup> There is no obligation to do so; he may leave his cousin to find out.

Thus says Vola. Ovetaia is fuller still: "It is like a form of *tauru* relationship; a cross-cousin goes into the house, sees a shirt and says: "The shirt is mine," and walks off with it; the other inquires: "Where is my shirt?"—"So-and-so has taken it," say they. "O fie! the cad,"<sup>1</sup> says he and that's all; he may abuse his cousin, but not take back his property: it would be low.<sup>2</sup> Cross-cousins, man and woman, are impudent to one another; *ndavola* are *tavale* of opposite sexes; they may call each other "Cad," and pull their hair. Fornication between them seems light; people say: "He disposes of his wife; they will marry hereafter." They are called husband and wife (*veivatinini*), even if they are not married. An old man seeing a pretty cross-cousin will say: "You are my wife," whereat she is angry, and says: "I, your wife! An old man like you!" If a girl wants clothes for a festival, she tells her male cross-cousin to get them. Formerly, if they had an intrigue and did not marry, it would pass.

The theory I wish to oppose to Mr. Thomson's has become apparent. *Tauru* is based on exogamy: two tribes that used to intermarry are *tauru* to one another; the same rules govern the behaviour of *tauru* and cross-cousins because both are cognatic relationships.<sup>3</sup> So much is certain; more speculative suggestions may be held over while I bring forward instances.

Lakemba and Mbengga are *tauru*. The Lakemban version is that Raluve, daughter to the Lord of Lakemba, climbed a *mamba* tree and came down in Mbengga and married the Lord of Mbengga. "Mbenggans," concluded Poasa, "are children of the woman, and Lakembans children of the man; Lakemba and Mbengga are cross-cousins." The Mbenggan version is that a woman of Numbulevu in Sawau, Mbengga, was taken to Rewa, passed on to Mbau and thence taken over to Lakemba, where she had a son, who remained in Lakemba, and a daughter, who went to Tonga.

Waitambu and Vakano in Lakemba are *veitaurutaki* because of two stones: the ancestor (*vu*) of Vakano had intercourse with the ancestress of Waitambu; they lay down, and did not go home, but turned into stone; these stones lie in Natui nika, the taro land of Waitambu.

The tie between Vanuaso in Ngau and Dhakaundrove dates from the time when the people of Dhakaundrove were still in Vanua Levu. There they once held a great game of *tingga*. The men of Vanuaso attended and won. Two women of Dhakaundrove fell in love with two of the victors, and, being repulsed, swam out to sea after their departing canoe and were turned into stone.

Mr. Thomson has given in his book, an outline of the legend which explains the *tauru* relationship between Nodho and Nayau. The essence of it is this: a woman of Nayau was swallowed by a shark. She ripped its bowels with a shell. In pain the shark swam fast and entered the Rewa delta; it stranded at Nodho.

<sup>1</sup> *Asombo! na kaisi la.*

<sup>2</sup> *Kaisi*, i.e., commoner, low born, serf.

<sup>3</sup> As the reader will see, there is no great credit in the discovery since natives will tell you so in as many words; it is merely a matter of knowing the kinship and noting what they say.

The people going to cut up the fish, found the woman inside and led her to the chief of Nodho who took her to wife; they had a son who in time went back to Nayau. How the Nayau people in recent times exercised their rights of *tauvu* will be found in Mr. Thomson's book.<sup>1</sup>

The tribes of Vuna, in Sawani, and Nduanuku, in Dholoi Suva are *veitambani*, that is, they intermarry; they are also called *tauvu*, though improperly, I think; yet the fact that *tauvu* is identified with *veitambani* is significant. The ancestors of the two tribes were cross-cousins.

The tribe of Dhelia, in Vuniniundrovu, and Nasau in Nakini<sup>2</sup> are *tauvu* because Tau, the ancestor of Dhelia, used to go and sleep with an old woman of Nakini. He would go to her place: "Gossip (*mbui ni ngone*), let us sleep together." "By and by," she would say, "eat first." Then she would fill him full with *mbele* (*Abelmoschus Manihot*), and so on till he fell asleep; then she would say: "Wake up, let us sleep together." "Oh! no," he would say, "let me sleep first."

Roko Nemane of Totoya says that a daughter of Kumbua Vanua of Moala married into Tungua, Tonga. "Hence arose her descendants. This is a great *tauvu* in Ketei (Totoya), and the *tauvu* extends to the whole of the Moala side<sup>3</sup>; it is due simply to the sister's son (*vasu*), whereby they have common ghosts." The custom of *tauvu* is, I believe, unknown in Tonga; but it is sufficient to us that Fijians should look upon Tongans as their own *tauvu* on the ground of intermarriage.

One of the most decisive cases I know is the *tauvu* of the Lovoni tribe in the interior of Ovalau with the Solomon Islands. It is related that Vaula, the ancestor of Moturiki, and Raka Vono, ancestor of Lovoni, went to the Solomons and brought back a chief's daughter. She preferred Raka Vono and became his wife. "She had the septum of her nose pierced, so Raka Vono said: 'Let our *matanggali*<sup>4</sup> always have their noses pierced,' so they had their noses pierced till the advent of the government." The reason why I call it a decisive case is that it is an invention by some old man of Lovoni; it shows that there is no doubt in the minds of the old men as to what constitutes a *tauvu*; and fake as it is, it has been taken most seriously by both parties who carry it out into practice.

Watisoni, of the Vunanggumu tribe in the highlands, has no legend about his *tauvu*, the Naremba tribe in Mataiwailevu, but explains: It is due to the women inasmuch as they come from them to marry with us. They take each other's property without leave, seize pigs if they want to make a house for house builders. This comes from the ancestor, the woman, the ghost (*tevoro*)<sup>5</sup> that was given in marriage, whereas the women of Muaira and Narokorokoyawa are human, so they are only relatives (*veivəkani*).

<sup>1</sup> I must take exception to the statement than Nayau is "poverty stricken." Lau is the wealthiest province in Fiji, and Nayau comes about third for wealth in Lau. I should also be grateful if Mr. Thomson would publish his evidence that Nayau was once an important island. I have so far failed to find any.

<sup>2</sup> Both inland.

<sup>4</sup> Non-exogamous clan.

<sup>3</sup> Totoya, Moala, and Matuku Islands.

<sup>5</sup> All these words may possibly be plural.

We may wind up our evidence with Saimone Ngonedha's theory of *tawvu*. As a matter of fact, the word does not belong to the vernacular of his tribe of Waimaro, but he translated the local *veikakimatani* by the coastal *tawvu*, and as he is one of the rare Fijians who observe customs of other parts, his testimony has great value. He distinguishes three kinds: (1) the *kalou vata* or *vu vata*: the former is usually translated "having common gods": the latter means "having common ancestors"; (2) *veitambani* due to intermarriage, thus Nakorosule can freely take the property from Matailombau because of the women brought over from that tribe; (3) *veimbatiki*, each of which is not allowed by the other to eat certain foods (*veitambuki* in Kakana). I hope at some future time to deal with the second and third; the first, according to Saimone, can insult each other just like the second.

Passing over into the totally different West<sup>1</sup> we get *tawvu* identified in Mba with their own *veikila* or *vikila*. *Veikila* means properly to know each other, and Fijians only know each other when they are related. In the west it is always applied to intermarrying *matanggali*; in Serua and Nandi it is used of cross-cousins.

I think the theory has so far answered the requirements laid down at the outset: it is not merely plausible at first sight, but explains the details naturally, according to a strict determinism, with one exception, however, which threatens to shipwreck it. It is quite common to hear the bond of *tawvu* defined as *kalou vata*, or, as they now say, *tevoro vata*<sup>2</sup>; the orthodox translation of this is "having common gods"; now since each gens has its so-called "god," and membership of the gens is patrilineal, and therefore the gentile cult is also patrilineally transmitted, how can *tawvu* have common "gods," being as they are cross-cousins and related only through their mothers?

To quote evidence: Liwake of Lakemba says: "*Tawvu* are due to common *tevoro*." Inia of Tamavua ascribes it to common *kalou*. In Ndravo they say Vakano and Ndravo are *kalou vata*. Yet when we examine the facts we find that tribes and *matanggali* having the same "gods" are not *tawvu*, whereas gentes *tawvu* to one another rarely have the same "gods"; indeed, I have not been able yet to find an instance in which they had. Thus Tarukua in Lakemba had a cult of Ulunawale (head only): the gentes of Tanggalevu in Tumbou and Nanggalitoka in Waitambu called their "god" Ulupoko (body head), which is a Tongan form, yet these three are not *tawvu*. Sakaraia of Narodhake identifies his Mbatinggoka with Tokairambe of Tumbou, yet Narodhake and Tumbou are not *tawvu*. Namuka is a colony of Nanggarini in Nggalinggali, Kambara, and it has the same "god," yet they are not *tawvu*. The gens of Dheyekena in Lakemba and the village of Tokalau in Kambara have the same "god," Tui Vakano, but they are not *tawvu*, only relatives (*veiwekani*). Ovea and Mbau both counted among their "gods" the snake Ratumaimbulu, but they are not *tawvu*.

<sup>1</sup> West of the Tomaniivi and Muanivatu range a different language and different social organization prevail.

<sup>2</sup> In a paper "On the Meaning of the Word *Kalou*" (*Journ. Roy. Anthropol. Inst.*, 1912, vol. xlii, p. 437), I have shown how *tevoro* (devil) has become substituted for the native *kalou*.

On the other hand, the *tauvu* relationship of Ovea in Vitilevu and Waitovu in Ovalau, which Veni of Ovea ascribes to "common gods," to wit a snake, is by Jo of Waitovu traced to Tunodho, a "god," whose child went to Ovea; Tunodho has no animal connected with him; Mbeledhi of Vuma traces the same tie to Valematau, who also has no animal. In fact, whenever I have investigated both ends of a *tauvu* relation, if any particular "god" was mentioned, it was a different one in each place. The people of Wakano say they are *tauvu* of Ndravo near Mbau because their "god," Tui Vakano, went over to Ndravo; in Ndravo it is Saumaki who went over to Vakano. Saimone Ngonedha gives the tribes of Waimaro and Nandereivalu as instances of *kalou vata*; now I have noted down all the gentile *kalou* I could find in Waimaro, and have all the chief ones from Nandereivalu but never a common "god" could I discover. His other instance of *kalou vata* is founded upon the fact that Nggamau, ancestor of Waimaro, defecated in the mouths of Ndidhimo and Ndadhamo, ancestors of Ndrekeniwai: not a hint therefore of common "gods" in the very explanation.

It is evident that the translation of *kalou vata* cannot be right. All our troubles come from our translating *kalou* "gods." I have shown in the paper just mentioned that *kalou* is simply "ghost." If we apply this here, it follows that *kalou vata* means simply "with common ghosts," in other words with common forefathers; which is perfectly true, for if two families intermarry frequently, the paternal ancestors of the one will be the maternal ancestors of the other.

It is not even necessary to suppose that *kalou vata* actually means a community of ghosts; literally, it means "ghosts together," and may merely refer to a close connection between the ancestors on both sides, as between Nggamau and Ndidhimo and Ndadhamo, or between Nggamau and the ancestor of Nandereivalu as brothers, or between the ancestors of Vuna and Nduanuku as cross-cousins.

The point cannot be absolutely settled till we have reconstructed the ancient form of *tauvu*; for this relationship must be an old one, or, as Watisoni expresses it, goes back to the ancestor (*vu*), the ghost. Can we venture to be more precise and say that it goes back to a time when ancestors were commonly spoken of as ghosts, and the relation of *tauvu* was then intimately connected with the ghost-cult?<sup>1</sup> The relations of *veivewani*, *veikilai* and probably also *veitambani*, would belong to a later and more secular stratum. It is, perhaps, not quite beyond hope to fix the chronology of this *tauvu* stratum, for highland pedigrees commonly lead back to an ancestor, some seven or eight generations ago, who is a ghost (*kalou*; modern *tevoro*), and had human offspring; we must allow a longer time on the coast. Are we justified in seeing in this fabled descent the record of a true passage from a religious to a secular view of ancestry?

Another question that suggests itself is whether the *tauvu* relationship is derived from the dual organization. It would seem impossible at first sight that all the tribes that are not connected by *tauvu* should once have been moieties of the

<sup>1</sup> In Nandi and Vunda the equivalent of *tauvu* is *mate kila*, lit. dead know, i.e., related dead? It has there a religious basis.

same tribe, separated, as they so often are, by a hundred miles of water or more. But it is not unreasonable to suppose that the dual organization has existed in Fiji, that when intermarriage began with other groups than the moiety of the same tribe, all the privileges of the moiety (*tauvu*) were extended to the new relatives, only intensified, through the same unknown reason through which the sister's son's right (*vasu*) has become intensified. In other words the present *tauvu* would be formations on the analogy of the dual system; they would at once mark the expansion of that system and the weakening both of the tie and its religious character due to excessive multiplication; the *tauvu* was then gradually debased into the modern *veivakani*, *veikila* and *veitambani*.

Here we may leave *tauvu* for the present with its many further potentialities. Future research may throw more light upon it. It must be remembered that it is properly a coastal institution, though the term has come into use in the highlands. Vanua Levu, to which one informant and etymology refer it more particularly, is still unknown; it may be holding in its keeping the key to these problems.

Let me end with a word in defence of native accuracy and truthfulness. The only serious obstacle we have encountered has been due to a mistranslation of the word *kalou*, which for being universal is not more excusable among early residents: for the resulting contradictions the white man, and not the native, is to blame. Again, we have seen how apparently conflicting statements may be perfectly reconcilable; it may be equally true, if the two places intermarried, that a lady of Lakemba went to Mbengga as that a lady of Mbengga went to Lakemba; that Saumaki went to Vakano, as that Tui Vakano went to Ndravo; that offspring of Ratumaimbulu went to Waitovu, as that a child of Tunodho went to Ovea. Undoubtedly it often happens that every native tells you a different story, but that may simply be that there are many different stories, all of which are true.