

Kava, the Devil, and the Snake: Pentecostal Iconoclasm in Contemporary Fiji

Reference:

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Abstract:

In his book, *The Polynesian Iconoclasm*, Jeff Sissons (2014) explains that within a short period of time during the early 1800's a number of island societies in eastern Polynesia desecrated or destroyed many of their temples and sacred icons as part of their process of rejecting traditional cosmologies and embracing Christianity. This included the renunciation of kava use and the destruction of kava related utensils such as *kumete* and *tanoa* (kava bowls). Although some people within these societies recently have begun reengaging with kava and its related practices as part of cultural renaissance, scepticism remains. In Tonga, Samoa and Fiji (with Fiji having both Melanesian and Polynesian influences), iconoclasm was experienced with less intensity than elsewhere in Polynesia. For instance, although the early missionaries encouraged the destruction of weapons of warfare and objects linked to traditional worship, kava and its use was mostly ignored. Indeed, in the case of both Methodism and Roman Catholicism, kava was incorporated into Christian rituals.

However, over the past thirty years, Pentecostal Christian groups have gained traction in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Their teachings call for the necessity to be 'born again', which often includes the rejection of traditional cultural conventions. For some, particularly in Fiji, the 'born again' message includes the renunciation of kava, a practice these Christian groups argue has its foundations in ancestral worship and 'the workings of the Devil'. After the preaching of anti-kava messages, Church services and rallies can conclude with fervent displays of kava utensil destruction. This paper considers the recent aspect of Pentecostalism, with its anti-kava ideology and associated destruction of kava-related implements, as a present day manifestation of a much older pattern of "Polynesian Iconoclasm".

Key words:

Kava; Pacific, Polynesian Iconoclasm; Pentecostal; new Christian movements; The New Methodist Church; 'Souls to Jesus'; diabolisation

Reading note:

This conference presentation was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation and several videos. PowerPoint slides are indicated with 'PPT'. These include a superscript number ¹ to provide direction to the PowerPoint slide and selected references in the Endnotes section at the end of the paper. Additionally, it may appear that some themes discussed in this paper are over simplified. This is due to a 20 minutes presentation time restriction although this paper is currently being rewritten for publication in which arguments are fully expanded. That article is expected to be published before the end of 2019.

(PPT1¹) Within a period of little more than ten years starting in 1812, the indigenous peoples of Tahiti, Hawaii and fifteen other closely related societies, destroyed or desecrated all of their temples, and most of their god-images and sacred icons. The driving force behind this cataclysmic event was the arrival of Christian missionaries, mostly from the London Missionary Society, who encouraged locals to reject their traditional cosmologies and instead, embracing Christianity. (PPT2²) That event is the focus of Associate Professor Jeff Sissons book entitled *The Polynesian Iconoclasm*³. Iconoclasm is a compound word, formed through the following word elements (PPT3⁴): *icon* = image, statue (of sacred personage); *cataclasm* = violent break, disruption; *iconoclasm* = a violent break with the worship of sacred images.

The Polynesian Iconoclasm also included the renunciation of kava, its cultural and medicinal use and consumption, and the destruction of kava related utensils. (For more detail on kava [*Piper methysticum*], including its cultural and medicinal significance and usage, please consult Endnote⁵). This was due to kava's link with the ancestral gods and their mana, or spiritual power. (PPT4⁶) A number of authors write on this theme of kava and mana (see Endnote⁷). Kava's union with the ancestral gods encouraged the Christian Missionaries to view kava as a (PPT5⁸) "symbol of the... dark ways"⁹, and the drinking of kava as a "heathen"¹⁰ practice that was holding the "natives back from the one true religion"¹¹ – Christianity, narrative and belief that social scientists term 'the diabolization of culture'¹². In some areas, the diabolization and renunciation of kava, kava ceremony and the destruction of kava utensils such as *kumete* and *tanoa* (common Pacific words for kava bowl), had a major impact on cultural practice and resulted in the loss of traditional knowledge.

For instance, when the anthropologist Louis Lewin arrived in Tahiti in 1931, he wrote that as a result of bans on kava drinking by the missionaries starting 100 years earlier, (PPT6¹³) "it was no longer possible to find a single specimen of the plant and many Tahitians no longer even knew it by name"¹⁴. Not long after Lewin was in Tahiti, Edwin Lemert visited Te Au Maohi, or the greater Rarotongan Island group, and reported (PPT7¹⁵) that kava "was suppressed so quickly and thoroughly by the mission[aries] that no observations were made of its importance"¹⁶. (PPT8¹⁷) In Hawaii, the influence of the Christian Missionaries almost eradicated kava use. I say *almost* as those few who continued to use kava did so in secret¹⁸. (PPT9¹⁹) Although our focus here is the *Polynesian Iconoclasm*, Christian missionaries also played a key role in the diabolisation and resultant eradication of kava from Pacific Islands further afield including coastal areas of PNG, the Solomons and Kosrae²⁰.

(PPT10²¹) So what about Samoa, Tonga and Fiji? These three places saw marked change as a result of early influence by both the London Missionary Society and Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. However, unlike Tahiti, Hawaii and Te Au Maohi, kava continues to play a critical role in Samoan, Tongan and Fijian cultural practice and is often drunk in these island nations on a daily basis? How then did kava survive in these places?

It appears that while the Missionaries were able to influence massive change in Samoa, Tonga and Fiji, a stalemate of sorts occurred regarding kava, an impasse the Missionaries realised they

were not going to win. Again, I am heavily summarising the situation, but that impasse led to kava in these three island nations being subsumed into Christianity. (PPT11²²) Keesing²³ summarises the situation nicely regarding Samoa: “Instead of accepting Christianity and allowing it to remould their lives... Samoans have taken the religious practices taught to them and fitted them inside Samoan custom, making them a part of the native culture.” And in Fiji, where the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society dominated missionisation, (PPT12²⁴) Tavola²⁵ states, “Methodism itself became grafted to Fijian culture, rather than displacing it” . (For more on this theme of melding kava with Christianity, see Endnote²⁶).

(PPT13²⁷) *The Polynesian Iconoclasm* of the early 1800s was both a huge success in some areas of the Pacific and a massive failure in others, depending on how you choose to view this event. Jump forward 200 years and there appears to be a new wave of Iconoclasm unfolding. To explain this contemporary Iconoclasm and particularly its impact on Fiji, I need to first provide some context.

(PPT14²⁸) Researchers²⁹ explain that Methodism, and to a lesser extent Catholicism, have been the dominant Christian religions in Fiji since the mid-1800s. That Methodist influence remains, visible in that most Fijians villages have Methodist Churches as their centre-piece structures. The first Pentecostal denomination to arrive in Fiji was the Assemblies of God Church (AoG) in 1929³⁰. This more lively expression of Christianity, led by charismatic leaders who preached a need to be ‘born again’ of the Holy Spirit, was essentially a lone ranger denomination with limited influence until Fiji gained independence in 1970. In the years that followed Independence, the AoG were joined by several other Pentecostal movements, with a major shift occurring in the mid-2000s, (PPT15³¹) a shift which led to (what I have termed) *Kava, the Devil, and the Snake: Pentecostal Iconoclasm in Contemporary Fiji*.

(PPT16³²) In 2004, Atunaisa Volaono founded of *The New Methodists*, also known as ‘Souls to Jesus’. This evangelical/Pentecostal Christian denomination, influenced by American Pentecostalism, saw immediate growth, with its popularity aided by youth interest in a livelier style of Christianity together with endorsements by Fiji’s most famous rugby player Waisale Serevi and Atunaisa Volaono’s brother, Esala Teleni, who was the Fiji Commissioner of Police.

(PPT17³³) Not long after the founding of *The New Methodists Church*, Pastor Atunaisa Volaono preached a message in which he explained a vision he had had. In this vision, which he had earlier posted online³⁴ and said was from God, he reports seeing a snake swimming in a kava bowl. He said this snake was the Fijian ancestral god Degei and that God had told him kava was being used by Satan to pull people away from God. (See Endnote³⁵ for more on Volaono’s vision/revolution together with reaction by some indigenous Fijian kava users).

Over the years, Volaono’s ‘snake in the kava bowl’ vision has become his signature message in which he argues the contemporary consumption of kava is anti-Christ and is cursing Fiji as a nation. In a short section of edited video (available here³⁶), recorded at a ‘Souls to Jesus’ rally in 2016, Volaono³⁷ makes it clear that the consumption of kava creates a union between the

drinker and the Devil, a union that is causing a curse on the people and land of Fiji, and that the Bible supports this view.

Video transcription (translated from a mix of English and Fijian language):

"... baby mix, elephant mix, strong mix se light mix [literately meaning, no matter how much kava you consume], whenever you mix kava, listen, the Devil is around, and that is one of the curses [for the Fijian people today, some who are] listening [to this message] on the television, listening on Facebook, I tell you, that is the curse of our nation. Why? Because the Devil can reach our community by [through those who are] drinking kava. The kava is for the Devil, fullstop. Some people say, 'but its [kava production] bringing a lot of money'. Marijuana too bring a lot of money. Drugs bring a lot of money. So you can't say that because it [kava, drugs] brings a lot of money, for us not to drink kava, or for us not to leave [give up] kava. I want to tell you today, the Bible is very clear [literally, 'it is very bad to drink kava']."

At another 'Souls to Jesus' rally in 2016, Vulaono³⁸ preached that due to the link between kava and the Devil and resultant curses on the people and land, it was better for Fijians to consume alcohol. That message was captured on video and has been edited to include translated subtitles as Vulaono preached in the Fijian language (available here³⁹).

Video transcription and translation:

"['Ke ko tamata'! x4] If you are a human! [spoken four times], 'Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine' [Bible verse from Isaiah 5:11], drinking kava. Ladies and gentleman, if you compare drinking alcohol with drinking kava – stabbies, stabbies, the beer in the small bottle, Fiji Gold, Fiji Gold – when you wake up in the morning after drinking beer compared to yaqona [kava], you wake up fresh. But yaqona [kava] shakes your brain and takes you to the world of worshipping devils [into the demonic]..."

Vulaono commences his message by citing a verse from the Bible – the book of Isaiah, chapter 5, verse 11 – which warns against the excessive use of 'wine'. However, Vulaono substitutes the word 'wine' for the word 'yaqona' – the Fijian word for kava. The word 'yaqona', 'kava' or any reference to a substance with effects similar to kava are not mentioned in the Bible. Additionally, notions that kava is an alcohol incorrect, with this being a common misunderstanding regarding kava⁴⁰.

Vulaono then states that in a comparison between alcohol and kava, it is better for Fijians to drink alcohol than kava, as kava is linked to the "worshipping [of] devils", taking the user into the realm of the demonic. This is a perplexing comment for two reasons. Firstly, even when consumed over lengthy periods at high volumes, kava is considered non-addictive, whereas kava's effects are vastly more subtle than alcohol, lacking marked euphoria or hallucination⁴¹, effects that are considered more beneficial than that of alcohol. For instance, *The British Medical Journal*⁴² reported that kava was initially introduced to the Australian Aboriginal population in the Northern Territories in the late 1980s with the aim of curbing alcoholism and a raft of anti-social behaviours, a measure that at the time was deemed highly successful. Hunter & D'Abbs⁴³ added that "kava offered the pleasures of mild intoxication, however it did not lead to the patterns of violence and destruction that were tearing Australian indigenous communities apart... Having failed to halt the introduction of 'white man's poison' [alcohol], they hoped that

kava might provide a less destructive alternative: in modern drug policy parlance, a 'harm reduction' measure." (p.333). Darwin Medical School Professor Peter d'Abbs⁴⁴ expands on this, stating that "unlike alcohol it [kava] did not lead to violent behaviour; second, it did not befuddle the mind and could therefore be used to stimulate 'clear-headed' discussions..."

The second reason why Vulaono's comment is confusing is because of a well-known contemporary Fijian proverb, "one that originated from the Church pulpit", and a saying Pastor Vulaono would be well aware of – *Ni ra gunu yaqona ni valagi sivia na kai Viti, e ra dau vakarautaka e levu na itovo kaukauwa, ka laki tini ena veivala*. This literally translates: 'When indigenous Fijians drink too much alcohol, they tend to show actions which are violent and abusive and leads to confrontation (fights)⁴⁵. I have frequently heard Fijians make comments such as, 'If you want to see the Devil, give a Fijian man alcohol'. The link between increased anti-social behaviour and alcohol use among other Pacific alcohol users, together with measures to combat this, is discussed further in Endnote⁴⁶. In a New Zealand based study, Fehoko⁴⁷ argues that Pacific youth who consume kava are vastly less likely to be involved in disorder offences and criminality generally when compared with Pacific alcohol using youth.

Vulaono therefore counters informed research and commentary, preaching that alcohol; a substance that is linked to addiction, impaired reasoning and drunkenness which often leads to violent anti-social behaviour, is advantageous over kava; a non-addictive, non-euphoric substance that relaxes the user and allows for quality conversation, because unlike alcohol, kava leads the user into communion with the demonic (PPT18⁴⁸). When Vulaono preached this message it was met with a great deal of criticism and debate on social media. However, instead of engaging in dialogue, Vulaono's followers tended to follow a similar response pattern – as though coached – using the Biblical scripture including, '*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith...*' (1 Peter 5:8-9) and '*Beware of false prophets [referring to those who criticise Vulaono's message], who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves*' (Matthew 7:15-20).

Vulaono's message has been picked up on by other Pentecostal denominations and reported on in the media (PPT19⁴⁹). Pentecostal ministers now regularly preach that kava is 'the devils liquid', that it makes people lazy, it encourages men to have affairs, and it curses villages, evidenced in a lack of development etc. Pentecostal church goers often add traction to this rhetoric through alarmist commentary on social media and the creation of images such as Figure 1. In another Facebook post, a photograph of a Fijian brown snake, sleeping at the base of a kava plant (see Figure 2), was uploaded, suggesting that this was 'proof' that kava was associated with the Devil.

Traction resulting from Vulaono's signature message has led to congregational members from several AoG Churches inviting their Pastors to their villages, prompting a series of preaching rallies starting in Bua, Eastern Vanua Levu, in early 2017. Rallies typically started with hymns and worship songs, and a message about kava being an anti-Christian practice which has caused a curse on the village and led to a lack of development (PPT20⁵⁰). Villagers were told that the

renunciation of their kava use and the burning of their kava utensils would break the curses and bring blessings that would include development. Villagers then received prayer as part of renouncing their kava use (PPT21⁵¹) and were encouraged to bring out their kava bowls, related utensils and cultural items for burning, an event I have termed *Pentecostal Iconoclasm in Contemporary Fiji* after seeing some video captured in Bua during that first rally in 2017. That video, showing *tanoa* and *kumete* (kava bowls) being broken with an axe and then burnt, can be viewed in this link⁵².



Figure 1: Created image uploaded to Facebook depicting Pastor Atu Vulaona and a kava bowl containing a snake. (Unknown image creator, circa 2013).



Figure 2: Photograph of a Fijian brown snake sleeping at the base of a kava plant, uploaded to Facebook suggesting this provided 'proof' that kava was linked to the Devil. (Unknown photographer, 2018).

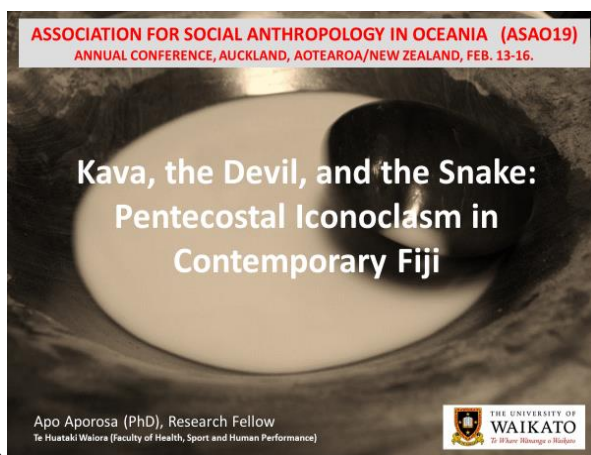
Kumete and *tanoa* take several days to carve from a very slow growing hardwood called *vesi* (see link in Endnote⁵³ to view kava bowls being carved). To make a *tanoa* of about 50cm, or half a meter in diameter, the *vesi* tree would need to be at least 150 years old. Large old *vesi* are now very difficult to find as most have been cut down to meet the needs of the tourism market as visitors want kava bowls as mementoes of their Pacific island holidays. Therefore, many of the *tanoa* being smashed and burnt during the video I termed *Pentecostal Iconoclasm in Contemporary Fiji* were priceless irreplaceable artefacts, some over a hundred years old and

made from vesi several hundred years older. The burning rituals led a great deal of criticism from a number of museums, cultural commentators and some Church Ministers. This is because *tanoa* comprise a unique aspect of Fijian identity, with that link to identity reflected in a term *waqavesi*, a word used in formal language to refer to *tanoa*. This literally means ‘the vessel that holds and carries kava’, kava that many Fijians say is *mana* (spiritual power) and an ingestible representation of the land and ancestors of the Fijian⁵⁴. This requires kava use to be underpinned by respect values, with *tanoa/waqavesi* acting as centrepieces in which those sitting around it talk, laugh, debate serious political issues, plan work schedules and village welfare, report theological discussions, prayer for friends who are in need, and bless new-born children. They are also centrepieces in which apologies and agreements are made, and where loved ones are farewelled at death.

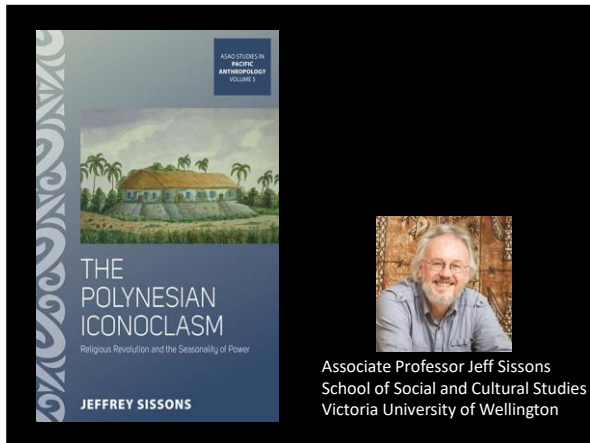
(PPT22⁵⁵) Some argue that *kumete* and *tanoa* are symbols of identity, unity and respect, and the liquid they hold – kava – is an ingestible manifestation of those attributes which, when consumed, brings on relaxation capable of stimulat[ing] ‘clear-headed’ discussions”. A lesser number say that kava and kava bowls are evil and carry the ‘devil’s liquid’, cause curses, take people away from God, and therefore need to be destroyed in acts reminiscent of the *Polynesian Iconoclasm* of 200 years ago. In the case of Pastor Atu Vulaono, he argues that because of kava’s union with the demonic, it is better to drink alcohol, a substance linked with a great deal of societal destruction⁵⁶.

(PPT23⁵⁷) In 1992, UNESCO reported that “the loss of culture” or cultural identity is at “the heart of our educational and social problems”⁵⁸. The report concluded that instead of diabolising and eliminating culture, “culturally appropriate teaching and learning is integral” to socio-cultural stability, a process and goal that is reliant upon depth of cultural identity. (PPT 24⁵⁹) Thaman⁶⁰ concurs, arguing that a lack of understanding of one’s personal culture perpetuates a breakdown in socio-cultural stability and harmony. This poses the question as to whether the religious ‘preferences’ of Pentecostal Christians such as Pastor Atu Vulaono and his followers are having greater societal impacts in addition to encouraging alcohol use?

Endnotes (Powerpoint slides, references and video links:

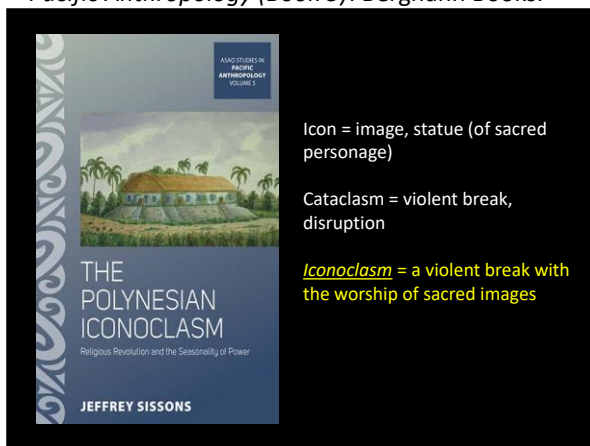


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3 Sissons, J. (2014). *The Polynesian Iconoclasm: Religious Revolution and the Seasonality of Power*. ASAO Studies in Pacific Anthropology (Book 5): Berghahn Books.



4

Icon = image, statue (of sacred personage)
 Cataclasm = violent break, disruption
Iconoclasm = a violent break with the worship of sacred images

5 Aporosa, S.A. (2019). Kava and ethno-cultural identity in Oceania. In S. Ratuva (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of ethnicity*. Chapter 134-1. (pp. 1-15 [online-first release]). Singapore: Springer Nature. (download from: <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/12377>)

Turner, J. W. (1986). "The water of life": Kava ritual and the logic of sacrifice. *Ethnology*, 25(3), 203-214.

Brunton, R. (1989). *The abandoned narcotic: Kava and cultural instability in Melanesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (p.67-70)

Lebot, V., Merlin, M., & Lindstrom, L. (1992). *Kava: The Pacific drug. (Psychoactive Plants of the World Series)*. New Haven: Yale University Press.(p.121-133)

Lindstrom, L. (2004). History, folklore, traditional and current uses of kava. In Y. N. Singh (Ed.), *Kava: From Ethnology to Pharmacology (Medicinal and Aromatic Plants - Industrial Profiles Volume 37)* (pp. 10-28). Boca Raton: CRC Press.(p.11-)

Tomlinson, M. (2006). Retheorizing mana: Bible translation and discourse of loss in Fiji. *Oceania*, 76, 173-185.

Aporosa, S. (2014). *Yaqona (kava) and education in Fiji: Investigating 'cultural complexities' from a post-development perspective*. Albany: Massey University, Directorate Pasifika@Massey. (p.35-9, 67-70)

"High priest (bete) consumes yaqona [kava] for the invocation of ancestral spirits". (Payson, 2008)

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7 Lindstrom, L. (2004). History, folklore, traditional and current uses of kava. In Y. N. Singh (Ed.), *Kava: From Ethnology to Pharmacology (Medicinal and Aromatic Plants - Industrial Profiles Volume 37)* (pp. 10-28). Boca Raton: CRC Press.(p.11-)

Aporosa, S. (2014). *Yaqona (kava) and education in Fiji: Investigating 'cultural complexities' from a post-development perspective*. Albany: Massey University, Directorate Pasifika@Massey. (p.35-9, 67-70) (download from: <https://tinyurl.com/y72ofqsr>)

Tomlinson, M. (2006). Retheorizing mana: Bible translation and discourse of loss in Fiji. *Oceania*, 76, 173-185.

Brunton, R. (1989). *The abandoned narcotic: Kava and cultural instability in Melanesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (p.67-70)

Lebot, V., Merlin, M., & Lindstrom, L. (1992). *Kava: The Pacific drug. (Psychoactive Plants of the World Series)*. New Haven: Yale University Press.(p.121-133)

Turner, J. W. (1986). "The water of life": Kava ritual and the logic of sacrifice. *Ethnology*, 25(3), 203-214.

a "symbol of the... dark ways"¹, and the drinking of kava as a "heathen"² practice that was holding the "natives back from the one true religion" – Christianity³.

'the diabolization of culture'³.



"High priest (bete) consumes yaqona [kava] for the invocation of ancestral spirits". (Payson, 2008)

¹ Hanlon, D. (1988). *Upon a stone altar: A history of the island of Pohnpei to 1890*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. (p.114)

² Gregory, R. J., Gregory, J. E., & Peck, J. G. (1981). Kava and prohibition in Tanna, Vanuatu. *British Journal of Addiction*, 76, 299-313. (p.303)

³ Macdonald, F. (2015). 'Lucifer is behind me': The diabolisation of Oksapmin witchcraft as negative cosmological integration. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 16(5), 464-480.

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⁹ Hanlon, D. (1988). *Upon a stone altar: A history of the island of Pohnpei to 1890*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. (p. 114)

¹⁰ Gregory, R. J., Gregory, J. E., & Peck, J. G. (1981). Kava and prohibition in Tanna, Vanuatu. *British Journal of Addiction*, 76, 299-313. (p. 303)

¹¹ Hanlon, D. (1988). *Upon a stone altar: A history of the island of Pohnpei to 1890*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. (p. 114)

¹² The diabolisation of indigenous religion by Christian churches and movements:

Barker, J. 1990. Encounters with evil: Christianity and the response to sorcery among the Maisin of Papua New Guinea. *Oceania*, 61(2): 139–155.

Epstein, A. L. 1999. Tolai sorcery and change. *Ethnology*, 38(4): 273–295.

Meyer, B. 1992. 'If you are a devil, you are a witch and, if you are a witch, you are a devil.' The integration of 'pagan' ideas into the conceptual universe of Ewe Christians in Southeastern Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 22(2): 98–132.

Meyer, B. 1994. Beyond syncretism: Translation and diabolization in the appropriation of Protestantism in Africa. In *Syncretism and anti-syncretism: The politics of religious synthesis*, edited by C. Stewart and R. Shaw, 45–68. London: Routledge.

Meyer, B. 1999. *Translating the devil: Religion and modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Eves, R. 2000. Sorcery's the curse: Modernity, envy and the flow of sociality in a Melanesian society." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 6(3): 453–468.

Newland, L. 2004. *Turning the spirits into witchcraft: Pentecostalism in Fijian villages*. *Oceania*, 75(1): 1–18.

Jorgensen, D. 2005. Third wave Evangelism and the politics of the global in Papua New Guinea: Spiritual warfare and the recreation of place in Telefomin. *Oceania*, 75(4): 444–461.

Macdonald, F. (2015). 'Lucifer is behind me': The diabolisation of Oksapmin witchcraft as negative cosmological integration. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 16(5), 464-480.



TAHITI: "it was no longer possible to find a single specimen of the plant and many Tahitians no longer even knew it by name"

Lewin, L., & Wirth, P. H. A. (1931). *Phantastica: Narcotic and stimulating drugs, their use and abuse*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübne. (p.218).

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¹⁴ Lewin, L., & Wirth, P. H. A. (1931). *Phantastica: Narcotic and stimulating drugs, their use and abuse*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübne. (p.218).



TE AU MAOHI (Rarotonga group / Cook Islands): "the beverage was suppressed so quickly and thoroughly by the mission[aries] that no observations were made of its importance"

Lemert, E. M. (1967). Secular use of kava in Tonga. *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 28, 328-341. (p.328)

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16 Lemert, E. M. (1967). Secular use of kava in Tonga. *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 28, 328-341. (p.328)

HAWAII: Kava was *almost* eradicated by the missionaries; it continued to be used by some in secret

Kanahele, G. D. (1995). *Waikiki 100 B.C. to 1900 A.D.: An untold story*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press. (p.108).



Contemporary Hawaiian re-engagement with kava.

Tengan, T. P. K. (2008). *Native men remade: Gender and nation in contemporary Hawaii?*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.

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18 Kanahele, G. D. (1995). *Waikiki 100 B.C. to 1900 A.D.: An untold story*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press. (p.108).

For more on the eradication of kava from selected Pacific Islands including PNG, the Solomons and Kosrae, together with the diabolisation of (kava) culture, see:

Aporosa, A. (2014). *Yaqona (kava) and education in Fiji: Investigating 'cultural complexities' from a post-development perspective*. Albany: Massey University, Directorate Pasifika@Massey. (p.40-44)
 Aporosa, A. (2017). *Kava (Piper methysticum): Demythifying the Pacific's cultural keystone species*. Presented at the Tālanga Seminar Series, University of the South Pacific, Tonga, 12 Oct. <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/12255> (p.5-7)



"High priest (bete) consumes yaqona [kava] for the invocation of ancestral spirits". (Payson, 2008)

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20 Aporosa, S. (2014). *Yaqona (kava) and education in Fiji: Investigating 'cultural complexities' from a post-development perspective*. Albany: Massey University, Directorate Pasifika@Massey. (p.41,42, 45, 68) (download from: <https://tinyurl.com/y72ofqsr>)

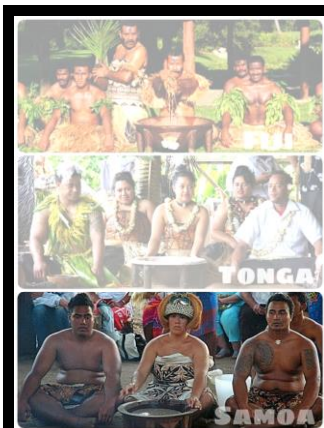
Aporosa, S. (2017). *Kava (Piper methysticum): Demythifying the Pacific's cultural keystone species*. Paper presented at the Tālanga Seminar Series, University of the South Pacific, Tonga, Oct 12. (download from: <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/12255>)



Samoa, Tonga and Fiji saw marked change as a result of early missionary influence. However, unlike Tahiti, Hawaii and Te Au Maohi (greater Rarotongan Island group / Cook Islands), kava continues to play a critical role in cultural practice and is often drunk on a daily basis?

How did kava survive in these places?

21

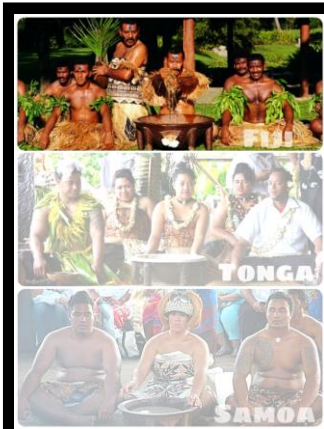


"Instead of accepting Christianity and allowing it to remould their lives... Samoans have taken the religious practices taught to them and fitted them inside Samoan custom, making them a part of the native culture."

Keesing, F. M. (1934). *Modern Samoa: Its government and changing life*. London: Allen & Unwin. (p.410)

22

23 Keesing, F. M. (1934). *Modern Samoa: Its government and changing life*. London: Allen & Unwin. (p.410)



"Methodism itself became grafted to Fijian culture, rather than displacing it"

Tavola, H. (1991). *Secondary education in Fiji: A key to the future*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific.

For more on the melding of kava with Christianity, see:

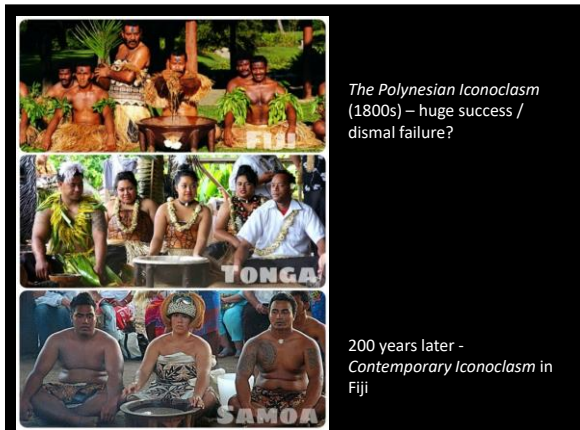
Aporosa, A. (2014). Yaqona (kava) as a symbol of cultural identity. *Locale: The Australasian-Pacific Journal of Regional Food Studies*, 4, 79-101. (p.88-9)

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25 Tavola, H. (1991). *Secondary education in Fiji: A key to the future*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific. (p. 9).

Aporosa, S. (2014). *Yaqona (kava) and education in Fiji: Investigating 'cultural complexities' from a post-development perspective*. Albany: Massey University, Directorate Pasifika@Massey. (p.41,42, 45, 68) (download from: <https://tinyurl.com/y72ofqsr>)

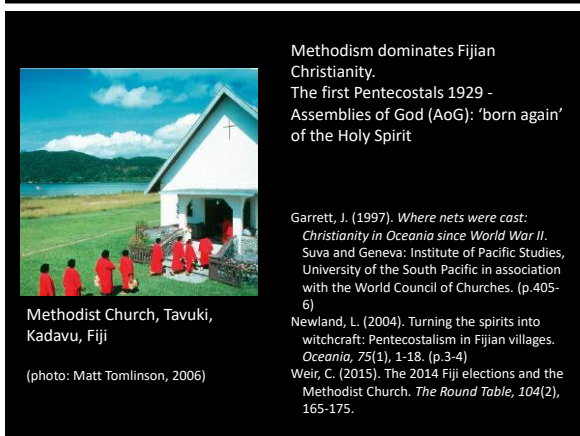
26 For more on this melding of kava with Christianity, see: Aporosa, S. (2014). Yaqona (kava) as a symbol of cultural identity. *Locale: The Australasian-Pacific Journal of Regional Food Studies*, 4, 79-101. (p.88-9) (download from: <https://tinyurl.com/y83xgagc>)



The Polynesian Iconoclasm (1800s) – huge success / dismal failure?

200 years later - Contemporary Iconoclasm in Fiji

27



Methodist Church, Tavuki, Kadavu, Fiji

(photo: Matt Tomlinson, 2006)

Methodism dominates Fijian Christianity. The first Pentecostals 1929 - Assemblies of God (AoG): 'born again' of the Holy Spirit

Garrett, J. (1997). *Where nets were cast: Christianity in Oceania since World War II*. Suva and Geneva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific in association with the World Council of Churches. (p.405-6)

Newland, L. (2004). Turning the spirits into witchcraft: Pentecostalism in Fijian villages. *Oceania*, 75(1), 1-18. (p.3-4)

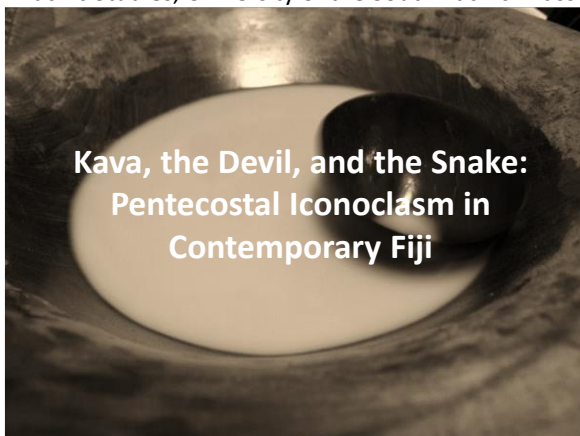
Weir, C. (2015). The 2014 Fiji elections and the Methodist Church. *The Round Table*, 104(2), 165-175.

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²⁹ Newland, L. (2004). Turning the spirits into witchcraft: Pentecostalism in Fijian villages. *Oceania*, 75(1), 1-18. (p.3-4)

Weir, C. (2015). The 2014 Fiji elections and the Methodist Church. *The Round Table*, 104(2), 165-175.

³⁰ Garrett, J. (1997). *Where nets were cast: Christianity in Oceania since World War II*. Suva and Geneva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific in association with the World Council of Churches. (p.405-6)

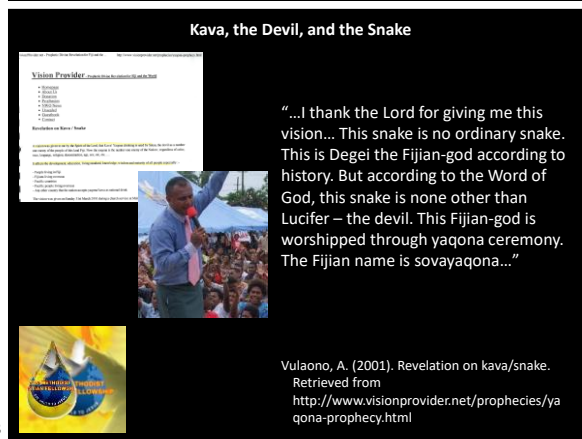


Kava, the Devil, and the Snake: Pentecostal Iconoclasm in Contemporary Fiji

31



32



33

- ³⁴ Pastor Atu Vulaono’s ‘kava/snake revelation’ was originally uploaded to <http://www.visionprovider.net/prophecies/yaqona-prophecy.html> This has since been removed although a copy from the original upload is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yykwz16f>
- ³⁵ Interview: Fiji Broadcast Commission. (2017). CUCURUI S01E01 Yaqona - Pastor Atunaisa Vulaono. April 2. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WY8XE4W7doo>
- Kava user reaction to Vulaono’s vision/revolution: Aporosa, S. (2014). *Yaqona (kava) and education in Fiji: Investigating ‘cultural complexities’ from a post-development perspective*. Albany: Massey University, Directorate Pasifika@Massey. (p.154-7) (download from: <https://tinyurl.com/y72ofqsr>)
- ³⁶ <https://vimeo.com/327387998>
- ³⁷ Sewak. (2017). Kava is "the curse of our nation". Souls to Jesus rally, Fiji. Video (1 min. 15 sec.). Posted on ‘Souls to Jesus’ Facebook feed Nov. 19. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/vulaono.souls2jesus/videos/1881355765213286> (edited video available at <https://www.facebook.com/mereoni.koroisau/videos/1182734768431916>)
- ³⁸ Qalivere, M. K. (2016). Pastor Atunaisa Vulaono: Alcohol versus kava. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/mereoni.koroisau/videos/1182734768431916>
- ³⁹ <https://vimeo.com/327390722>
- ⁴⁰ Aporosa, S. (2011). Is kava alcohol?: The myths and the facts. *Journal of Community Health and Clinical Medicine for the Pacific*, 17(1), 157-164. (download from <https://tinyurl.com/y7vcl68>)
- Aporosa, S. (2017). *Kava (Piper methysticum): Demythifying the Pacific's cultural keystone species*. Paper presented at the Tālanga Seminar Series, University of the South Pacific, Tonga, Oct 12. (download from: <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/12255>)
- ⁴¹ Aporosa, S. (2011). Is kava alcohol?: The myths and the facts. *Journal of Community Health and Clinical Medicine for the Pacific*, 17(1), 157-164. (download from <https://tinyurl.com/y7vcl68>)
- Aporosa, S. (2017). *Kava (Piper methysticum): Demythifying the Pacific's cultural keystone species*. Paper presented at the Tālanga Seminar Series, University of the South Pacific, Tonga, Oct 12. (download from: <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/12255>)
- ⁴² Minerva. (1988). News and notes. *British Medical Journal*, 296(June 25), 1801.
- ⁴³ Hunter, E., & D'Abbs, P. (2003). In 'modest but practical ways': Medical practitioners and substance misuse in Aboriginal Australians. *Internal Medicine Journal*, 33(8), 333-335.

- 44 D'Abbs, P. (1995). The power of kava or the power of ideas? Kava use and kava policy in the Northern Territory, Australia. In N. J. Pollock (Ed.), *The power of kava* (Vol. 18, Canberra Anthropology (Special volume,1&2), pp. 166-183). Canberra: Australian National University.
- 45 Aporosa, S. (2014). *Yaqona (kava) and education in Fiji: Investigating 'cultural complexities' from a post-development perspective*. Albany: Massey University, Directorate Pasifika@Massey. (p.162) (download from: <https://tinyurl.com/y72ofqsr>)
- 46 Aporosa, S. (2014). *Yaqona (kava) and education in Fiji: Investigating 'cultural complexities' from a post-development perspective*. Albany: Massey University, Directorate Pasifika@Massey. (p.161-2) (download from: <https://tinyurl.com/y72ofqsr>)
- 47 Holt, H., & Fehoko, E. (2018). Kava consumption an 'alternative to alcohol consumption' and could be a solution to youth crime. Television New Zealand: Breakfast, March 28. Retrieved from <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/breakfast/clips/kava-consumption-an-alternative-to-alcohol-consumption-and-could-be-a-solution-to-youth-crime>

Kava, the Devil, and the Snake

V.s

"unlike alcohol it [kava] did not lead to violent behaviour... stimulates 'clear-headed' discussions..." (Prof. Peter d'Abbs, Darwin School of Medicine, 1995, p.169)

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Kava, the Devil, and the Snake

FACEBOOK POST:
New Methodist Church in Fiji

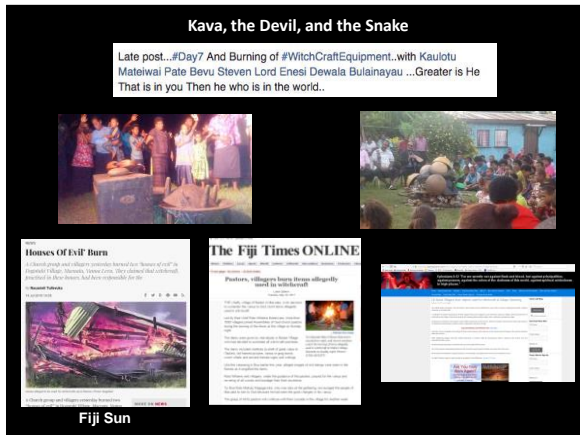
49

Times, F. (2008). Kava is evil, says minister. *Fiji Times*, Aug. 24, p. 2.

Kava, the Devil, and the Snake

Late post...#Day7 And _____ with Kaulotu
Materiwai Pate Bevu Steven Lord Enesi Dewala Butainayau ...Greater is He
That is in you Then he who is in the world..

50



51

Qiolevu, L. (2017). Pastors, villagers burn items allegedly used in witchcraft. Fiji Times (online), May 30. Retrieved from <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=402458>

Tuilevuka, N. (2018). Houses of evil' burn. Fiji Sun (online), July 14. Retrieved from <https://fijisun.com.fj/2018/07/14/houses-of-evil-burn>

Nai, M. (2019). Burning of artefacts linked to alleged witchcraft, occult. Fiji Times (online), Feb. 23. Retrieved from <https://fijisun.com.fj/2019/02/23/burning-of-artefacts-linked-to-alleged-witchcraft-occult/>

52 <https://vimeo.com/327410768>

Rawalai, L. (2017). Villagers burn objects used for 'witchcraft' at village cleansing. Fiji Times (online), Feb. 18. Retrieved from <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=389697>

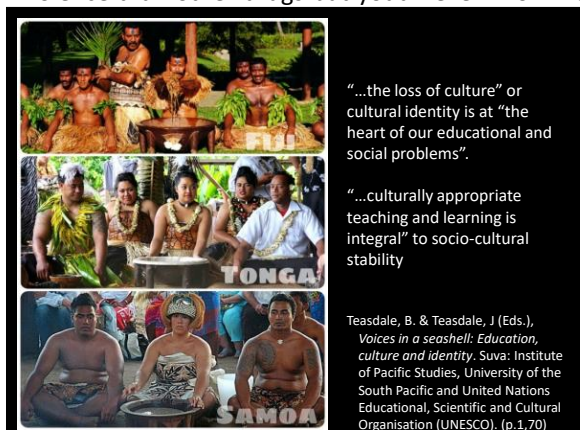
53 <https://vimeo.com/327411017>

54 Aporosa, S.A. (2019). Kava and ethno-cultural identity in Oceania. In S. Ratuva (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of ethnicity*. Chapter 134-1. (pp. 1-15 [online-first release]). Singapore: Springer Nature. (download from: <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/12377>)



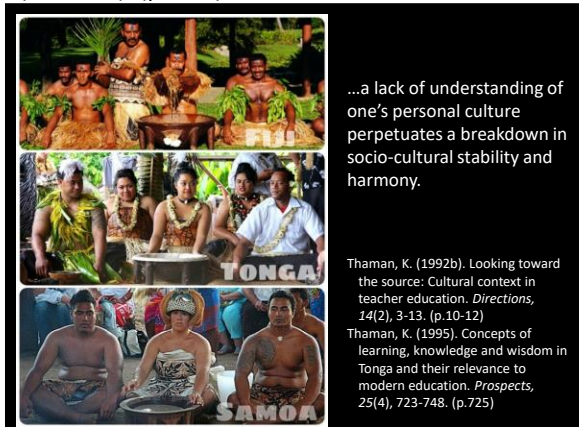
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- ⁵⁸ Teasdale, B. & Teasdale, J (Eds.), *Voices in a seashell: Education, culture and identity*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). (p.1,70)



- ⁵⁹
- ⁶⁰ Thaman, K. (1992a). Cultural learning and development through cultural literacy. In B. Teasdale & J. Teasdale (Eds.), *Voices in a seashell: Education, culture and identity*. (p.24-36). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). (p.30)
- Thaman, K. (1992b). Looking toward the source: Cultural context in teacher education. *Directions*, 14(2), 3-13. (p.10-12)
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