

# **Fiji: History, geography & culture: Teacher's topic guide**

## **God is Love Year 7**

### **Spiritual Awareness:**

God's love embraces all cultures. As Christians, we are commanded to love our neighbour. This extends beyond the person living next door. As in the story of the Good Samaritan, kindness to our neighbour may mean showing compassion to someone culturally different.

The true meaning of 'loving our neighbour' is to show personal interest and appreciation, and to extend God's love to them.

### **Our response to 'God is Love'**

Because God is a love I will...

- Love God
- Share God's love with others
- Thank Him for the love that He has shown towards Fiji
- Appreciate the great sacrifice made by the early missionaries in sharing the Gospel

### **Spiritual Awareness: God loves everyone equally**

#### **Our response to 'God is Love'**

Because God is patient and kind, I will...

- Love God and others
- Show kindness and patience
- Extend friendship to anyone who may be lonely or left out of the group
- Extend God's love to people of different cultures

### **Bible stories and passages**

Luke 10:25-38 The Good Samaritan

Mark 10:13-16 Jesus loves all the children of the world

Luke 10:27; Matthew 22:39 Love the Lord with all your heart...and your neighbour as yourself.

Romans 3:19-26 People could not be made right with God by following the law, so God made another way, so that all nations would have opportunity to come to Him.

James 2:1-9 Warning against prejudice.

Acts 10:34-36 The gospel for all nations

Acts 16:6-10 Taking the gospel to the nations

### **Bible verses**

1 Corinthians 13:14 Love is patient and kind.

Acts 10:34 God treats everyone on the same basis.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world...

John 13:34 A new commandment...love one another.

John 15:17 This is my commandment that you love one another.

John 15:13 The greatest love

1 John 4:16 God is love.

Psalm 136 Give thanks to the Lord, His love endures forever.

Psalm 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

## **Outcomes**

Students will

### *Knowledge*

- gain an understanding of Fiji's history and geography
- explain the Indenture system
- gain an understanding of the cultures and religions of the various people groups of Fiji
- appreciate feelings and problems of minority groups
- experience aspects of different cultures
- study the history of the coups in Fiji
- study Fijian foods from nature
- realize that God loves everyone equally and wants everyone to come to know Him through His Son

### *Skills*

- research
- collect and organize items for display
- develop map skills

### *Values*

- appreciate other cultures
- socially include students from other cultures
- be thankful for all that God has provided
- share God's love with others

## **Activities**

- Research history, geography of Fiji.
- Draw a map and mark in cities, rivers, seas and geographical features
- Take a survey to find out different ethnic roots of class members. Record results.
- Find out the history of each ethnic group; how they came to Fiji
- Invite visitors to teach a cultural skill such as cooking or a craft.
- Find out which languages are spoken in Fiji and learn to say a few phrases in these languages.
- Experience aspects of different cultures within Fiji, e.g. food, art, music.
- Mark on a world map the countries of origin of people living in Fiji
- Discuss the problems people face when they migrate to a new country; the problems the Indians faced when arriving in Fiji as part of the Indenture system.
- Research and present a report on India today, e.g. major cities, rivers, social structure, religion, major industries, flora and fauna.
- Study the work of missionaries who showed God's love to the Indians of Fiji

## **Assessment**

1. Present a project on culture of a Fijian people group other than your own.
2. What have I learned from the study of different cultures...
  - about God? about doing what God wants me to do? about the Bible?

**Biography:** Hannah Dudley, Pandita of India, Amy Carmichael

# Values education Year 7

## God is Love

### Forgiveness

God wants us to forgive others as He has forgiven us.

#### Forgiveness is...

- giving a person another chance, even if they have hurt me
- not wanting to pay someone back for the wrong things they have done to me
- being kind to those who have hurt me
- not reminding myself or the other person of the wrong things they have done to me

#### Activities

1. When Jesus died He said, "*Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.*" What wrong things did people do to Jesus?
2. Sometimes we find it hardest to forgive people in our own family, because they might keep hurting us over and over again. Why does Jesus want us to keep on forgiving?
3. Write about a time when you forgave someone in your family.
4. Do you think you should forgive a person even when they don't say sorry? Why?
5. How can it help YOU when you forgive someone?
6. What should we do in these situations?
  - a) Someone teases you because of the way you look
  - b) Someone damages your property
  - c) Someone borrows something of yours and then loses it.

#### What does the Bible say about forgiveness?

Ephesians 4:32 Forgive one another as God has forgiven you.

Matthew 18:21-35 The parable of the king's servant.

Luke 15:11-32 The son who left home.

# Art Year 7

## God is Love

### Fiji: history, geography & culture

**Biblical Wall art and text:** Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. Psalm 33:12

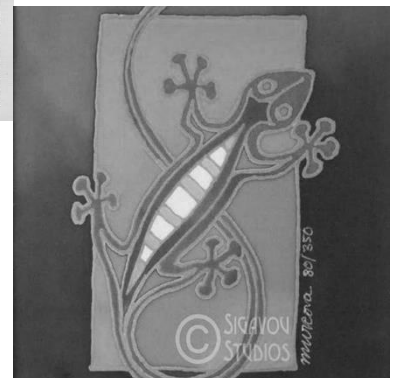
#### Traditional art of Fiji

Arrange an excursion to the museum or a traditional arts/crafts market. Students can take notes and make sketches to use as inspiration for creating their own traditional Fijian art.



#### Traditional art of India

Compare colours, designs and subject matter of the traditional art of both cultures.



#### Contemporary art of Fiji

Look at the work of some contemporary Fijian artists and students can create a work of art that depicts Fiji, but in a contemporary style.

#### Fabrics and fashion

Design cloths in the Fijian and Indian styles.

# Amy Carmichael

## Biography

Can you imagine traveling thousands of miles away to help children? Amy Carmichael was known as Amma, which means mother, to many children in India. Discover more about Amy's remarkable life in this lesson.

Have you ever wanted to change something about your appearance, such as the color of your eyes or hair? Amy Carmichael did! When she was a little girl, Amy would pray to God each night to change her brown eyes to blue. To her dismay, her eyes didn't change, but she continued to pray to God, and when she was grown, she became a missionary in India.

Amy Carmichael was the oldest of seven children! She was described as a feisty child who longed for excitement. Amy was born in 1867 in Ireland, an island country close to England. Amy's father owned a mill, so they were able to live in a beautiful home and they had enough money to buy everything they needed.

When Amy was twelve years old, she attended a boarding school, which is a school that students live at. Away from home. Amy was able to come home during breaks and holidays.

Sadly, when Amy was eighteen, her father died, and life changed. The family was no longer wealthy, and she had to help take care of her brothers and sisters.

Amy felt a calling to pursue missionary work, so she left for India in 1895. Amy settled in a town called Dohnavur, which is about thirty miles from the southern tip of India. Amy focused on helping Indian women convert to Christianity, but after meeting a young Indian girl, she felt she needed to help children.

The young girl's name was Preena, and she had been sold to a Hindu temple by her mother. It was common in these times for parents to sell girls to the Hindu temple because it saved them money and they believed they would find favor with the gods. At the age of 5 or 6, many girls were given to the priests to be slaves. They lived in the temple until they were old. Then they were put out of the temple because the girls were no longer useful to the priests. They went to live in groups in the poorest parts of the town.

Preena did not like it at the temple, and she ran away. Amy found Preena, and there was a connection between them. Preena called Amy Amma, which means mother. Amy decided to help children who were sold or abandoned and living in poverty.

One day a baby was brought to Amy to look after, and soon after, another two. More babies followed. Toddlers were brought to her too, especially very pretty little girls whose parents thought that the gods would make them rich if they gave their daughters to them. Some temple women, who desperately didn't want girls to go through all that they had been through, risked their lives to get new babies and toddlers out of the temple and into Amy's care.

For years Amy was a mother to unwanted little girls. She gave them a home, she loved them as though they were her own and she taught them about the Lord Jesus. Not all of them survived because some became ill, and there were no medicines at that time.

One day Amy had an accident. She fell, breaking her leg and damaging her ankle badly. Nowadays she would probably have had surgery and would have been able to walk again. But things were different then, especially in India.

For the next 20 years, Amy was mostly in her bed and rarely out of her bedroom. That didn't stop her loving rescued children and it gave her time to pray for them.

# Hannah Dudley

## Biography

### Part 1

The plantation owners did not care about the Indian people, but the Methodist Church loved them and wanted them to know that the Lord Jesus also loved them. A lady named Hannah Dudley came from the Methodist Church in Australia to help the Indians. Miss Dudley had worked for live years in India so she knew the Hindi language, and knew how people lived, what food they ate, what made them happy and sad, and all about their traditions.

Miss Dudley began work in Suva among the Indian people in Toorak who no longer worked for the plantation owners but were growing vegetables to sell to the white people in Suva. Hannah believed that God brought Indians to Fiji because, "He wanted to save them through the Gospel of His Son". She knew that God loved them very much, that Jesus died so they could have all their sins forgiven and so they could have everlasting life.

Hannah suffered many things so that she could be a good witness to the Indians. She lived as close to the families as she could, ate the same food as them, shared her money and her food, and became so poor she could not afford to go back to Australia when she got sick. The mosquitoes bit her very badly and her legs were poisoned. She could not walk for several weeks. One time she fell into the Rewa River near Davuilevu, and two Fijian boys had to rescue her.

Some Indians didn't want her to talk about Jesus to the Indian people and they spread bad stories about her, that she was not really a trained teacher but a beggar in Australia. When her father died in Australia, she could not go home to be with her mother and brother and sisters; she cried for her father all alone in Fiji. But Hannah was very faithful and hard-working. She visited the homes of the people to tell them about Jesus, and went to comfort those people who were in prison or in hospital. The women loved to welcome her into their very poor homes because she could speak Hindi. They could tell her their stories about their homes and family in India, and they knew she understood because she had lived in India. Also they knew that she, like them, missed her family members.

After a year some people wanted to become Christians and get baptized. People in Australia sent her enough money to build a church where Dudley High School stands today. This was the first Indian Methodist Church in Fiji.

### Part 2

Hannah Dudley felt very sorry for all the children playing around their houses during the day with no one to care for them and no chance to go to school. She knew that unless they learned how to read and write they would not be able to get any better work than the weeding and planting that their parents were doing, so they would never be free or able to earn money to have a better life.

Miss Dudley lived in one room in a house that belonged to somebody else, but she had a verandah on her room. She decided to start a school on her verandah. She went around the

Indian homes asking the parents to send their children to her school. Most of the parents only wanted to send their boys to school, but she said girls should also be allowed to come. So many children came that she had to move her school to a church hall. This used to be on the compound where the Centenary Church now stands, then it was moved up to Toorak.

Miss Dudley did not have books or blackboards or many of the things our teachers have today but she did the best she could with what she had available. Some of the Indian fathers said that they wanted to learn to read and write, so they could get better jobs. Hannah agreed that they could come at night after work, and so for three nights of every week she had a night school for men.

Hannah believed that education was important. God is very wise. He has made a wonderful world, and the more we learn the more we can be thankful for this wonderful world that we live in. If people don't know what makes the rain come, what the sun is, how plants grow; how people get sick and get well again, they can have all sorts of wrong beliefs that make their lives very unhappy.

While Hannah was teaching the children and adults how to read and write, she would tell them stories from the Bible. She was teaching the Indians about our Lord Jesus Christ at the same time as teaching them how to read and do mathematics. Hannah Dudley also had a Sunday School, and many of the children came because they liked to hear Bible stories.

The Government only began schools for Indian children in 1911. This was fourteen years after Hannah had begun her work. Today we have the privilege of education and we must thank God for giving us this opportunity, and also thank our parents who working hard so their children can go to school.

### **Part 3**

Imagine that you are nearly blind. If you were nearly blind you would need help to do things like getting dressed, crossing the road, buying things at the shops, and lots of other things. Hannah met a nine-year-old boy who was just like this. Rajesh's mother had run away from her husband because he used to hit her all the time. She got a job as a housekeeper, but the lady who gave her the job said Rajesh was not allowed to live with her. She could only see her son on her one day off each week.

Who would look after Rajesh all the other days? Where would Rajesh live? His grandmother and grandfather and all his aunts and uncles were still in India. The neighbours were too busy and too poor and they had nothing to share with this boy. Rajesh's mother was very worried.

Then Rajesh's mother heard about a nice white lady called Miss Hannah Dudley, who talked about how Jesus loved blind people and healed them. She took Rajesh to see Hannah. Hannah said, "Let Rajesh stay with me."

By then Hannah had a house in Toorak where the Dudley School stands now Rajesh could not go to school because he couldn't see well enough to read, but he loved to listen to the stories Miss Dudley told the children: stories from the Bible, stories about life in India, stories about life in Australia. Hannah knew that Rajesh must one day look after himself so



he must learn to do something well enough to earn money She taught him a trade. We don't know what it was. -Perhaps it was polishing peoples' shoes; he could do that by feeling the shoes and feeling how much shoe polish to put on his brush, then rubbing the shoes very hard.. Or perhaps he worked in a store putting vegetables into bags; he could count very well. Hannah taught Rajesh to 'see' by feeling things with his fingers, and he became very clever.

Hannah cared for other little children who were left alone when their mothers and fathers died. These children are called orphans. Hannah adopted them and loved them as though they were her own family, even though she was not married and had no husband to help her earn money for their food or school fees. She loved them, and they loved her and began to call her "Hamari Mataji" or "Hamari Maa

#### **Part 4:**

Hannah Dudley left Fiji when she got too sick to work anymore. She took some of the Indian children whom she had adopted and went back to her home country of Australia. She could only keep the children there until they had finished their education; they were not given permanent residency. So rather than send them back to Fiji, Hannah left her country of birth and went to live in New Zealand, where the children were allowed to become citizens.

One of Hannah's adopted sons, Raymond, became a Minister of the Methodist Church. His fellow-ministers liked him so much they elected him as the President of their Conference. This was the first time they had ever elected someone who wasn't a white New Zealander to become their President, so it was a great honour.

One of Hannah's girls, Piyari got married to Ranjan Mewa, and they bought a shop that sold fruit and vegetables. They had three sons. Three of Hannah's other girls did not marry but they became very good at sewing and were happy living in a nice house in Auckland and going to work each day Hannah grew old and weak, and Piyari and Ranjan took her to live with them. Early on May 2, 1931, Piyari and Ranjan and their children, and all of Hannah's adopted family living in Auckland gathered around her bedside because they knew their beloved Maa was dying. Hannah was very peaceful and quiet; she was not afraid to die because she knew that when she "went through the deepest darkness, she would not be afraid, because Jesus, the good Shepherd, would be with her." (Psalm 23).

Early in the morning of May 3, 1931, Hannah died. Her sisters and brother were still in Australia, but the children she adopted, who were grown up now and her grandchildren, stood around the bed and prayed with her as she died.

They were sad to lose their beloved Maa, but they were happy that she was going to Heaven to see Jesus. They also knew that because they believed in Jesus, loved Him and served Him the way that Miss Dudley had taught them, and they would also go to Heaven one day. They would all be together again. Hannah once said to a friend that those who believe in Jesus never really die. They just go to sleep in this life and pass through the gate into the presence of Jesus.

### **The Indian Division of the Methodist Church in Fiji & Rotuma**

The Indian people were brought to Fiji from different parts of India between the years 1879 and 1916. Altogether 60,533 Indians came to Fiji during that time to work on the coconut, sugar, cocoa and other plantations that the white people owned in Fiji. The Indians were mostly uneducated people from the villages in India, who did not know where Fiji was - they thought it was in another part of India and that they would be able to live very much the same as they always had.

However, they had to travel over the sea for nearly three months, and when they got to Fiji they were often treated very cruelly by the white plantation owners. They had to live in very poor houses, and were punished if they did not do all the work the overseers expected them to do each day. Often overseers sat on horses and whipped the Indian labourers in the field if they did not work very hard all the time. Other times the Indians had to give back some of their wages as a fine, or they were sent to jail, if there was not enough work done.

The Indian women had to get up at 3.00am to bathe, cook breakfast and lunch before they went to the field to work. They carried their babies on their backs and put them to sleep on sacks beside the fields while they worked. Children too old to be carried to the field, played at home without anyone to care for them until they were 8 or 9 years old, then they too had to work on the fields. There was no school at all for them to go to. All the aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers were back in India, so there was no one to look after the children.

Only 0.1% of the Indians came to Fiji as Christians; 83% were Hindus, Muslims 15% and Sikhs 2%. The Indians came firstly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar provinces, and later from the Punjab area in northern India and Madras in South India. They were very unhappy and missed their families back in India. Many became so angry they committed murder and other crimes and went to prison. The British Government only allowed four women for every ten men to come, so many men could not get married, and this led to a lot of fighting, divorce and immorality. .

Under the indenture system, the Indians had to work for five years and then they were free to stay in Fiji or return to India. If they worked for another five years, they were offered a free passage back to India. If they chose to stay in Fiji, the British Colonial Government said they "would be in all respects free men with privileges in no way inferior to those of any other class of Her Majesty's subjects resident in the Colonies". This led the Indians to believe that they would be politically equal to Fijians once their indentured period was served. 9,000 Indians were put on plantations in the Suva, Nausori and Rewa delta areas. In 1884 the Methodist Mission began to think about teaching the Christian faith to these Indians, but it wasn't until 9th July 1892 that the first missionary, John Williams from India, arrived in Suva. He worked in Rewa and Nausori.

# Pandita Ramabai of India

## Biography

Ramabai was born in the year 1858 in Western India. Her parents like most of the people of India, belonged to the Hindu religion. Her father was a 'pundit', a religious teacher. He was a kindly man and he named his daughter 'Ramabai' or 'Giver of Delight'. He was generous too, especially to the pilgrims who came to his house. Before long all his money was gone. He had to sell his home and became a wanderer himself. Little Ramabai was carried about in a cane basket and she grew up without a home.

Her father was an honoured man. In the Hindu religion there are hundreds of different 'castes' or classes into which people were born. The castes could not mix with each other. The lowest were the 'outcasts' or 'untouchables'. The highest were the Brahmins' or Priests' and Ramabai's father was one of the highest castes. He was welcomed wherever he went. People gladly listened to him reading the Holy writings in the old sacred language called Sanskrit'. He traveled round India to the temples of the gods and his family lived on the gifts of the people. But most of the people of India are quite poor and if the crops fail there is dreadful famine. While Ramabai was still young, both her parents died of starvation. She and her brother were left homeless wanderers.

Ramabai was a clever girl. In those days women were less important than men but her father had even taught her the sacred Sanskrit language. As she traveled through India she learnt other languages too. She longed to use her life in service for others. As a good Hindu she read their holy books, prayed to the idols in the temples, and bathed in the sacred rivers, but slowly Ramabai grew discontented with her religion. The gods never seemed to answer her prayers, and the lazy priests at the temples would not help her, but she felt something even worse about her Hindu religion. Everywhere she went she saw the dreadful unhappiness of Indian girls. By Hindu custom, marriages were arranged by the parents and girls were married by the time they were twelve-years-old. Then, if the boy 'husband' died the girl was left a widow and she would never marry again. In old times, Hindu widows died with their husbands on the funeral pyre. This terrible custom has been forbidden by the British rulers of India, but in 1829 widows were still despised. Hindus believe that we live over and over again, and to be a child widow must be a punishment for evil-doing in a former life. Throughout India Ramabai saw these poor girl-widows harshly treated when they had done nothing wrong. She determined to give her life to helping them.

When she was 20 years old Ramabai went to Calcutta, the largest city of India. No one could sneer when she spoke about the sad lot of Hindu women. Scholars were astonished that she was as clever as they were in the sacred language and in the Hindu scriptures and teachings because women were not allowed to learn the holy Sanskrit language. Besides, Ramabai was not even married. But they recognized her learning and wisdom and called her 'Pandita' or 'Lady Teacher'. Soon afterwards Ramabai married the man she loved and a little girl was born to her, 'Manoramabai'-'The Joy of my Heart'. Ramabai had broken the custom by marrying a man from the lowest caste of all. When her husband died she was left a widow. But she refused to live in misery or to give up her great ambition.

Ramabai went to the city of Poona. There for the first time she met Christian missionaries and read the Gospel of Jesus in her own language. The Sisters of St. Mary the Virgin showed her Christian love and encouraged her in her work. Ramabai wrote books about it and, when she had saved enough money, she went to England to study and then to America. When she returned to India to take up her life's work she was a Christian. She had found in the Good News of Jesus the answer to all her prayers.

In 1889 Ramabai set up her first Widows' Home in Bombay. She was helped by gifts from friends in England and America. Her Home grew so quickly that she needed a bigger house. She found one in Poona and there the unhappy girl-widows found happiness. Ramabai never tried to change their religion but before long the girls wanted to share the joy that Ramabai found in the worship of Jesus. The fame of her Home spread and more girls came to it. Ramabai traveled round the cities disguised as a beggar, rescuing girl-widows from cruelty and starvation.

When plague broke out in Poona, Ramabai moved her Home out into the countryside. She had bought a piece of land there with money from her friends abroad. It made an excellent settlement for her girls and before long it became famous as 'Mukii Sadan' - 'The Home of Salvation'. Ramabai had three women to help her teach and train her 300 girl-widows. One of the three was her own daughter, Manoramabai. She could not refuse anyone in need and by 1900 Ramabai had 700 girls in her country Home. It was a Christian village with its own church and houses, and wells, and its own orchards and vegetable gardens. Ramabai's girls grew into fine young women. There was much to be done in the houses and out on the land, in the laundry and in the bake-house. On the looms the girls learnt to weave their own clothes. They helped to print the Bible that Ramabai had translated into their own language.

They joined in the worship of the village church and many of them were baptized into the Christian Church. The fame of Ramabai and her work spread far and wide. In the year 1919 King George V honoured her with a gold medal for her devoted service to the women of India. From 'The Home of Salvation' her girls went out to marry and set up their own Christian homes. Ramabai died in 1922 but her influence lives on still today in the new India, for Pandita Ramabai brought new honour and respect for the women of her country

### **Revision Questions**

1. What is famine? What causes it?
1. How important was it to Ramabai that she knew how to read and to speak in different languages?
2. What 'cause' did Ramabai want to give her life to?
3. How many girls lived in 'The Home of Salvation' by the year 1900?
4. What did the girls learn to do?

# **Fiji: History, Geography and Culture**

## **Student research**

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# Fiji: Facts and Figures

## Which Europeans discovered the Fiji Islands?

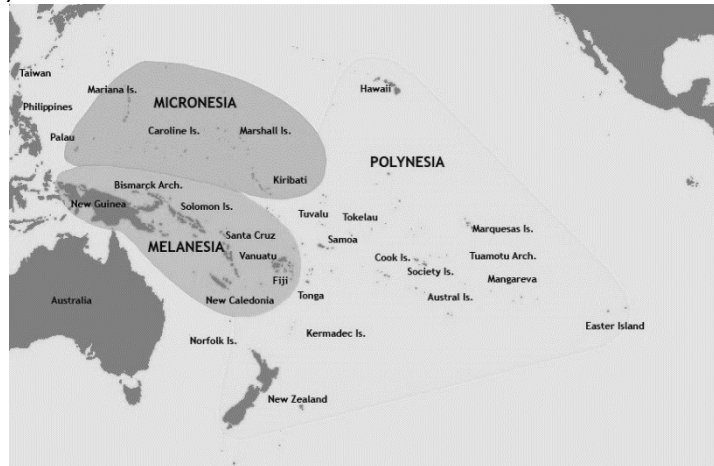
The European discoveries of the Fiji group were accidental. The first of these discoveries was made in 1643 by the Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman and English navigators, including Captain James Cook who sailed through in 1774, and made further explorations in the 18th century.

## How many islands in Fiji?

Fiji comprises of approximately 330 islands, about one - third are inhabited. It covers about 1.3 million square kilometers of the South Pacific Ocean. The two major islands are Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

## Where is Fiji?

Fiji is in the South Pacific Ocean, in Melanesia. It surrounds the Koro Sea about 1,300 miles (2,100 km) north of Auckland, New Zealand. The islands of Fiji are scattered over about 1,000,000 square miles (3,000,000 square km).



## Where did the first Fijian people come from?

Indigenous Fijians are believed to have arrived in Fiji from western Melanesia approximately 3,500 years ago, though the exact origins of the Fijian people are unknown. Later they moved onward to other surrounding islands, including Rotuma, Tonga and Samoa.

## What is the population of Fiji?

As of October 2015, Population of Fiji is around 860,000. Around 54% are indigenous Fijians and around 330,000 (38%) people are of Indian descent. ... Around 61,000 Indians were brought to Fiji by the British between 1879 and 1916 to work on Sugarcane plantations.

## What languages are spoken in Fiji?

Fiji has three official languages: English, Fijian and Hindi. Fijian is spoken either as a first or second language by indigenous Fijians. The Fijian language has 300 dialects. Many of these are in danger of being lost, as most Fijians now speak standard Fijian. About 99% of Fijians speak English but only about 33% can read and write in English.

**Which is the biggest island in Fiji?**

Viti Levu is the biggest island in Fiji and is home to more than 600,000 people. The Fijian capital is also found on the island. Viti Levu has a total area of 10,389 square kilometers, and measures 146 kilometers long and 106 kilometers wide.

**What are the main industries in Fiji?**

Fiji is a land of white sandy beaches and tropical rainforests. Tourism is therefore one of the main sources of income. Sugar cane processing makes up one-third of industrial activity. Fishing, coconuts, ginger, and copra are also significant.

Fiji has a more developed economy than neighbouring island nations. However, it still remains a developing country. Many people grow and sell fruit and vegetables in markets and on the roadsides.

**What religions are practiced in Fiji?**

Christianity is the main religion, and was founded by the early missionaries. The Methodist church is the largest church in Fiji. About 53% of the population is Christian, and about 38% Hindu. The earlier, traditional Fijian religion, however, was based on ancestor worship which extended to every aspect of the culture, including medicine.

**What goods are imported?**

Foodstuffs, machinery, mineral fuels, beverages, tobacco, and manufactured goods are the principal imports.

**Where did Fiji get its name?**

The story goes that Captain Cook asked the Tongans what the name of the islands to their west was. He heard 'Feegee', the Tongan pronunciation of Viti: so 'Fiji' came from Captain Cook who did not hear the correct Tongan pronunciation.

**What is the highest mountain in Fiji?**

Mount Tomanivi, previously named Mount Victoria, is an extinct volcano located in the northern highlands of Viti Levu. At 1,324 metres (4,344 ft), Mount Tomanivi is the highest mountain in Fiji. A trail leads to the summit of Tomanivi from the village of Navai.

**What is the climate of Fiji?**

Fiji has a warm tropical climate. Maximum temperatures rarely move out of the 31°C (88°F) to 26°C (79°F) range all year round. Southeast trade winds from March to November bring dry weather and the rainy season runs from December to April.

### **What are the main rivers in Fiji?**

On Viti Levu, the largest island, the major river is the Rewa; this river is navigable for 113 kilometers (70 miles). The island also has other river systems, including those of the Nadi, Ba, and Sigatoka. All of these rivers rise in the island's central mountains. The main river on Vanua Levu is the Dreketi.

### **What foods are eaten in Fiji?**

Traditional Fijian food is a wonderful mix of fresh, local ingredients found in the tropics. The traditional preparations and cooking methods have been passed down the generations. Coconut, fish, rice, taro, sweet potatoes, cassava and breadfruit are the main components in local Fijian dishes.

The lovo is the traditional form of cooking. This is the Fijian name for a feast cooked in the earth (in New Zealand, a 'hangi'). The taste is like a barbeque, only a little more smoked, and it's a very efficient way to cook large quantities of food at the same time.

Indians prepare their own traditional dishes such as dahl, curries and rice. The dried lentils and spices are imported from India, but the Indians make use of the wide variety of vegetables and fruits growing in Fiji.

### **Which animals are native to Fiji?**

The only native mammal is the fruit bat. Six varieties can be found on the islands, including the Fijian monkey-faced flying fox. There are numerous reptiles such as iguanas, including the rare crested Iguana, as well as snakes, lizards and geckos.

#### *Iguanas*

The Fiji crested iguana or Fijian crested iguana (*Brachylophus vitiensis*) is a critically endangered species of iguana native to some of the northwestern islands of Fiji, where it is found in dry forests. Fijian banded iguanas are omnivorous, eating leaves, flowers, fruit and insects.

Fiji banded iguanas reach 60 centimetres (24 in) in length when measured from snout to tail tip and bodyweights of up to 200 grams (0.44 lb). The crests of these iguanas are very short reaching a length of 0.5 centimetres.

#### *Snakes*

Snake bites are virtually unknown in Fiji. The highly-venomous black and white banded sea snakes, which are often found along Fiji's shores or swimming in lagoons do not bite, unless severely provoked. In the evening's sea snakes will venture on land, curl up and go to sleep.

The most poisonous sea snake is the Beaked Sea Snake. Just 3 drops of venom can kill about 8 people! Fortunately, these snakes have short fangs and they are unable to bite through diver's suits very easily. They are not likely to bite unless threatened.

#### *Birds of Fiji*

Examples:

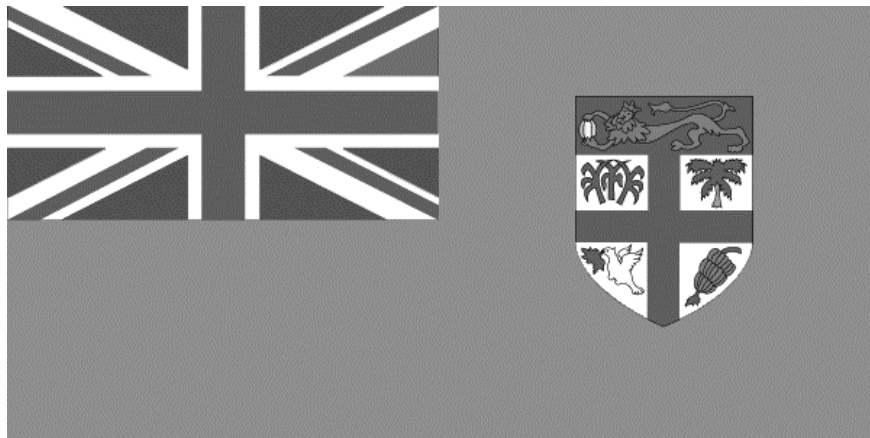
Grebes • Albatrosses • Shearwaters and petrels • Gannets • Frigate birds • Pelicans • Bitterns, herons and egrets • Ibises and spoonbills • Ducks, geese and swans • Hawks, kites and eagles • Falcons • Turkeys • Pheasants and partridges • Rails, crakes, gallinules and coots • Plovers and lapwings • Sandpipers • Skuas • Gulls, terns, and skimmers • Pigeons and doves • Parrots and lorikeets • Cuckoos • Barn owls • Frogmouths • Swifts • Kingfishers • Swallows and martins • Cuckoos • Bulbuls • Thrushes and allies • warblers • Fantails • Monarch flycatchers • Australasian



robins • Whistlers and allies • White-eyes • Honeyeaters • Bellmagpies • Starlings • Waxbills • Sparrows

### *Birds in danger*

The Myna is an introduced bird which has been blamed for chasing the native birds into the bush. Mynas are very common where people live, but they do not usually live in the bush. Many of the Fijian native bush birds are in danger of becoming extinct. This is because of introduced predators such as the Ship rat, the mongoose and feral cats.



### **Projects**

1. Prepare a brochure about Fiji that would encourage an overseas tourist to visit Fiji.
2. Make a poster showing the different types of animals in Fiji, including birds. Divide the birds into sea birds, shore birds and land birds.
3. Make a poster explaining why some of Fiji's native birds are endangered and give some ideas that could save these birds. Also explain the meaning of a 'predator' and where the predators have come from.
4. Draw the Fijian flag and explain the meaning of the emblems, including the Union Jack in the left-hand corner and the coat of arms which contains 6 emblems.

# Geography and History

## Geography

Fiji consists of 320 islands.

### Viti Levu

- The largest island
- Suva, Fiji's capital is on the Eastern side
- Nadi, Fiji's largest airport is on the Western side.

### Vanua Levu

- Fiji's second largest island
- The mountains in the interior are bigger than those on Viti Levu

### Taveuni

- The next largest island
- One-tenth the size of Vanua Levu
- Has very fertile soil and called "Fiji's Garden Island".

### Kadavu

- Almost as large as Taveuni
- Has several high mountain peaks: Mt. Washington, an extinct volcano on the western side, and Mt Challenger on the eastern side
- Lau
- The islands of the Lau group are spread over 500 km of ocean to the east.

### Lau island group

- East of Viti Levu
- The first Europeans came to these islands for trading

### Mamanucas

- Immediately south of Yasawa Island and directly west of Viti Levu
- These 13 small islands contain at least 10 holiday resorts.

### Rotuma island group

- Volcanic islands 646 km to the north of Fiji
- The people of Rotuma have a Polynesian background and language group, possibly originally from Tonga and Samoa.

## History

- Fiji was first inhabited by the Melanesians who are thought to have reached the Pacific by way of New Guinea.
- The first record of a European sighting was by Abel Tasman in 1643, in his ship.
- The first recorded visit to Fiji was not until 1774 when Captain Cook anchored off Vatoa in Southern Lau.

## Sandalwood

- Europeans came looking for sandalwood in the early 1800s.
- The first Europeans to live among the Fijians arrived during this period. Some had escaped from convict settlements in Australia and Norfolk Island, but most of them were seamen who had deserted their ships or some shipwrecked while involved in the Sandalwood trade.

## The Chiefs

- The country was divided according to the rule of chiefs, who were constantly involved in warfare.
- From the 1830s to the 1850s the most powerful chiefs were the chiefs of Bau, Rewa, Somosomo, Verata, Naitasiri, Namosi, Macuata, Bua and Lakeba.
- About this time, overseas missionaries were becoming interested in Fiji. Three Tahitian teachers of the London Missionary Society were the first missionaries to arrive, followed by the first European missionaries in 1835, David Cargill and William Cross.
- The first missionaries came to Lakeba with the support of King George of Tonga, but few Fijians became Christians until some of the high chiefs were won over.
- By the early 1850s Ratu Cakobau, warlord of Bau had become the most powerful chief in Fiji. In 1854 he became a Christian and claimed himself to be king of Fiji, but Ma'afu, a high chief in Tonga who had arrived in Lakeba in 1848 wanted to take over Fiji.
- In 1865 Cakobau and Ma'afu, and other independent chiefs, were persuaded by the British official Captain H.M. Jones, to form a "Council of chiefs". The six most powerful chiefs in Fiji joined together to form a council. These were the chiefs of Bau, Rewa, Lakeba, Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata. These six chiefs were given power to laws. However, it did not go well.
- In 1873 the chiefs expressed a desire to come under the rule of Britain. In 1874, the chiefs sent a message saying that they wanted to give over all governing rights to the British queen. This was accepted in 1874 and Fiji became a British colony.
- Ninety six years later, on October 10<sup>th</sup> 1970, Fiji became independent from Britain. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, first Prime Minister of independent Fiji, received from Prince Charles the documents evidencing Fiji's independence.

## Traditional crafts and village life

- Early Fijians built four types of canoes. The smallest was the takia, and this is the only one that is still made in modern times. The largest was the drua, up to 30 metres long, double hulled and capable of carrying 200 warriors.
- A typical village would have included temples, homes, buildings for cooking, for storing yams and receiving guests.
- Women made bark cloth (masi), mats, pottery and fishing nets.
- Men typically worked at gardening and fishing.

## Meals

- At meal time, a long narrow mat is spread length-wise on the floor. The eldest male of the household sits at the top end of the mat, younger males next, then children on both sides of the mat. The female head, and perhaps her oldest daughter, sits at the lower end. With the pot of food beside her, she serves from here, with the help of her daughter. The woman who is serving the meal does not eat until everyone else has been served and has finished eating. While others eat, she and any helpers, sit fanning away flies.
- Finger bowls are provided both before and after meals. There is little conversation during meals. Doors are left open during meal times. It is unsociable and un-Fijian to eat with closed doors. Members of the household are to be visible to all who pass by. It is good manners to invite any passer-by to join the family at their meal. The polite response is to thank the person for the invitation and walk on. But if the response to the invitation is accepted, no fuss is made. Room will be made at the dining mat and plates provided.
- The most common foods are vegetables and fish or shellfish. Cattle are only killed for ceremonial purposes. Chicken and duck are served only on special occasions. Sometimes, but not often, a wild boar is killed.
- For special celebrations, such as weddings and funerals, the whole community is involved in bringing cooked food. These functions attract people from other villages who are fed and entertained for a number of days.

## Greeting a high chief

- A chief was greeted by the village men with: “Duoo.....Oooo!” This is known as the tama.
- The women’s greeting was “Mai na vakaa.....duuu.....aaaa!

## Yagona (Kava)

- This is the drink from the pulverized root of a tree that grows all over Fiji.
- The botanical name is Piper methysticum. The root is pounded and grated before mixing it with water.
- The gritty pieces of root are strained out. It is served in a coconut shell or bilo.
- The drink is made in a shallow wooden bowl with legs. It is called the tanoa, and was carved in the olden days from solid blocks of vesi wood. Some were more than 1 metre across.
- The yagona ceremony was an important part of Fiji life and part of all official ceremonies. While the drink is not alcoholic, it has a numbing effect on the mouth and limbs.
- Too much kava, especially in daylight hours, made people relax a little too much at the expense of getting work done.
- Yagona was presented at the Sevuseva ceremony, when important visitors arrived.
- Yagona was a token of peace between two parties. It was an occasion when two parties sit down and drink a cup of peace. It was done after the two parties were willing to forget and forgive whatever may have been between them in the past. It is an offering of apologies and a token of request for everlasting friendship.

## The Tabua

- A tabua is a polished tooth of a sperm whale that is an important cultural item in Fijian society.

- A tabua was traditionally given as gifts for making peace (in the sevusevu ceremony), and were important in negotiations between rival chiefs.
- The tabua was also used to cover any wrongs done, and sometimes it was sent on a death mission.
- Dead men would be buried with their tabua, along with war clubs and even their strangled wives, to help them in the afterlife.
- Originally tabua were very rare items, available only from beached whales and from trading with other islanders.
- Today the tabua remains an important item in Fijian life. They are usually traded as gifts in weddings, birthdays, and at funerals.
- The sale of the tabua requires permits from the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, the Fijian Department of Environment, as the sperm whale is an endangered species.
- A tabua can be worth more than \$500, although there is no fixed value for it.

### **The Fijian war cry**

It has now become traditional for Fijian rugby teams playing at international games to do the cibi. This is a Fijian war-cry with a history dating back to the days of clubs and spears.

Originally the cibi was meant for the battle in the open field, as a way of giving courage to the warriors. It was then performed again with more vigour on their return home if they had a victory. Their victory was also celebrated with flags, one for every victim killed. Those who killed enemies were honoured.

### **History of Suva and places around Suva**

**Suva** – Long ago in the early days of Suva, the chiefly seat was at Nauluvatu, overlooking Walu Bay. The Tui Suva who ruled from this hill fort in 1750 is said to have been called Ro Btilekaleka (Ratu Short-tooth.)

When the British Crown agent, Colonel Smythe, visited Suva in 1860, dense tropical jungle came right down to the water's edge and the area around Suva Point was covered with large trees and other big trees. The name was given "Muanikau, meaning Wooded Point.

Suva today has become the urban, administrative, commercial, educational and transportation centre of all Fiji. It is where the major population concentration is.

**Flagstaff** – an English word which means "flag pole". A tall flagstaff was erected on the hilltop to convey messages to approaching ships. A flag was hoisted when the person on watch sighted a ship through the telescope.

**Samabula** – an important section of Fiji's capital. Its origin is "Sa ma bula", meaning "He lives". This was a command of the enemy to spare the life of a captured young chief of the other tribe.

**Toorak** – an Australian Aboriginal word meaning "where the chief is". It was named after the first Government house in Melbourne Australia, which was built in the suburb called Toorak.

**Nausori** – means the "ramming of the cooking pots". This was in reference to the anger of the warriors of old. A sugar mill was built here in the late 1880s. The Nausori village had to be moved in

1930 to make room for the Rewa bridge. Nausori was declared a township in 1931. Nausori today is the site of Fiji's second largest airport.

**Lami** – on the north-west boundary of Suva city. It got its name from Lomai, a village near Mabukaluku on the banks of the Waidina River.

# People of Fiji

## Indigenous Fijians

The first inhabitants of Fiji came from Melanesia, the islands to the west between Papua New Guinea and Fiji. However, others came from the east, from Polynesia, particularly Tonga. Many of the present chiefly families trace their descent, through 11 or more generations, from strangers who sailed or drifted to these shores from distant islands, and who settled singly or in small groups among the Melanesian people already occupying the land.

The strong Polynesian influence, both physical and cultural, is due primarily to visiting parties of Tongans, many of whom stayed in Fiji for years or settled permanently. Melanesians are characteristically short and dark-skinned, with curly hair. Polynesians are generally taller, lighter in skin colour, with straight hair. The intermingling of these two races has produced in Fiji a variety of physical features. Culturally the differences are not so obvious, but social organization does differ between tribes from east and west.

Fijian customs reflect an utmost courtesy and dignity toward the visitor. There are ceremonies for every occasion.

## Indo-Fijians

### The Indenture system

Sir Arthur Gordon was a British governor in Fiji from 1875 to 1880. Under British rule, Fiji was expected to develop its own economy and to help pay its own way. Sir Arthur Gordon thought that the answer was in the growing of crops for national export. He thought that cotton, copra and sugar cane would be suitable.

Gordon thought about where the labourers would come from. Many people would be needed to work in these large plantations. He did not want to break up village life of the Fijian people. He proposed recruiting Indian labour. This had been done in other parts of the world, like South Africa. Arrangements were made in 1887 with the Indian government for Indian labourers to be brought to Fiji for a period of five years. *This was called the Indenture system.*

The Indian people were brought to Fiji from different parts of India between the years 1879 and 1916. Altogether 60,533 Indians came to Fiji during that time to work on the coconut, sugar, cocoa and other plantations that the white people owned in Fiji. The Indians were mostly uneducated people from the villages in India, who did not know where Fiji was. They thought it was in another part of India and that they would be able to live very much the same as they always had. But this was not the case.

They had to travel over the sea for nearly three months, and when they got to Fiji they were often treated very cruelly by the white plantation owners. They had to live in very poor houses, and were punished if they did not do all the work the overseers expected them to do each day. Often overseers sat on horses and whipped the Indian labourers in the field if they did not work very hard all the time. Other times the Indians had to give back some of their wages as a fine, or they were sent to jail, if there was not enough work done.

The Indian women had to get up at 3.00 am to bathe, cook breakfast and lunch before they went to the field to, work. They carried their babies on their backs and put them to sleep on sacks beside the

fields while they worked. Children too old to be carried to the field, played at home without anyone to care for them until they were 8 or 9 years old, then they too had to work on the fields. There was no school at all for them to go to. All the aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers were back in India, so there was no one to look after the children.

Only 0.1% of the Indians who came to Fiji were Christians; 83% were Hindus, Muslims 15% and Sikhs 2%. The Indians came firstly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar provinces, and later from the Punjab area in northern India and Madras in South India. They were very unhappy and missed their families back in India. Many became so angry they committed murder and other crimes and went to prison. The British Government only allowed four women for every ten men to come, so many men could not get married, and this led to a lot of fighting, divorce and immorality.

The labourers were to work as directed by the government and at the end of five years were to be free to return to India at their own expense. If they chose to stay in Fiji for another five years, the Fijian government would pay for their return to India, or, if they wished to stay in Fiji, they could do so.

The Indian government insisted that for every hundred men sent to Fiji, forty women should also be sent, so the labourers could have some sort of family life. In 1879, the first shipload of 498 labourers arrived from India. Indians chose to come for a number of reasons. The main reason was that they were poor, and wanted a fresh start.

The labourers were supplied with barracks to live in, each barrack containing sixteen small rooms. The walls between the rooms did not go right up to the ceiling, so the noise carried from one room to the next. In each room, there were either three single men or a married man with his wife and children. All living, cooking, eating and sleeping were carried out in this small room. There were no schools for the children, and very little medical care, which resulted in a high death rate. There were also suicides.

Workers were given a specific 'task' to do each day which had to be completed by nightfall. If the worker failed, he would receive no wages for that day and was liable to be prosecuted. The overseers were paid extra if their workers got through the work quickly, so they often used physical punishment to make the workers work harder.

Although there were inspectors, they were few, and did not come around very often. Even when the government inspector came, he seldom received a true picture of the working conditions. It was difficult for the Indians to make formal complaints because they did not understand the court system and could not pay for a lawyer.

In spite of the abuse of the indenture system, most of the Indians were better off than they had been in India, where many had been on the lowest level of society. In India they had been under the caste system where some were seen as being the lowest in society and were not allowed to mix with someone in a higher rank. This all disappeared in Fiji.

Although their work was hard and their conditions were cramped, they were getting a regular wage and were assured of food and shelter. The work of the Indians created a great expansion of the sugar industry and gave a boost to Fiji's economy.

### **The end of the indenture system**

The C.S.R. sugar company had to change its policy on the treatment of workers. The Indians were now free to stay and work on the plantation, return to India, or work independently in Fiji.



Many Indians remained in Fiji and became farmers, leasing land from Fijians. Others worked in trades or transport, as many do today.

### **Methodist missionaries to Indo-Fijians**

#### **Pastor John Williams**

In 1892, the first missionary from India, Pastor Williams, arrived in Suva and began work amongst Indians in Nausori, Koronivia and Davuilevu. He worked with the free Indian – (those whose indenture terms had finished). He was given a small boat by the church and traveled up the Rewa River to talk to the Indians who worked in the plantations.

Williams had a great deal of trouble here. He could not speak well in English, so the English missionaries did not understand him or look after him well. His wife, who was a well-educated woman, found life too hard and she became very ill. After one year, his wife left with their son to return to India. In May 1894, less than two years after arriving in Fiji, John Williams also left. The Mission shifted his little home to Davuilevu where it was used as a small hospital. The missionaries believed the work of teaching the Indians about Christianity was a failure, and for three years there was no full time Christian worker with the Indian people, until 1897 when Hannah Dudley came from Australia. The Church wanted her to work in Nausori and Davuilevu, but she chose to work in Suva.

#### **Mr Cyril Bavin**

In 1901 a missionary, Mr. Cyril Bavin worked for a year among the Indians in Nausori, and then returned to Australia to train to become a church minister. An Indian teacher named Joseph Jacob lived near Nausori and taught the Indian children.

#### **Rev. John Burton**

A year later, in 1902, Rev. Burton was appointed to the Indian work in Fiji. He was an Englishman, but raised and educated in New Zealand. He was a very well-educated man with degrees from university. Rev. Burton was appointed as Superintendent of the Indian Mission in Fiji, and for the first five months at Nausori, he and his wife lived in the two-roomed cottage originally built for John Williams. He arranged to have a new house built on Baker's Hill at Davuilevu.

The plantation owners were not happy to have missionaries working among the Indians, as they didn't want the Indians to learn to read and write, or think about anything other than their work and the life they knew then. They didn't want the Indians to have hope of rising above being a plantation worker. Therefore missionaries were not allowed to visit the Indian housing areas on the plantations.

After the Rev Burton complained to the government about the bad living conditions for the Indians. Burton, wrote a book in 1912 in which he outlined the abuses of the indenture system. He suggested a plan for better treatment of the labourers. In 1915 Andrews and Pearson were sent from England to Fiji, to investigate the conditions. They produced a report, and the Indian government decided to send no more workers.

Burton was successful in getting improvements to their housing, and gained permission from Government to visit Indians in their homes. He also learned the Hindi and Urdu languages.

Burton visited and spoke about the Gospel to the Indians in their homes on Sundays, and in the market places on Saturday afternoons. He used to leave home on Saturday evening, visiting villages, staying overnight in Indian homes, and continuing his visits on Sundays before returning home to Nausori. One man called Baramool was converted; this is his story:

Baramool had been a champion wrestler and had been to several times for assault. Then he became a Christian. Once a Muslim spat in his face. Baramool wiped the spittle from his face with the end of his loin-cloth. The muscles of his face tightened in anger, but then he calmly said, "Brother, if you had done that to me six months ago I would have killed you, but now, because I am a disciple of Jesus, I forgive you". He said to Burton afterwards "Padre Sahib, did they spit on Jesus?" On being told that this was so, Baramool replied, "Then I am a proud man today".

### **Care of Orphans, Dilkusha Home, and Dilkusha schools.**

Rev Burton and his wife began to take orphaned Indian children into their home, and Rev Burton's sister came to care for them. She was their care-giver and their teacher. Miss Austen, a missionary sister and a trained nurse later took over this work and she and six orphans had their own home, built near the Burton's home, in 1906, the first Dilkusha Home. In 1910 a hurricane destroyed the church, a house and the orphanage. The re-built home is the present double-storey building opened by the Governor of Fiji in September 1912. At present the home cares for more than 50 children, Indian and Fijian, mostly girls but a few young boys are also raised in the home.

In 1926 the Methodist Church built a new orphanage for boys, and the Home girls used their old building as a school. This was the first Dilkusha Girls' School and in addition to the children from the Home, it started to take in day pupils from around the Nausori area. In 1969 the first concrete double-story school building was opened. Miss C.J. Weston was headmistress for many years. By 1972 the school had a roll of 400.

### **Indian Marriage and Rev. Cyril Bavin**

By 1913 Bavin was back in Nausori working amongst the Indians, this time as an ordained minister. He was angry that Indians could only get married in front of a Government District Commissioner, and it was a very cold ceremony with no marriage vows and no words of acceptance on the part of the bride and the bridegroom. The Methodist Church, and other Churches protested to the Governor, but nothing was done to change this law. Mr. Bavin decided to perform a marriage ceremony for two young people from Dilkusha Orphanage. Bavin was prosecuted, but the defence lawyer said in court that it was a very bad thing to not allow the Indians a religious ceremony when all Fijians were able to be married by ministers of religion. Bavin won his case, and later a Marriage Ordinance in 1918 provided for religious ceremonies for Indian people.

### **List of notable Indo-Fijians**

Mahendra Chaudhry, fourth Prime Minister of Fiji  
Julian Moti, former Attorney General of the Solomon Islands.  
Rajen Prasad, former member of parliament in New Zealand  
Anand Satyanand, Governor General of New Zealand 2006–2011  
Lisa Singh, Australian Senator

### **The Chinese in Fiji**

The Chinese came to Fiji from Australia and New Zealand after discovery of gold in these countries in the 1850s. The first small Chinese community was established around Levuka in the 1870s. They ran small businesses and exported tortoise shells to their homeland. The new settlers were mostly males, and they married outside their ethnic group, mainly to Indians, part-Europeans and Europeans.

Today more than 50% of the Chinese population is involved in either mixed business or small restaurants. Another 15% are market gardeners, mainly in the Tamavua-Sawani districts, selling their produce at Nausori and Suva markets.

# Religions in Fiji

## Early religion

The old Fijian religion contained a myriad of gods and spirits. Along with the same gods worshiped in different parts of the country, each clan might have its own deities. The core of the system was ancestor worship in which people paid homage to their forebears, particularly the illustrious ones. Each clan had its own temples dedicated to one god or goddess - an ancestor with a specific role. Thus one ancestral spirit, perhaps descended from a great warrior, would be dedicated to warfare and cannibalism; others, perhaps descended from an agriculturalist, would be concerned with crop productivity; and others might be concerned with fishing or some other activity. Gods thus reflected the society from which they sprang.

Deification of chiefs went on right into the last century. This was evidenced on the battlefield, when warriors were reluctant to kill chiefs because they were seen as demigods - people who stemmed from the gods and had the potential to become gods. When a chief fell in a battle, the ranks broke and the enemy was for all practical purposes vanquished. This aspect was not lost on unscrupulous chiefs who hired European mercenaries to shoot enemy chiefs on sight. Perhaps this explains why a small group of Europeans backed by a strong 'conventional' Fijian army could wreak havoc upon armies of thousands of Fijian warriors.

## Christianity

Fiji owes its peaceful way of life to the early Christian missionaries who made great sacrifices to help the early Fijians put aside their life of war and bloodshed.

In 1830 the London Missionary Society made the first Christian contact with Fiji, when three Tahitian missionaries began their work in Lakeba, but they were unwelcome and had to move on to the nearby island of Oneata.

In 1835, English missionaries David Cargill and William Cross arrived in Lekeba. They had previously worked in Tonga. They were able to gain the confidence of the Fijian people. Cargill wrote the Fijian alphabet and set down the language in writing.

In 1838, Joeli Bulu, a Tongan missionary came to work in Fiji.

In 1867 Thomas Baker was killed by Fijians

In 1882, the missionaries turned their attention to the Indians who had been brought to Fiji as labourers in the sugar plantations. A request was sent to the Australian Methodist church and Pastor John William (not to be confused with missionary John Williams), was sent from India. However, he became ill and had to return to India.

In 1897 Miss Hannah Dudley, an Australian Methodist missionary, carried on the work among the Indians. It was through the efforts of the missionaries that the abuse to the Indian labourers was brought to the attention of the government and the indenture system dissolved.

The Methodist church was the earliest denomination to be established in Fiji. Other denominations which followed were:

Roman Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Christian Brethren, Salvation Army, Assemblies of God and Baptists.

### **Eastern Religions**

About 40% of Fiji's population are Indians, the majority of whom are descendants from the indentured labourers brought over from India in the nineteenth century. The majority were Hindus and a small number of believers in Islam.

### **Hinduism**

85% of the indentured labourers brought from India were Hindus. Christian missionaries in Fiji found that the Hindus agreed with much of what they said but did not convert to Christianity. Most would say that 'all roads lead to Rome' meaning that believing in Jesus is right and true but believing in other gods will also get you to heaven. Hinduism has a large number of gods and goddesses.

The Hindu community in Fiji has built many temples, schools and community centers over time. Diwali is their primary festival of the year.

Diwali is a public holiday in Fiji. It takes place near the end of October. It is really a succession of several holidays one after another. Little lamps called dipas are lit to decorate the home and garden. These are to guide the Hindu goddess Lakshmi, to people's homes. Hindus believe that she is the goddess of prosperity and fortune. Before the dipas are lit, people clean their homes and place wreaths of flowers on the door. Lakshmi is believed to ride on a swan. During Diwali, families gather to honour the moon. They prepare a feast and eat it under moon-shaped lamps. They say that the moon changes its face every 14 days, so they share a meal of 14 different dishes. Yama is the last Diwali holiday in which brothers and sisters promise love and loyalty to one another.

Hindus began building temples after their arrival in Fiji. These served as venues for marriages, annual religious festivals, family prayers after the death of loved ones, and other social events. The Hindu temples were constructed both in northern and southern Indian styles. The Shiva Hindu temple at Nadawar in Nadi, for example, was built in 1910; however this temple was destroyed in an arson attack and communal violence against Hindus in 2008. Sri Siva Subramaniya Hindu Temple in Nadi is the largest Hindu temple in Fiji.

In addition to temples, Hindus built schools and community centers to improve the social and educational opportunities.

Hindus have the reputation of being hard working. Among the Hindus of Fiji, any kind of work including physical labor in farms, is culturally considered a form of puja (prayer) and religious offering.

### **Sikhs**

Less than 2% of the Indian population of Fiji are Sikhs. This religion is an offshoot of Hinduism, founded in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century by Guru Nanak. His teachings were against the incredible amount of ritual and enormous number of gods and goddesses in Hinduism. He devised a far more simple form of worship.

### **The Society for Krishna Consciousness**

Also known as Hare Krishna, the followers of this eastern faith are quietly working to increase their small numbers. This religion is another offshoot of Hinduism but very few of the Indians have been

converted. Krishna followers have been most successful in operating Indian restaurants, and selling Indian sweets in Suva and Lautoka.

### **Islam**

The prophet Mohammed is believed to be the last greatest of the Islamic prophets and the Koran is the holy book that he wrote, as a result of a 'revelation'.

Fiji shows its religious tolerance by recognizing the prophet Mohammed's birthday in November as a public holiday. Ramadan in the ninth month of the Muslim year is observed with 30 days of fasting during the hours of daylight.

### **Jehovah's Witnesses and Latter-Day Saints**

These two religions also have a presence in Fiji. They mainly attract followers who are nominal or lapsed Christians or Hindus.

#### **Latter-Day Saints (Mormons):**

Here are four differences between what Mormons believe and what Christians believe:

- Mormons don't use the cross as a symbol of worship because they do not believe that Christ died to pay the price for our sins.
- Mormons believe that salvation comes through their won works rather than through the grace of Christ.
- Mormons believe that the prophet Joseph Smith is greater than Christ.
- Mormons believe in continuing revelation. While they accept the King James Version of the Bible, they also believe that the Book of Mormon has more authority.

#### **Jehovah's witnesses:**

Here are four differences between what Jehovah's Witnesses believe and what Christians believe:

- Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe that Jesus was fully God.
- Jehovah Witnesses do not believe in the Trinity and only believe the Holy Spirit to be an impersonal force or power from God.
- The Jehovah Witnesses state that good works are required to be saved.
- Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in Hell.

# The history of coups in Fiji

## What is a coup?

Coup d'état is a French term meaning "stroke of state".

Pronounced 'coo'

A coup is an illegal takeover of the government by a small group.

There have been four coups in Fiji, in the following years, all resulting from strife between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

- 1887 (2 in this year)
- 2000
- 2006

## The coup of 2000

The 2000 coup was aimed at the government under the first Indo-Fijians Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry.

On Friday, May 19, 2000, seven armed soldiers in civilian clothing led by Fijian businessman George Speight, took the prime minister, Mahendra Chaudhry, and other politicians hostage at Fiji's parliament in Suva, the capital. The opposing group threatened to shoot them if there was a rescue attempt. Speight said he was acting in the name of indigenous Fijians against a government dominated by ethnic Indians.

Speight and the armed soldiers held the politicians at gunpoint for 56 days. During this time, there was violence in the streets, theft and vandalism of shops. Fiji's economy collapsed overnight and all tourism was stopped.

On May 22 leaders of the Methodist Church, by far the biggest church in Fiji, representing about 70 percent of ethnic Fijians—publicly disassociated itself from the coup attempt.

The church's president, Tomasi Kanailagi, called on members "to pray for the nation and refrain from illegal activities, which are against what Christianity stood for."

Other churches, such as the Assemblies of God also called for prayer. The Anglican Bishop of Polynesia, Jabez Bryce, whose church has about 8,000 members in Fiji, and the biggest number of Indo-Fijian Christians, went a step further, stating that "in our democratic society there are legitimate ways to express disapproval. Those avenues have not been exhausted."

Speight declared himself Prime Minister, and immediately formed what he called an "interim government" and demanded the resignation of Fiji's president, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. Instead the president declared a state of emergency, which gave him executive powers, imposed a night curfew in Suva, and demanded the release of the hostages. Police and army commanders publicly supported the state president.

Speight demanded that the government be controlled completely by ethnic Fijians.

Prime Minister Chaudhry had been widely criticized as being arrogant and insensitive to ethnic Fijian concerns, especially in relation to land reform. Many Indo-Fijians leased land owned by Fijians under a 99-year-lease system. These leases were now expiring, and many ethnic Fijians were not willing to

renew them, forcing Indo-Fijians off the land. Land forms a strong part of indigenous Fijian's cultural identity.

While the crowds gathered at Parliament to support the Speight coup, many prayed and sang hymns. But on the other hand, some Fijians looted about 200 shops, most owned by Indians, causing damage estimated at US\$15 million.

But there is another side to this coup that is rarely publicly voiced, namely traditional divisions among ethnic Fijians. Fiji has three large, traditional "tribal" or provincial alliances that predate British colonialism. These divisions now surfaced, as chiefs declared their support either for the president or for Speight.

Many Fijians expressed horror and shame at these actions. While they agreed with some of Speight's grievances, they did not believe a coup was the way to resolve the problems.

Through this political upheaval there was soul searching among Christians. Everywhere people were praying and crying out to God. The solution had to come from God. It was only prayer that pulled Fiji back from the brink of disaster.

For a long time, churches were divided and not in unity. There were attitudes of "We are right" and "They are wrong". It was time for Fiji's church to repent. Cooperation with God and each other was long overdue.

#### **An end to the 2000 coup**

An interim government headed by Commodore Frank Bainimarama was set up, and handed power over to an interim administration headed by Ratu Josefa Iloilo, as President, on 13 July, 2000. A meeting was held for churches all over the country. It was called at short notice and had a huge response. From this meeting, an "The Association of Christian churches in Fiji" was formed. Three weeks of prayer was declared across the nation. Multitudes flocked to another meeting at Albert Park in Suva, where acting Prime Minister Josefa Iloilo made a speech. "Our efforts to improve this country will come to nothing," he said, "unless they are submitted to God."

Iloilo initiated a revival torch which was carried from place to place throughout the nation. Christians prayed for the next government. Bainimarama, head of the army, managed to end the coup without bloods shed and was democratically elected as Prime Minister in the elections of 2001 and 2006.

#### **Results of repentance in the years 2000 -2004**

One month into the coup, a meeting of reconciliation was held between Fijians and Indians. Fijians helped Indians to repair their shops and replant their farms.

The churches experienced revival across Fiji. The walls between denominations were broken down. As people turned to the Lord, there was a reduction of crime in the streets and a recovery of the economy. Tourism returned. Many Indians turned to the Lord and many experienced healing. People in the prisons opened up their hearts to ministry. Those responsible for overtaking the government repented and came to the Lord, even George Speight.

Remote places also experienced a cleansing. In many villages in rural areas ancestral spirit worship was still practiced. Even though the days of cannibalism were over, the spirits remained. Some could walk on hot stones and not feel heat. Another practice was to take a basket of leaves to the top of the mountain to gain blessing from the ancestral spirits. When the leaves were brought back a curse

was placed over the village. Other people in rural areas were involved in the drug trade. They planted marijuana and secretly sold it to people from overseas. Some were addicted to drink.

As revival swept across Fiji, people from the rural villages turned to the Lord. The curses on their villages were lifted. People stopped fire walking, drugs and drink. Many were healed of physical ailments.

The village of Naku on the island of Tovulili, had experienced decades of social upheaval and witchcraft. Their soil was unproductive and their water had become toxic. The water in the river was white and no longer supported life. Crops planted around the river died. But when the people turned to God, the water became clean and fresh and fish that the people had not seen for 55 years returned. Shellfish returned. Grasses on the river bank came back. Crops were productive again. Trees started bearing fruit. Plants that had previously only produced small bananas now produced large bananas. Taro planted close to the river bank was productive.

In 2003 the village of Nabutautau, which had been responsible for the murder of Methodist missionary Thomas Baker, set out to achieve a cleansing. Relatives of Thomas Baker were invited from Australia to attend a special reconciliation ceremony. As the people of the village repented on behalf of their forefathers, they felt the chains of guilt removed. In January 2004, an official year of prayer was declared throughout Fiji. Like the revival of the 1800s, Fiji experienced the power of God transforming the nation.

### **The 2006 coup**

A long-running conflict between the government and military of Fiji reached crisis point in early December 2006. The unrest was caused by three bills under consideration by the Fijian parliament, one of which would pardon some of the rebels who participated in the coup of 2000.

On 4 December, a well-planned military presence made itself known in Suva by setting up strategic road blocks, making public demonstrations of their presence and seizing weapons from opposing factions, including the police.

On 5 December, many key government ministers and chief executives were placed under house arrest and President Ratu Josefa Iloilo signed an order dissolving Parliament. Two Australian soldiers died in a Blackhawk helicopter crash after Australia moved three warships to waters near Fiji in case evacuation of foreign nationals became necessary.

The December 2006 coup was aimed at doing away with chiefly dominance and corruption. Its aim was to bring about accountability, transparency and inter-ethnic tolerance.

### **References:**

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George Otis Jr, *Let the seas resound*



# Fiji's foods from nature

Castaway Chef Lance Seeto  
Fiji Times Sunday, March 30, 2014

Nature provides all living creatures with seasonal fruits, vegetables and sea life in a carefully orchestrated provision of essential vitamins and minerals to heal, repair and provide sustenance.

Fijians are very lucky to be able to still enjoy eating fruits and vegetables in-season. Right now ivi chestnuts, avocado, pink guava and duruka are in abundance in markets and street stalls.

In the next few months it will be breadfruit and fish like tugadra and salala sardines. The seasons are a source of natural diversity and considered essential for balance for both the planet's resources and its life forms.

Seasonal foods not only provide medicine for the body at the right time of the year, they are also a reminder of foods we looked forward to as children.

## **Duruka - asparagus or cane shoot?**

One of the pleasures of seasonal Fijian produce is not knowing exactly when they will start appearing at the markets and roadside stalls.

Over the past month, bundles of the early season red duruka, or Fijian asparagus, have been lining the streets of Suva like American Indian teepees.

It's more fancy name is Sugar Cane Blossom. Duruka may look similar to the European asparagus but that's where similarities end, as it is actually a member of the sugar cane family.

The unopened flower head in the stem can be eaten raw or cooked, and is enjoyed by South Pacific cultures boiled, poached in coconut milk or roasted.

The porous texture of the flower soaks up sauces well, which is why it is perfect cooked in fresh coconut milk, but next time try it with an Asian sauce like sweet and sour, garlic oyster or brown bean.

You can even crumble the flower and saute it French style with butter and garlic, or Thai style with ginger, basil, chili and soy.

## **Ivi – Tahitian chestnuts**

Another favourite that we wait for each year is ivi, or Tahitian chestnuts.

As their name suggests they did not originate in Fiji, and can be found across the South Pacific and stretching across to South East Asia. Boiled, roasted or pureed, you can't eat too many of them in one sitting as they are notorious for creating very stinky flatulence (smelly fart).

Boiled or roasted, ivi are a delicious chestnut that can be eaten natural, pureed to serve with a main course, or used in cakes and desserts. Just be sure you only have one serving!

## **Guava - the queen of fruits**

If pineapple is known as the "king of fruits" then quwawa, or guava must be the queen.

In Fiji, it is popular to make them into jam and chutney, but these small fruit hide a secret gift from nature if you eat them raw.

Guava is undoubtedly one of my favourite seasonal fruits that look out for each year and is finally in abundance.

This pink guava should be eaten with its ripened yellow skin left on, as it is high in vitamin C and fibre, which helps strengthen our body to fight off many types of viral infections.

The fibrous flesh, skin and seeds also act as a broom to sweep away food particles and cancer-causing toxins out of the body. Guava may be small fruit but they are jam-packed with vitamins and minerals that help protect the heart, blood, membranes and skin.

Eat one a day in a balanced diet for added protection and medicine, or try out my guava and ginger sasa juice recipe. It's medicine for the body, tastes deliciously fruity, and it mops and brooms at the same time.

### **More to look forward to**

As we dig out old recipes for this month's seasonal produce, what does the rest of the year have in store?

April is traditionally the month of breadfruit and tugadra fish, while in May there is plentiful uvi leka yams and salala mackerel.

In June, daniva sardines and matu fish appear, while July sees the beginning of the kuita (octopus) season.

August signals the start of Fiji's colder season and blooming of flowers, but it is also a time when octopus and vaya sardines are plentiful.

September is traditionally the start of mango season and the beginning of spawning for one of Fiji's most cultural fish, kawakawa, or the grouper and cod family of fish. October usually brings the balolo, or sea worms, up from the depths of the oceans floor.

November is the start of the big season of food including crabs, walu, kavika apples and ripened pineapples. The Fijians call December, vula i nuqa lailai as it is generally when the abundance of small nuqa, or rabbit fish, begin appearing.

1. What are the advantages of eating fruits and vegetable in-season?
2. Who wrote this article and what is his position?
3. In which month of the year did he write this article?
4. In dot points, list some special features of: daruka, ivi and guava.
5. Make a list of at least 6 of your favourite Fijian foods from nature.
6. Draw a time line to show the availability of seasonal foods in Fiji throughout the year. Use words and pictures.

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