

# Chapter 10

## Cultural Survey of the Nakauvadra Range, Ra Province, Fiji

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### SUMMARY

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During the course of the survey, an annotated field map of significant cultural sites was constructed to identify and map sites of historical and cultural significance in the Nakauvadra Range. Our resulting maps generally depicted that resting spots or stop-over spots were found high up in the forest and close to mountain peaks. Fortified settlements in the form of ring-ditches and stone walls were evident further up into the forest and closer to water sources.

Also observed were mound features used as native land boundaries showing land holding units amongst the different yavusa or clans during *Rt. Sukuna's* presence in the *Veitarogi Vanua* around the early 1950s.

### INTRODUCTION

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The Nakauvadra Range in the province of Ra is renowned locally as a significant cultural site with many links to legendary tales of Fiji's colorful past. Having being dubbed the "highway" for many of Fiji's ancestors across Viti Levu in the days when modern forms of transportation were unheard of, the Nakauvadra Range is rich in evidence of settlements and historical events that have been reinforced by oral traditions passed down by elders and scripted accounts from the *Vola Vivigi* or "blue book" containing descriptions of historical events that took place along the range.

Although very rugged and difficult to access, the inhabitants of the Nakauvadra forest probably chose to construct their settlements on high altitude to better protect them from raging enemies. Our primary aim was to identify and map sites of cultural significance in the Nakauvadra Range. Below is an account of the different sites of cultural significance found in order of visit during the survey.

### METHODS

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The Fiji Museum-Archaeology Department assessed most of the archaeological/historical sites during the first week of the survey (Map 10 for site locations). The second week was spent mainly focusing on the collection of oral histories and general knowledge about the Nakauvadra Range from the people of Vunisea village.