



THE GREAT EXODUS OF TETEPARE ISLANDERS

Produced by:

**Isaac Molia
Program Coordinator
FRIENDS OF TETEPARE**

with technical assistance from:

**Rence Arden Soreh
Community Resource Planning Officer
COMMUNITY RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
World Wide Fund for Nature
South Pacific Program**

February 2000

Acronym

EIA Environment Impact Assessment
FOT Friends Of Tetepare
RAC Rendova Area Council
RMO Resource Management Order
RMP Resource Management Plan
SIG Solomon Islands Government

SPREP South Pacific Regional Environment Program
TDC Tetepare Development Company
TOLOA Tetepare Original Landowners Association
WW2 World War 2
WWF World Wide Fund for Nature

THE GREAT EXODUS OF TETEPARE ISLANDERS

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Location

Tetepare Island is a stone age relic that sits along the long crescent of volcanic islands and coral atolls in Solomon Islands. It is the largest uninhabited island in the country and the South Pacific.

The island is situated at 9030N, 340E and covers a total landmass of 120 square kilometres. It is 27 kilometres in length and 7 kilometres wide and is separated from the nearby Rendova Island by the Balfour Channel and from New Georgia and Vangunu Islands by the Blanche Channel. The island has an average elevation of 200 metres above sea level and the highest point is 357 metres.

1.2 People of Tetepare

All descendants of Tetepare have collectively inherited Tetepare and have 'equal' access to its rich forest and marine resources. Tetepare is said to mean a 'fighting pig' or 'wild boar' in the islands long forgotten dialect, and hunting of tetepare (pig) continues to be a valuable subsistence activity for nearby landowners.

Bill Carter in his Conservation Strategy for the Island of Tetepare noted the following factual observations:

".. in the nineteenth century several tribal groups lived in villages scattered across the island but mainly on the Northern, leeward side of the island. They relied on fishing, gathering of rainforest products and planting small garden plots." (Carter, 1997)

Indicating, therefore, that the people of Tetepare like their Western Province neighbors were hunters, gatherers and fisherfolks. Besides, legends also reveal that the people were at one point of time fierce warriors, with a distinct language and unique cultural behavior. The wild acts of headhunting pursuits by the original inhabitants of Tetepare did not last but backfired only to prove that:

"In mid 1800 these inhabitants fled the island, spreading throughout Marovo lagoon. Rendova, Kolobangara and Simbo" (Carter, 1997)

Though not recorded by Carter, oral history further confirmed that other remnants of the original peoples of Tetepare also fled to the adjacent New Georgia, Roviana Lagoon, Vona Vona Lagoon, Gatokae and Ranongga Islands. Despite such peaceful trends of the great exodus a century and half-later many descendants still revere Tetepare as the home of their ancestors.

This was due to certain factors, which circumstances made it not possible to foresee at the time of the great exodus. First, is the spiritual significance of the island, second is the abundance in supply of the islands rainforest and marine resources and last is the presence of swelling populations and intensive environmental threats in their adopted villages, communities or islands.

1.3 Commercial Plantation

The introduction of commercial coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) plantations on the island was in the mid-1910s. Original commercial traders contracted local persons from nearby islands to plant coconut trees and in c1940 copra yields between 250 and 330 tons per year. Copra was exported to outside islands and exchanged with cash.

Mid 1910 to 1972 was the era of intensive commercial trading by exploitative foreign traders on the island. Also, it was common to find that during this era there were no indigenous population or villages on the island except human occupation by a small group whom were hired to live in plantations to cultivate *cocos nucifera*.

Plantation workers abandoned all plantations of *cocos nucifera*, along with its expatriate management in late 1972. Since then active or regular human intervention to the island ecosystem has been very minimal.

1.4 Ecology

Tetepare is the rarest form of an island in the country with virtually no large-scale inhabitation by humans for the past 130 years. Though plantation workers and expatriate managers or owners did minimal intervention since the mass withdrawal of Tetepare descendants.

In this connection, it can be argued that major portions of the island's natural resources are almost virgin. Such an almost virgin or 'neutral' state makes the island ecologically rich and valuable for the natural and biological multiplication of flora, fauna and aquatic species, which are vital sources of food and income for peoples of the nearby places.

1.5 Flora and Fauna

Studies on the composition of flora in Tetepare were not immediately available at the time of writing; records relied are on incident sightings, studies of individual species and indigenous knowledge. Despite such shortfalls, given decades of no human habitation, the geophysical character of the island and the isolation of the island, it seems reasonable to predict that Tetepare will prove to be a veritable biological new laboratory.

John Read and Katherine Moseby in a pilot survey of amphibians and reptiles of Tetepare found that a total of 21 reptiles and 4 frog species were found during the study. In addition 7 mammals and 48 bird species were also recorded during the brief survey.

In fact, the Tetepare White Eye (*Zosterops tetiparia*), an endemic species of bird, was first recorded on the island by Diamond in 1976. *Zosterops tetiparia* is identified differently by population (appearance, behavior and song) from similar species on New Georgia and the nearby Rendova Island.

In addition to that is consensus that Tetepare also offers an ideal ecology for the habitation of crocodiles, which live in its rivers, near the coast. The significant non-disturbance of Tetepare habitat will maintain the replenishment of its wildlife.

1.6: Forestry Ecosystem

Studies have shown that the forests of Tetepare are largely in a natural or 'less' disturbed state, though minimal disturbance by shifting agriculture which is consistent with a previous large and active population was recorded by Tegler (1994).

Carter found that stock take of virgin forests indicate that the untouched rainforests of Tetepare represent about 4% of the remaining primary resources in the province and around 30% of the untouched hills on the sedimentary ridge environmental domain.

The biodiversity is complex in composition and structure. Studies by Carter have shown that canopy trees include akwa (*Pometia pinnata*), malakona (*Buchanania arborescens*), arakoko (*Gmelina moluccana*) and vassa (*Vitex cofassus*) and other emergent plants are also commonly found on the island.

He further noted that akwa, vassa and La'usi (*Celtis latifolia*) dominate the raised coral platforms of the Northern coast. Under cover trees include marmalade (*Alangium javanicum*) and kakala'a (*Myristica fatua*). In the Southern Coastline he wrote that the beach forest is dominated by undisturbed plant species of U'ula (*Intsia bijuga*), akwa, ba'ula (*Calophyllum kajewskii*), and one one (*Heritiera littoralis*).

In the Southeast extremity of the island is a small area of lowland rainforest. The rainforests occur on flat land and is often associated with fresh water swamps. This complex ecology has often been a target for conversion to coconut plantation and agriculture systems.

It can be said that the ecological undisturbed tall forest of Tetepare is significant. The forestry is suitable for conservation because of its physical environmental and anthropological significance that gives birth to unusual, rare, endangered species or ecosystems to breed and multiply.

1.7 Marine Resources

The availability of marine and aquatic resources, shortly after the mass exodus of Tetepare Islanders, was enormous. The population of fish, green snail, trochus, beach-de-mer and turtle to name a few increased dramatically. This was due to the fact that news of the sea devil and other associated versions of such stories were still fresh among the nearby islanders. Later, intervention to marine life by mankind became fraudulent.

2.0: Timeline

Table 1: Timeline of Events

Date	Event
Pre 1860	Tetepare People live in large communities on the island
c1860	The island is abandoned due to (a) disease (b) minate (headhunting & warfare) © beach or sea devil magic (d) famine
1894	English trader buys first turtle shell
1898	Solomon Islands becomes British Protectorate
c1900	Burns Philip negotiates with Rendova people to lease Tetepare. Crown grants lease over the land
1902	Methodist Church arrives in Munda – clothes, tobacco and kerosene introduced
1910	Coconut plantation commences at the Northwest tip of the island.
1918	Planting is completed (51784 coconut palms) and includes a 9.5 strip on the Southern coast at the nearest point to Rendova.
c1940	Plantations yield between 250 and 330 tons per year, the best output from BP's Western Province properties. Cattle and pigs provide breeding stock for other BP properties and meat for local consumption. Workforce consists of manager, assistant and stockman and about 70 islander workers.
1942	Lease abandoned due to imminent invasion by Japanese.
March 1942	Japanese occupy the Solomon Islands.
August 1942	Allied Forces arrive.
January 1943	Japanese retreat complete.
c1949	The crown buys the lease for 10,000 pound including derelict buildings for the purpose of resettling Rennellese. The idea was later rejected. An annual lease was granted to K H Dairyample – Hay.
October 1951	Roy Gilmour Hodge resides and manages the property to December 1952. Temporary accommodation and a drying facility were erected. A tramway (1.5 miles) was made serviceable.
1952	Clearing of scrub infestation was not attempted due to lack of labour. Plantation yields 265 tonnes per year including a 6 Month period when worker strengthens averaged 18 men.
1953 – February 1961	Four managers in this period reopened some pre-war tracks for tractor and trailer equipment. Tram rails were removed. Accommodation and buildings remained unimproved.
c1960	Last of the original inhabitants of Tetepare died.
1 March 1961 –30 September 1970	Hodge is again manager, residing on Tetepare but also managing his property Turufie on Rendova.

Date	Event
1961	Plantation (724.8 ha) surveyed for lot 1 of LR173 as a fixed term estate along with Lot 3 (10.12 ha) as part of Lot 1. Balance of the island reverts to the crown. 600 acres of land cleared of scrub. Temporary buildings replaced include a two stage dryer and worker clubhouse. Worker accommodation upgraded. Copra production varied from 207 – 269 tonnes per year.
19 January 1965	Lot 3 registered with the commissioner of lands.
1969 – 1970	Tetepare copra production declined. Dairyample-Hay retired to Australia.
1 October 1970	Hodge offered Tetepare lease for SBD10,000.00 plus SBD1,200.00 adjustment for plant. Lease granted for 69 years. 150 acres of plantation leased to a Rendova group with a view to purchase the resettlement.
1970s	Increasing exploitation of Tetepare resources by peoples of Rendova and Viru.
1971	Copra production increased to 251 tonnes per year. Workforce was mostly from Malaita and Guadalcanal.
12 August 1971	Labour unrest began in Western Province. Problems occurred with workforce stability in Tetepare. Commissioner of Labour accused Hodge for 'holding men against their will'. Hodge denied allegation. Property production valued at 20 tons per month x SBD2,000.00 equals SBD40,000.00
31 December 1972	Buildings valued at SBD17, 570.00. Copra prices declined.
January 1972	P. Solodia, Inspector of the Commissioner of Labour inspected Tetepare. Copra prices further declined. Properties began to shut down.
February 1972	Hodge obtained credit and maximized production. Boat chartered for SBD1, 000.00 to recruit labour.
1974	Agriculture and Industrial loans board took over lease of Lot 1 (724 ha)
1976	Land Resources Survey recommended Tetepare as a natural reserve. Diamond recommended Tetepare to become a conserved area.
14 April 1978	Lot 1 transferred to the Development Bank of Solomon Islands
1980	Dahl recommended Tetepare to become a conserved area.
1985	SPREP recommended that Tetepare become a conserved area.
1989	Western Province Preservation of Culture Ordinance passed.
1991	Maruia Society recommended Tetepare to become a conservation area.
1991	Western Province Environment Policy encouraged local communities to declare Tetepare as a protected area. Last person who heard the voice of Kaluvesu died. Logging interest placed caveat on Lot 1.
1992	Caveat over Lot 1 removed.
1993	Solomon Islands National Environmental Management Strategy produced.
1994	The Tetepare Development Company funded by Goodwill proposed to log the island. TOLOA formed and proposed resettlement schemes after logging. Tetepare tribes around Gatokae opposed the logging proposal.
1994	TCSP recommended the island as a reserve for forest and birds. Tegler submitted report on Environmental Resources of Tetepare.
1995	SolFRI recommended Tetepare area to become a conserved area.
24 May 1995	Tetepare Development Company gained approval to negotiate acquisition of timber rights over Tetepare.
15 August 1995	Rendova Area Council (RAC) coordinated timber rights hearing at Lambete, meeting was adjourned.

Date	Event
19 September 1995	RAC rejected timber rights proposal of Tetepare Development Company.
6 – 7 October 1996	Friends of Tetepare (FOT) was formed. Rendova Area Council revoked decision of 19 September 1995. Premier of Western Province suspended RAC and recognised the original decision.
25 November 1996	Resource Planning and Management Workshop.
January 1997	Program by FOT to document Tetepare tribal groups and historical data. First FOT newsletter 'Tetepare Watch' published.
June 1997	Conservation Strategy for Tetepare Workshop held.
January 1998	Stephen Kido recruited by WWF as FOT Coordinator. Later, Isaac Molia became Coordinator and S. Kido Chairman of FOT
December 1998	Australia funds FOT to produce Resource Management Plan. FOT Coordinator worked on full time basis.
January 1999	FOT affiliation with WWF.
December 1999	Bill Carter's' Conservation Strategy for the Island of Tetepare implemented.
January 2000	FOT Coordinator compiles information for a report on 'The Great Exodus of Tetepare'.
February 2000	Rence Sore, WWF Resource Planning Officer writes draft with FOT Coordinator
March 2000	Report submitted to Australian High Commission

Source: Carter, B: August 1997; *Conservation Strategy for the Island of Tetepare, Western Province, Solomon Islands, World Wide Fund for Nature South Pacific Programme, Gizo, Solomon Islands.*

3.0 History of the Great Exodus

According to unwritten knowledge, that is oral tradition, the original tribes of Tetepare were unique and not related to those of the neighborhood islands. The people of Tetepare spoke a distinct language, had strange custom or behavior and were hostile to the neighboring island groups. They were warriors and practiced cannibalism. Unfortunately, disaster struck and the people of the island dispersed to the neighbouring islands.

3.1 Causes of the Great Exodus

Direct descendants of Tetepare commonly recall that the causes of the mass exodus of Tetepare islanders were associated to disease, head hunting warfare (*minate*), beach or sea devil magic (*kavori*) and possibilities of a great famine that was said to be associated with the devils curse.

3.1.1 Disease

The Big Sick

At a date commonly referred to as 'long ago' by the descendants, exact time was not fixed in the unnumbered years of oral tradition, the people of Tetepare were struck by a 'big sick'. The big sick was an epidemic of chronic dysentery and was said to be contagious.

Healing by herbal medicine could not cope with the genocidal kind of death of Tetepare Islanders, which was caused by the big sick. Hence, the population of Tetepare was threatened with extinction. As a result the nearby island groups which at one stage were battlefields for Tetepare Islanders instead provided safe havens for the displaced Tetepare Islanders.

The Whalers Disease

The search for whales in the Pacific Region was common in the 1800 to 1887. At this period Tetepare descendants say that it was common to find foreign boats around islands near the boar land. It can be claimed, therefore, that the whalers had made earlier contacts with the local Tetepare residents. The level of contact was not clear but casual 'touch' and perhaps warfare could be implied.

In the process, researchers claimed that contagious disease was communicated between the warring parties. The newly introduced disease as it was not common on the island caused uncontrollable disaster. No known local medicinal plants could cure the whaler's disease though it might not be a serious headache with today's modern technological development.

This occurrence of the whalers disease might have combined with the big sick and resulted in the death of people while others fled to look for healthy space somewhere on the nearby islands.

3.1.2 Minate (Headhunting warfare)

When the fate of the disease was still striking the islanders, headhunters from the nearby Lokuru and Ugele villages of Rendova Island were also on a headhunting 'warfare' mission to Tetepare. On the island the raiders were astonished to find that unburied dead bodies lay all over the place. The human catastrophe was the result of the big sick and possibly the introduced whalers' disease.

Also, hardly any war canoes were visible. Despite such a sad incident of the great loss to mankind the warriors took no pity but beheaded Tetepare islanders who were alive and seen on sight at that time. As a result the lucky islanders retreated to nearby 'friendly spots'.

Battle of Daepago

Gangani, is the chief warrior of Ugele and son of Chief Pirikukuti. The warrior was famous for his bravery and was fearless. At the battle of Daepago, Gangani led his troop, landed at Tofa village and attacked a group of Tetepare islanders who were feasting. It was at this war that Gangani and his warriors almost slaughtered the entire villagers of Daepago. Dead bodies were left unburied at Tofa and Daepago.

Evidences of bones for dead persons can be seen around the Tofa and Daepago region even to this date. At the same time a number of the limited survivors of the battle of Daepago left Tetepare for nearby islands.

R.G.Hodge, manager of a coconut plantation on Tetepare Island (1951; March 1, 1961 to September 30, 1970) also documented a similar trend; '*.....for uncounted ages before the disappearance of the Tetepare tribe, they had been raided by groups of Rendova warriors and warriors from further islands. Captives were sometimes taken away by the raiders.....for a fate worse than death or just death.*' (Hodge, 1970)

Tetepare Islanders when taken as captives belong to a class no higher than that of a slave. Even worse was the practice that Tetepare women when taken as captives without the consent of tribal members and with no proper custom marriage would immediately cease ownership of Tetepare land. This was one major cause of the fast distortion of Tetepare customs, language and way of life.

3.1.3 The Devils Spell

Kavori (Beach or Sea Devil Magic)

Oral history also had it that another major cause of the great exodus of Tetepare islanders was 'ill will' or 'spell' casted to the people by the beach or sea devil magic traditionally known as *Kavori*.

In the good olden days the *kavori* was always friendly to the people of Tetepare and hostile only to their foes. Somehow, no body knew for certain as to why the devil reacted so violently against its people. Conspiracy theories had it that catastrophic diseases were dispelled to them and protection from enemies could not be guaranteed.

Hence, oral tradition had it that those outsiders from Lokuru and Ughele had an easy ride in the pre 1860 attack of Tetepare Island.

Olisugu

Another version of this supernaturally designed spell was that of *Olisugu*. Just like *kavori*, *Olisugu* was a god of protection for Tetepare islanders. The message of enemy attacks would be communicated to the people well in advance prior to the foe's warfare mission. Unfortunately, disrespect to *olisugu* turned the favor upside down for Tetepare islanders. The spell was cast and disaster struck the people of Tetepare.

Also, descendants say that even to this date the reversed natural order of the devil is still very much effective. In the immediate past entry to the island was greatly restricted not by human imposition but supernatural works. Even public mention of the name *olisugu* is reserved for the elderly.

Loduvuvusu

Once in history Chief Odikana of Saikile led his tribal warriors to raid Tetepare Island. The warfare troop landed at Karikari and tribal war fought at Kupa. Unfortunately, Chief Odikana was seriously wounded and fell dead on return.

Matarihe, Chief Odikana's blood sister was dismayed over the failed mission. She planned retaliatory measures; which in Melanesian societies is commonly known as pay back system. The Saikile butubutu in turn 'hiulu vagia rini' or negotiated *loduvuvusu* (magical spell - hilivuvusu) with the people of Hoava at Kusaghe. The request was granted.

Loduvuvusu was burnt at point *Lisa* (*taboo site - hope*) on the shores of Saikile land, wrapped into a parcel of pandanus leaf and brought to Tetepare Island. When the parcel was unwrapped on enemy territory the magic spread and affected men, women and children of Tetepare. Another version had it that the parcel was burned, smokes blown upward into the skies and descended at Karikari. When smoke was fully spread on the island curse was spelt among the inhabitants and the disease spread.

3.2 Migration to Nearby Islands

The senior descendants of Tetepare land would recall that their ancestors left the land of pigs in small numbers. Most probably, was the fact that relocation done in groups of two, three or even lone travelers. It was not possible to escape in large groups because enemies would identify them and curse would again befall on them. The following accounts, which were collected during the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000 tours, give evidence to the above assumptions.

Migration to Mariu Island

According to T. Palmer of Gatokae, Mudala was the first settler from Tetepare to arrive on the island of Mariu. Mudala, also, planted plots of coconut palms on the newly found land.

On realization that a total stranger had grown plantations on a strange land the fierce people of Vangunu reacted violently and attacked Mudala. Mudala eventually died but his tribal members of *Kupa* clan knew the ordeal.

Hence, up to this date the islands of Mariu remain lands with sacred attachments for *Kupa* tribesmen and women. As a result the lineage's of *Mahu* and *Mara*, two Gatokae offshoots of *Kupa* tribe, claim ownership of the island natural resources.

The tale of the five sisters

At the height of the Tetepare tension, when the devil's spell was unveiled, headhunting missions at its peak and side effects caused due to the dissatisfaction of traditional gods, families were forced to separate and scatter to lands of the unknown inhabitants.

The tale of the five sisters revealed that two sisters migrated to Nusa Roviana and headhunters took three of them to captivity.

Vurubehu and Tirodonga's fate: Vurubehu and Tirodonga were young when they fled from Tetepare Island. The two sisters whom accounts said were strong and knowledgeable about the nearby islands went ashore to Kalikoqu side of Nusa Roviana. On arrival they were taken to the Paramount Chief and questioned. Later, released and allowed to settle on conditions that they marry the Paramount Chiefs two sons. As choices for captives were non-existent the sisters accepted the proposal and married Tulohite and Podala.

Historical analysis of the sister's genealogy is explained in *Item 3.4: Oral History of Genealogy*.

3.3 Captivity to Nearby Islands

Raids by Bene

Bene was a *Varane* (warrior) and chief of Kokorapa. On various occasions he raided Tetepare Island. On each raid *Veala's* were taken to captivity. The *Veala's* were captives usually aged 6 to 9 years. They would be kept in custody by the chief's household, fattened by his servants, slaughtered and offered as sacrifices to the ancestors of the custodians.

The tale of *Zarorega* and *Doavoja*, the two sisters owed its origin on the successful raids of Bene. The two were blood-related sisters of *Vurubehu* and *Tirodonga* who paddled to Nusa Roviana and another was a *veala* who was taken to Duke.

Zarorega and Doavoja

During one of the successful raids by the people of Chief Bene three female's were taken as *Veala's*. At this time warrior Leko, the chief's right hand man, led the raiders. The females were a woman with her two daughters and were captured in a river whilst washing.

Zorega and Death of Ogunu from Duke

When the *Ogunu* (paramount chief) of Duke died all other chiefs on the island gathered to pay tribute to the deceased traditional leader. It was a traditional practice that at the end of the '*Huara hago*' (mourning session) a *veala* would be killed and eaten to show respect to the deceased soul.

As such the search for a *veala* began. *Kapisi*, *Katagala* and three strongmen composed a party to look for a *veala*. The party went to Kindu at first but was directed to go to Soe village near Dunde instead. They found the *veala's* and for three *bakiha's* (traditional money) and 2 white shell money bought one. The victim later identified as *Zorega* was then brought to Duke and on arrival at the river mouth of Malanga the party blew *ghoru* (corn shell) to signal the arrival of the team after a successful mission.

At the inland village of *Saruqu* the team had *Zorega* wrapped in a custom umbrella ready for sacrifice. Fortunately, for the victim the widow of the deceased chief, named *Vinia*, demanded to see the child. In the beginning the men resisted but with the strong begging power of the widow they gave in at last. The parcel was unwrapped and the child was exposed and laid in a helpless manger. At first sight *Vinia* grabbed the child with heartfelt passions of human love.

Zorega, at that time, was fed with roasted taro and the men were offered a pig as a substitute item for sacrifice instead. Also, oral history had it that *Zorega* revealed that on the day she departed from the loving arms of her

mother, *potana* (magical spell of good luck) was whispered to her to resist and avoid destructive evil forces. This was the working of *Zipolo* (bush shrub) or as they say '*rekise pa lelei*'. Zorega at her old age passed *kaluvesu* (spiritual powers) of *zipolo* to her descendants.

Life long proof of this traditional history is the fact that descendants of Zorega at Duke even to this date still plant *zipolo's* for '*vina ibu*' (fishing) and '*vina kari*' (farming) in their garden. The *kaluvesu* of *zipolo* still performs miracle.

Doavoja

Historical hearsay's visualized that the people of *Kuava* also went to Munda to look for *veala*. The *veala* taken was *Doavoja* and was bought from Chief Bene and Leko. *Doavoja* was taken to *Kuava* and adopted by the people of *Kuava*. She grew to become an attractive young woman.

At one point in history *Paramount Chief Korotai* of *Tubilavata* tribe on Ranogga Island invited *Kuava* villagers for a traditional feast. The feast was organised to commemorate a sacred tambu site for the tribe of *Tubilavata*. As part of the deal to attend the feasting ceremony, *Todoko* of *Kuava* was instructed to include the *veala* – *Doavoja* in his team. The requested was met and the *veala* went with the people of *Kuava*.

On arrival and at first sight *Deuru*, the son of the Chief, fell in love with the slave girl. Marriage was eventually arranged and the descendants of *Doavoja* prospered. Traditional history had it that *Doavoja* originated from *Salevo* on Tetepare Island.

Padakiavara

The descendants of *Tubilavata* claimed that *Doavoja*, *Tirodonga* and *Zarorega* had another sister. She was *Padakiavara* and was taken from Dundee by the people of *Saikile* and eventually ended at *Gerasi*, on the *Kusaghe* side of *New Georgia*.

Padakiavara wedlocked *Ghadokana* and settled at *Inata* land. The land lies adjacent to *Raro Bay* and *Lelei* land.

3.4 Oral History of Genealogy

Descendants of Vurubehu

Vurubehu of Tetepare descend married *Podala*, Paramount Chiefs son of *Nusa Roviana*. They had a son and named *Tabukevu* who intend married *Tagorade* and bore two sons *Soga* and *Koga*. *Soga* married *Vuto* and gave birth to *Edumali*. *Koga* married *Niha* and gave birth to *Leni* and *Kule*.

Descendants of Tirodonga

Tirodonga of Tetepare married *Tulohite* of *Nusa Roviana* and gave birth to *Muqiri*. *Muqiri* married *Naboko* and gave birth to *Lupa*, *Pago* and *Kikirade*. *Lupa* married *Qeuna* and had the following children; *Suvi*, *Pato*, *Sam Rove* and *Tiro*. *Pago* married *Gasu* and had three children. They were *Inoke Dive*, *Sokopiu* and *Qula*. *Kikirade* married *Ziru* and gave birth to *Vuru* and *Qulakota*.

Both sisters' generations at *Roviana Butubutu* has reached its eight level, that is 8 generations in total. It was also found that most people from *Kalikoqu* descend from the tribe of *Vurubehu* and *Tirodonga*. The sisters also had another sister who sailed across to *Duke* Island.

Descendants of Zarorega

Zarorega of Tetepare married *Rura* and bore *Keli* and *Ropu*. *Keli* married *Eneavara* and gave birth to *Heba*, *Ranga*, *Boso*, *Vidulu*, *Alonaru*, *Riabana*, *Ngilu* and *Asa*. *Ropu* never got married. *Heba* married *Ravedonga* of *Bilua* and gave birth to *Pada*, *Hepolo*, *Takorade*, *Luakolo* and *Vade*. *Ranga* married *Piqe* and gave birth to *Tamuqeo*.

Ngilu married *Pesere* and gave birth to *Piasibule*, *Etulu Isaiah Bana* and *Mary Muma*. *Riabana* was married and gave birth to *Sera*. His wife, however, was not identified by our sources.

Descendants of Doavoja

Deura of *Tubilavata* tribe on *Ranogga* Island married *Doavoja* and gave birth to *Kaena*, *Omanga*, *Kiniti* and *Nadavuto*. *Nadavuto* married *Kuru* and gave birth to *Bekezoto*, *Rauqeto*, *Segulu*, *Averade*, *Tekorade* and *Ogara*. *Omaga* married *Ponyuavara* and gave birth to *Selavaka*, *Sogarege*, *Evoso*, and *Olevuru*. *Kaena* married *Kera'abana* and gave birth to *Vidu*, *Kiluvoja* and *Minivido*.

Descendants of Padakiavara

Padakiavara of *Tetepare* married *Ghadokana* and gave birth to *Edumali* and *Kuiru*. *Edumali* got married to *Salomaja* and gave birth to *Minomino*. *Kuiru* got married to *Nuba* and gave birth to *Mojovido*. *Minomino* married *Vije* and gave birth to *Damu*, *Kota*, *Pate*, *Duri*, *Puni* and *Bela*. *Minomino* married *Ote* and gave birth to *Tini*, *Tili* and *Sami*. *Mojovido* gave birth to *Chavi* and gave birth to *Ale*, *Kiluavara* and *Garó*. *Buturu* the son of *Padakiavara* married *Alu* and gave birth to *Tekotina*, *Raungu*, *Mojoavara* and *Sanhoriko*.

4.0 Environmental Threat

Threat to the environment of *Tetepare* came in various forms. First, was the activities of early traders; buyers of beach de mer and whalers to a certain extent. This was followed by the clearance of scrubs by commercial coconut plantation workers. Afterwards was the brief extraction of logs by unorganised descendants.

Though the threat exerted was minimal damage to the natural ecosystem was done to a considerable level and would seem irreplaceable for a long period of time.

4.1 Early Traders

After the great exodus of *Tetepare* islanders in c1860 natural resources of the island was left untouched to fallow in a natural way. However, the introduction of traders in 1894 caused the change of tide. It was recorded that in that year (1860) an English trader was the first to buy turtle shells from fishermen on the island.

This was the birth of the commercial importance of natural resources. Harvest of natural resources was minimal and to cater only for subsistence purposes prior to the introduction of commerce by early traders.

4.2 Commercial Plantations

The arrival of *Burns Philip Company* in c1900 further promoted the spirit of commercialisation. Land lease was negotiated with landholders and lease granted by the crown. In 1910 shrub bushes were cleared and 51,784 coconut palms planted in the northwest tip of the island. Besides a 9.5 mile strip on the southern tip was constructed.

In 1961 another 600 acres of shrub land was cleared for further planting of *cocos nucifera*. Surveying of 724.8 hectares of land in Lot 1 of LR173 and 10.12 hectares of Lot 3 was done in a period of March 1, 1961 to September 30, 1970.

The destruction of the island natural resources for commercial agriculture was done merely to support the modern emerging economy. The loss is the disturbance done to natural ecosystem.

4.3 Logging

Locals and policy makers can confess that the country's economy is dependent mostly on logging. An intensive force in this venture is for *Tetepare* landholders to move from subsistence to cash based transactions.

Records show that in the 1990s certain descendants took advantage of the lack of organised landholder management to pursue selective extraction of high value timber, particularly rosewood. This opportunistic logging was on an adhoc basis, but could be very destructive if it continued and increased without landholder realisation.

More threatening was the commercial interest of Tetepare Development Company (TDC) to intensively log the island in 1995. TDC was funded by Goodwill - a foreign owned company. The Tetepare Original Landowners Owners Association (TOLOA) supported the idea and proposed a resettlement scheme after logging.

In August 15, 1995 the concept to log the island was brought to the attention of the Rendova Area Council (RAC). The RAC, then, coordinated an attempt for Timber Rights hearing at Lambete. The meeting was adjourned. Instead, RAC in September 1995 rejected the proposal to log the island.

October 6, 1996 was the birth of an environmentally friendly organisation, Friends of Tetepare (FOT). Unfortunately, the birth of FOT threatened RAC. As a result RAC overreacted to revoke the decision of 19 September 1995. In return to that overreaction the Provincial Executive landed its heavy hand to suspend RAC.

5.0 Friends of Tetepare

The Friends of Tetepare was formed to work with descendants to develop an integrated conservation and sustainable development strategy for Tetepare. It is FOT's opinion that the strategy would include some low impact use for cash and subsistence benefit. However, it would have the primary goal of maintaining the island biodiversity, the integrity of the resource base and the island cultural and historical significance.

It is envisaged that a Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Resource Management Order (RMO) would be prepared with Tetepare descendants for the conservation and sound management of the island territory. Only appropriate development options would be considered; examples are low impact eco-tourism, establishment of scientific field research and education centre.

The FOT members include descendants and representatives of different locations, living in Honiara as well as rural towns and villages, who volunteer time to work in support of the conservation of Tetepare. FOT has started liaison with descendants through village based volunteer service.

6.0 Legal Framework

Tetepare in a local context is governed by customary land tenure system and as an island situated within the geo-political boundary of Western Province must be governed under the devolved functions and responsibilities of the provincial government.

As Member Island of the sovereign country of Solomon Islands, Tetepare must come under the control of national authorities. Similarly, the nation as signatory to a number of international conventions Tetepare must adhere to a wide range of environmental issues.

6.1 Land Tenure

The national constitution as the country's supreme law recognises the fact that customary land tenure is basis of customary land management, including the use of flora and fauna. Traditional practices include seasonal bans on hunting and fishing, prohibition on killing and eating particular species, the exclusion of outsiders from communal territories (Eaton 1988:47) and rotation of areas for resource exploitation.

Customary land also embraces a spiritual relationship and a sense of individual and group identity (Boer 1993). Disputes over boundary marks on customary landownership are dealt first by Custom Chiefs Committee's. The Local Court hears complicated and solved case by the custom chiefs committee, with appeals going to customary lands appeals court.

6.2 Provincial Government

Responsibilities and functions, which were devolved by the Central Government to the Provincial Governments, recognise the roles and functions of traditional chiefs. However, the absence of an organised chieftain system in Tetepare is an obstacle in this regard. Despite such a shortfall the devolved powers have particular relevance to the conservation and sustainable management of resources on Tetepare Island.

Table 2: Responsibilities of Western Provincial Government to Tetepare

Responsibility	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade and Industry • Culture and Environment • Transport • Agriculture and Fisheries • Land and Land Use • Local Matters • Local Government • Rivers and Water • Liquor • Finance • Housing 	<p>Licensing of professions, trade and business</p> <p>Local crafts, historical remains, protection of fauna and flora</p> <p>Coastal shipping, provision of harbors, roads and bridges</p> <p>Animal husbandry, management of fresh and marine fisheries</p> <p>Codification of customary law, registration of rights and physical planning</p> <p>Waste disposal, parks, markets</p> <p>Bye laws for area and town councils</p> <p>Control and Use, Pollution and provision of Water Supply</p>

Source: Carter, B: August 1997; Conservation Strategy for the Island of Tetepare, Western Province, Solomon Islands, World Wide Fund for Nature South Pacific Program, Gizo, Solomon Islands.

6.3 Solomon Islands Government

The Central Government through the mechanisms of the Constituency and Act of Parliament recognises the ownership of natural resources with the people. Custom practice is the major management system that ensures wise use of natural resources.

The situation in Tetepare is unique in context that is to say that resident descendants of the island are remotely scattered and their assimilation into nearby island clans' means that original Tetepare custom has been significantly altered. As such the system of selecting tribal chiefs and trustees is vague and the social system of land use management is also confusing.

In this connection, Carter recommended that law in particular environmental law is needed to:

- To clarify traditional ownership relationships and support custom;
- Ensure ecological matters are considered along with development;
- Ensure that ecological and social impacts of a development proposal are considered;
- Protect valued elements of the Tetepare environment;
- And ensure that the wishes of the descendants are reflected in land management issues. (*Carter, 1997: 15*)

6.4 International Organization

The country has signed various important conventions that make it obliged to address a wide range of conservation-based issues. In retrospect many of the conventions are equally important to the management of resources on Tetepare Island.

Table 3: International Conventions that are relevant to Tetepare

Convention	Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration (1972) and Principle 1 of the Rio declaration • SPREP Convention (1986) • Apia Convention (1976) • World Heritage Convention (1972) • Biodiversity Convention (1992) • Forestry Principles of the Earth Summit (1992) 	<p>Human right of development and responsibility to conserve nature</p> <p>Marine pollution and protection of coastal areas</p> <p>Protected areas and custom rights</p> <p>Recognition and management of areas of universal cultural and natural heritage values</p> <p>Conservation of biological diversity</p> <p>A non binding code of conduct for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all forest types</p>

Source: Carter, B: August 1997; *Conservation Strategy for the Island of Tetepare, Western Province, Solomon Islands*, World Wide Fund for Nature South Pacific Program, Gizo, Solomon Islands.

6.5 Specific Legislation

It can be said that customary ownership of natural resources in Tetepare purely controls land management decisions. However, legal instruments of the central and provincial governments are also likely to affect the various decisions by the landholders.

Table 4: Legislation and Policy relevant to Tetepare

Act or Policy	Provisions	Area of influence
<u>Western</u>	<u>Province Ordinances</u>	<u>and Policies</u>
Provincial Powers	Regulations & Management of fresh and marine resources	Fisheries Management
Business License (Amendment) Ordinance	Licenses only granted to businesses which conform with policy	Business Management Tourism operations Fisheries Management
Coastal and Lagoon Shipping Ordinance (1991)	Control marine pollution and erosion of shorelines	Pollution control Environmental protection
Draft Tourism Policy	Policy on Tourism Development	Tourism operations
Environmental Management Ordinance (1991)	EIA, business license and pollution control	Business management EIA Environmental protection
Policy on Environment	Endorses the formation of protected areas	Protected areas
Preservation of Culture Ordinance (1989)	Protection of cultural places and their assessment	Heritage preservation

Act or Policy	Provisions	Area of influence
<u>SIG</u>	<u>Legislation</u>	<u>and Policy</u>
Environmental Health Act (1990) The Fisheries Act (1972)	Delegates to Provincial Government Sustainable management of fisheries and regulation of catch Regulates harvest and pollution from marine sources	Community Health Fisheries Management Fisheries Management
Forestry Resources and Timber Utilization Act (1969)	Sustainable development of forest resources 1977 amendment defines owners of timber rights 1994 amendment provides for deciding timber rights, environmental protection, sanctuary establishment 1990 Amendment details the process of gaining timber rights on customary land Environmental regulation of industry Protection of some species Reservation of catchments	Timber industry Local Area Council Local Area Council Environmental Protection Protected Areas Provincial Government Local Area Council Commissioner Landowner rights Environmental protection
Income Tax Act (1965)	1991 Amendment gives tax incentive to locals for tourism development	Investment Tourism operations
Investment Act (1990)	Provides for the potential requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment	EIA Provincial Government
Land and Titles Act (1970)	Preservation orders over any land with heritage value	Heritage preservation
Protection of Wrecks and War Relics Act (1980)	Restricts Access to and Interference with WW2 relics	Heritage preservation
Public Health Bill (1990)	Control of Public Health Issues	Community Health Tourism operations
Research Act (1982)	Government permission for research	Research Tourism operations
Tourism Development Plan 1991-2000	Policy for EIA including consultation	EIA Tourism operations
Wild Birds Protection Act (1914)	Establishment of reserves	EIA Tourism operations
The Forestry Act 1999	Planning and Management of Forests Control of forestry activities Recognition and ownership of forests	Provincial Government Local Area Council

Source: Carter, B: August 1997; Conservation Strategy for the Island of Tetepare, Western Province, Solomon Islands, World Wide Fund for Nature South Pacific Program, Gizo, Solomon Islands.

7.0 Working Togetherness

In essence two indigenous organisations that claim to represent the views and aspirations of Tetepare Island descendant exist. The first was TOLOA, which was formed to back a resettlement scheme after a proposed logging of the island by the TDC. It can be said though that TOLOA was backing the efforts of TDC to log the island territory. The composition of TOLOA includes some of the most influential persons of Tetepare descend.

Unlike TOLOA, FOT, which came later, was environment friendly and aims to conserve the unique ecosystem of Tetepare. FOT was formed in October 6, 1997. The management of FOT claim to represent views of the majority of Tetepare descendants.

In addition both parties have respective constitutions, executive bodies, visions, goals and plans for Tetepare. Also, both groups at least agree that conservation is part of the overall plan though the level of preserving the islands cultural and natural values differ significantly between the teams.

As the ambitions of both organisations are diverse in colour it can be assumed that their efforts would not eventuate without proper discussions of consensus building among the descendants. Instead it would only add confusion and doubt among the dispersed descendants.

On a positive note talks though informal have started between TOLOA and FOT management to overcome differences and merge the two constitutions, bodies of management and plans for the island as a first step of working together. Only then can serious identification of the displaced Tetepare islanders be truly pursued and a common vision and goal for Tetepare achieved. To sort potential problems when sustainable developments emerge would seem simple with such an initiation.

I suppose the best thing to do at the moment is to pursue plans to kick-start talks of unity and togetherness as a medium of building consensus between the TOLOA and FOT.

8.0 Sustainable Management of Resources

8.1 Terrestrial Resources

Though no species of terrestrial fauna is hunted on a regular or commercial basis, pig harvest is intermittently done on a subsistence level, especially for feasts and special events. Flying fox, possum, some bird species, coconut crabs and fresh water fauna are also taken. The harvest is sustainable given the infrequency of catch effort.

The impact of wild pig rearing on the balance of flora and fauna is unknown. However, it is expected that the increase on pig population will have a dramatic effect on ground flora and fauna and possibly be adding to sedimentation of streams.

Regular reduction of pig numbers is likely to be desirable to protect the natural and cultural values of Tetepare. Also, education on sustainable harvest (population control) of flora and fauna is desirable.

It is not rare to find residents of nearby islands to bombard the island ecosystem for medicinal plants. The practice though is not harmful but might appear to be less sustainable in the long run. It is recommended, therefore, that the island ecology is preserved and medicinal plants stored as a pharmacy for future demands.

8.2 Marine Resources

Carter found that a variety of marine organisms are consumed for subsistence livelihood and to meet minor commercial demands. Marine species included in this category are fish, green snail, cray fish, beach-de-mer, trochus and turtle.

It can be said that subsistence and minimal cash harvest of the resources is sustainable, evidence proves that some localities are being totally deprived of marine life regeneration. It is necessary that the harvest of restricted turtle species be monitored on a regular basis.

Appropriate fishing techniques are applied, such as restrictions on fish size, bag limits, closed seasons and exclusion zones. Perhaps a total ban on commercial harvest of marine resources on the shores of Tetepare is executed.

8.3 Farming

As the Northern (leeward) side of the island is fertile spots of small gardens are visible even from a distant. The gardens are maintained on a slash and burn method and are owned mostly by residents of Rendova Island.

From the outset the gardens might seem sustainable but repeated shifting cultivation practice is harmful to the environment. As a result it would be wise that garden expansion is constrained and its association with garden homes or settlements discouraged. Garden – settlement combination has the potential to threaten natural habitat.

8.4 Timber Harvest

The cutting down of plant (tree) species is mostly for home building, making dug out canoes and statue carving. Its harvest, however, is restricted to areas of easy access. As a result site visits to the island has shown that the supply of tree species had decreased in recent years.

As a method of controlling the fast depletion of tree species for house building, canoe making and carving molding it is suggested that tree planting of species with traditional value in accessible and disturbed locations be promoted.

9.0 Vision for Tetepare

The stated visions for Tetepare Island, which were agreed by FOT and a vast majority of displaced island descendants is as follows (Carter, 1997: 45):

Tetepare's natural and cultural assets will be managed sustainably with no evidence of degradation.

The islands community based management will be recognised internationally as a model of best practice for conservation and sustainable development, through its contribution to the protection of a self-sustaining natural environment and preservation of valued cultural resources.

Tetepare descendants and local communities will be united in their support for conservation efforts and will clearly benefit from these initiatives.

Tetepare will be a key ecotourism destination in Solomon Islands, renown for the quality of services and experiences provided.

Tourism will be dependent on the conservation of the areas natural and cultural assets rather than conservation being reliant on tourism.

Visitors will be appreciative and protective of the environmental settings, which they visit, as well as the efforts made to sustain the quality of these settings.

Government will be proactively supportive of island management, providing assistance and conditions for growth and economic prosperity.

10.0 Goal for Tetepare

Guided by the above proclaimed visions strategies were developed to achieve the stated visions. The following goals were proclaimed as a strategy:

- **Effective decision-making** – to unite Tetepare descendants through a common vision for the islands future, resulting in decision-making structures that represent descendants aspirations.
- **Protection of values and environmental quality** – To ensure the protection of the natural and cultural values of Tetepare and its overall environmental quality through effective resource management tactics.
- **Sustainable use of resources** – To foster income generating activities which are appropriate to the natural and cultural values of Tetepare and sustainably manage these with traditional subsistence use of resources
- **Ecotourism product and service development** – To develop ecotourism opportunities through the provision of economically and environmentally sustainable facilities and services.
- **Provincial support service and infrastructure development** – To develop off-island infrastructure and services to support island based income-generating activities.
- **Delivery of community benefits** – To establish mechanisms ensuring that Tetepare descendants and the local community benefit directly and indirectly from island based commercial activity.

11.0 Conclusion

It is essential that a study on the importance of plant species on the island for traditional medical practice be commissioned. The study would substantiate the preference of traditional medicine to modern medicine for specific diseases.

The completion of information gathering on the mass exodus of Tetepare Islanders, identification of islands that adopted the displaced descendants and the complexities of the communities of the displaced landholders need to be complete for effective resource planning and management of Tetepare Island.

In order for the vision and goal of Tetepare to eventuate it is envisaged that the spirit of working togetherness of TOLOA and FOT must be pursued with immediate urgency. It was analysed that a one-year period of effort by FOT to mobilise Tetepare landholders was not sufficient to achieve the vision and goals of the island.

Effective decision making, therefore, would only seem appropriate if all landholders of Tetepare work together in a harmonious relationship. As such the desire to conserve the islands ecosystem would be possible only if all descendants of Tetepare are consulted. The first step, however, is to identify the landholders and descendants of Tetepare.

FOT, therefore, is required to organise an urgent meeting with TOLOA representatives as soon as practicably possible. In that meeting influential members of TOLOA must be included. In this connection, WWF must facilitate such working togetherness at the same time ensure that any extension of funding must involve both parties.

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