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### Chapter 6, Family, in Intimacy and Community in a Changing World: Sikaiana Life 1980-1993

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## **DEPENDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE: Kinship and the Control of Resources**

This chapter is based on my research in the 1980s. In 2019, Robert Sisilo and Priscilla Taulupo told me that kinship ties are still important but there have been some changes that are discussed in this chapter. More people are intermarrying with other cultures. Fosterage seems less prevalent and important. Many of the traditional restrictions on relations between different relatives (notably in-laws) have been reduced. The population has increased but the population on Sikaiana has been relatively stable so that Sikaiana's resources are less important for the livelihood of the entire population, but land tenure is still very important and there are still competing views.

There is a game on Sikaiana in which a child is offered a special snack if able to trace a genealogical relationship to the person who baked the food. This game, although not played much at present, reflects an inherent fact of Sikaiana life. Most people are genealogically related, and a genealogical relationship implies solidarity, support and, as in this game, sharing. In explaining, justifying, and lamenting their relations with one another, the Sikaiana often refer to their kinship relations. The intimate web of social relations is built from their kinship obligations.

In my own adjustment to life among the Sikaiana, I was unlike every other person on the atoll because I had no ties based upon kinship or marriage. These ties provide every person living on the atoll, and in Honiara, with resources, allies, support and obligations.

In the second year of my first stay, I had a dream that in my mother's genealogy (either her mother or grandmother), I discovered that I had a Sikaiana ancestor. The dream was very vivid. So much so, that upon waking, for a moment I thought it was true. My first reaction upon waking was to rush to tell everyone on Sikaiana the exciting news: I had found a kinship relationship with them. Then I lay awake and thought for several moments about my grandparents and their families. I counted my four grandparents and realized that none of them had anything to do with the Sikaiana. I recounted this dream to a neighbor, who told me, without hesitation as if such dreams are usual, that I had the dream because I had been living among them for such a long time.

The dream accurately reflects something about my personal relations with the Sikaiana. I felt myself becoming about as involved in their lives as a foreigner can get, almost like kin. But in another sense that dream was quite simply, as Freud would say, wish fulfillment. One key element made me different: I wasn't kin.

People in the United States often ask me, in a tone of voice that betrays skepticism, whether, as an outsider, I was ever fully accepted by the Sikaiana. I had varying degrees of acceptance and closeness with different people. Some people, I consider to be among my best friends in the world. Others, I feel comfortable

with. There were people with whom I had less contact. Nevertheless, I think that for most Sikaiana, there lurked the constant notion that I was a *tama maa* or "white person", not only different in physiology, but also from a different cultural background. Even more to the point, I had a set of commitments elsewhere. I stayed for almost 33 months in 1980-1983. I returned to the Solomon Islands for seven months in 1987, made a short visit to Tenaru in 1993, and sometimes talked about settling there (and still think about it). But I never became a full member of Sikaiana lives in one very important respect: I had no lifelong obligations through ties of kinship. If I had married a Sikaiana woman, then I would have become committed to their life in a way that meant, however much I was liked or disliked, understood or misunderstood, I would have been with them for keeps.

Understanding the social relations of the Sikaiana requires understanding their kinship relations. Their familiarity is grounded in the fact that everyone is related. Kinship relations affect residence and access to resources, in addition to support and familiarity. A person needs garden land and coconuts to survive. These resources are controlled by lineages whose membership is determined by a system of patrilineal descent from a founding ancestor. The members of a lineage don't really own land. They are more like trustees who manage the land for the benefit of themselves, other lineage members, and their descendants both born and unborn. Although access to resources is determined by patrilineal descent, the basic unit of consumption and production on Sikaiana is not the lineage. It is the household, most often organized around a husband and wife. A Sikaiana person cannot be fully independent, nor fully respected by others, until he or she is married. Ideally, each married couple forms a separate and to some degree independent household. Household composition is not determined only by the offspring of a couple; it is also determined by other factors, especially fosterage and personal preferences. Genealogical ties, especially close ones, imply support. But the people who actually cooperate with one another is also determined by the personal preferences of those involved. Among a range of relatives, a person will be closely involved with some, but unlikely to cooperate with or seek the aid of others, even though these latter may be closer in genealogy. Within this web of potential relationships, patrilineal ties unite people as a result of shared interests in land and Sikaiana concepts about a shared heritage.

### **Loto Village**

When I first moved into the court house in 1980, I had no idea about the people who inhabited the houses around me, nor the relationships in which they were involved. There was a blur of faces, curious to get to know me and about whom I was curious. Over time, I came to recognize faces and mannerisms. I also came to learn their names, their kinship relations, why they were staying where they were, and their rivalries and alliances in village life. In the area surrounding my house, less than 50 yards on each side, there are very specific patterns of visiting and sharing. People go to households where they are welcome; they avoid households where, for a variety of reasons, they feel uncomfortable.

All land on Sikaiana is divided into estates or territories, which have boundaries and are controlled by different descent lines. Dry land is called *kaaina*; swamp land is called *keli*. The land on which the courthouse stood had been deeded to the community as a whole by a lineage often referred to as "Talappa," after a large tract of land which it held on the backshore of Hale. In a leaf house behind me lived Uriel, a member of that lineage, and his family. Uriel was the man whose fishing line I had hopelessly tangled on my first fishing trip. A shy and quiet person, he treated me with reserve for the first year of my stay. A catechist in the church and a former member of the Melanesian Brotherhood, he did not support my interest in the traditional Sikaiana religion which he considered to be part of a sinful past best forgotten. His wife, Laumani, had a very different temperament. Talkative and humorous, she was constantly calling out to me, teasing me, and, when she felt it was appropriate, criticizing me.

Uriel and Laumani had eight children, although not all of them were not residing in their house. (When I arrived in 1987, they had another baby boy.) At the time of my arrival, their oldest daughter, Tae, resided with them and looked after the children in the household. Their next daughter, Hautu, was residing in a different house with her foster father. Two daughters, Nakina and Teanea, lived with Temotu, a relative and close friend of Laumani's. Temotu, a widow, slept in a different house, with four or five houses between hers and Uriel's. Nevertheless, she was part of the Uriel's household. Every day, Temotu came to Uriel's household to work on copra or in the gardens, sharing not only common meals, but also gossip and views of events.

Uriel's oldest son, Teusa, slept in the house of Fane, Laumani's mother's sister. One son, Hilihili, was often at the household during the day but at night slept in the house of his foster father. Another son resided with the family. Their youngest daughter, Haitua, was in Honiara living with Uriel's sister. In 1981, they had one foster child, Hugh (Brown Saua's son and Temotu's grandson), who was living with them.

This family, however, like most Sikaiana families, was very mobile. When I took my census in 1982, Uriel was away in Honiara collecting building supplies for a new concrete house. Temotu and her foster children, Teone and Cathy, had moved into the house. Temotu's house had been taken by a relative of hers whose family had just moved back to Sikaiana after years of working on the Lever Brothers' plantations at Yandina in the Russell Islands. Uriel's daughter Tae had taken in a foster child, the young male son of her father's cousin. Nakina, one of Uriel's daughters, was at Yandina helping a relative look after a young baby. Four of Laumani's children were sleeping in a neighbor's house next door, although they still worked and ate with Laumani and Temotu as part of their household. Haitua, who had spent several months with her parents on Sikaiana in 1981, had returned to live again with her foster parents near Honiara. Another foster child, Vaisui, the son of Laumani's half-brother, was also living there.

This family was similar to most other Sikaiana families in its mobility and the manner in which children are moved between several different relatives.

## Kinship: Basics of Relationships

**Much of the following discussion examines issues concerning land tenure and genealogy. These were topics of considerable disagreement and hostility during my stays on Sikaiana and are still controversial at present in 2020. Nothing in this chapter should be used to support any position in a land dispute. I do not know who is right in their assertions about land use. My own view is that different views reflect different historical interests that became inflamed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as pressure increased on land and western-derived courts insisted upon trying to clear up ambiguities.**

The organization of families and households which seems so fluid can be understood in terms of how Sikaiana define relations based upon kinship, descent, fosterage and household membership.

Relatives are referred to as 'my people,' *oku tama*, a term similar to the idiom used by some speakers of English. In a very general way, the Sikaiana think of all people who share a biological relationship, however distant, as also sharing some very general social obligations. People reciting their genealogies and lines of descent refer to their 'tree' *laakau*, another metaphor similar to the English one, "family tree." The founder or origin of a descent line is referred to as its 'base' (*tahito*), which is also the word for the 'trunk' of a tree. Kinship relations are often described as spreading or dividing into separate lines over generations, much as the trunk of a tree divides into branches, and these branches further divide. Note that this image is the opposite of the schematic family trees sold in stores in the United States in which ancestors are branches, uniting through marriage and descent until arriving at their descendants at the trunk of the tree. Genealogical distance is referred to in the same terms that are used for geographic distances: 'close' *taupili* and 'far' *mmao*.<sup>i</sup>

Within this range of relatives, important relationships are traced through patrilineal descent which determines the formation of two social groups: *hale akina* or 'clans', which are descended from the founding migrants to Sikaiana; and *kano hale* or 'lineages', segments of the *hale akina* that hold rights to use land.



Some of the people who joined Sikaiana's founder, Tehui Atahu, during his travels established ritual houses and became the original founders of different 'clans', *hale akina*. There are two groups of clans: 'chiefly' (*heto aliki or mata aliki*) and 'commoner' (*tanta-vale*). Chiefly clans assert their descent from the atoll's two legendary founder heroes, Tehui Atahu and Tehui Luaniu. Saatui claims descent from Tehui Luaniu; Saalupe and Vaka Vusu both assert their descent from Tehui Atahu, although each challenges the legitimacy of the other. The *tanta-vale* are the descendants of Tehui Atahu's followers and later immigrants to Sikaiana. These four commoner clans are named: Saakava, Saapei, and there two different clans with the same name, Saatelua. *Saa*, literally means 'appear,' as ships do on the horizon and some people described these clans as the descendants of canoes which 'appeared' (Saatelua literally means 'the two appear'). In some generations, some of the commoner clans did not have any male offspring. Immigrants who arrived on Sikaiana intermarried with women of these clans. These immigrants took the name of the *hale akina* of their wives.

Members of the chiefly clans had rights to succeed to the chieftainship, a ritual role concerned with Sikaiana's religious ceremonies. But by the late 19th century, they did not have any special political power or authority. People were independent based upon exclusive rights to use land which were held by lineages. Each clan was associated with specific ritual houses which formerly faced the lagoon on Hale, where today most Sikaiana people have houses. The membership of each clan cooperated in ritual activities; for example, each clan was responsible for replacing part of the central ritual house, *hale aitu*, when it was repaired during the *manea* ceremony.

Some Sikaiana use the English word "tribe" to translate *hale akina*. Using anthropological jargon, I refer to the *hale akina* as a "clan." But the term "tribe" reflects an important Sikaiana connotation of *hale akina*. The term not only refers to a social group, but, like the term "tribe" in the English language, it also conveys a sense of ethnic identity. Members of the *hale akina* named Saakava, for example, trace patrilineal descent from Levao, a man who according to legend arrived on Sikaiana from Samoa about 10 generations ago.<sup>ii</sup> Levao's descendants include members of different land-holding lineages, each with distinct and sometimes competing interests. Each of these land-holding lineages was founded by a different patrilineal descendant of Levao who lived about three or four generations after him. Nevertheless, members of all of Saakava's lineages recognize themselves as sharing a common identity, something like an ethnic identity in a multi-cultural society, on the basis of their descent from Levao.

Most clans are divided into segments or "lineages", also determined through a male line of descent, which have rights to use specific tracts of land. Lineages were founded, usually between six to ten generations ago (in 1980), by a person who acquired rights to parcels of land during a distribution of land to the atoll's residents. This ancestor lived more recently than the one who established the more inclusive clan (*hale akina*). The Sikaiana refer to these land-holding lineages as *kano hale*, although the term *kano hale* also refers to other social groups including a natal family, a household, an extended family, and some patrilineal descent segments of a clan which include several different land-holding lineages. Like the English term "friend," I believe that the term *kano hale* is meant to be ambiguous, sometimes allowing Sikaiana speakers to

imply more or less than they really mean. I refer to these land-holding descent lines as "lineages" and for purposes of simplicity the descendants with rights in them will be described as "lineage members." Whereas clans are largely ceremonial groups, lineages are economic groups. Rights to almost all of Sikaiana's land resources are determined by descent which forms the membership in a land-holding lineage. There are about sixteen separate land-holding lineages; I write "about" because there are several cases where people disagree about whether there are segments which ultimately hold independent rights to certain parcels of land.

The membership of a land-holding lineage can be visualized as following a step-like pattern through the various lines of male descendants from the founder. The patrilineal descendants of the original owner have full rights to the lineage's land and they make decisions about its use. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to revoke their rights to use this land. With every generation, female offspring and their immediate descendants can use the lineage's land. But as their genealogical distance from their male link to the lineage increases, they are less likely to activate their rights. These offspring of these women prefer to use rights to the land of other lineages to which they have full entitlement through patrilineal ties. Women and their descendants may become highly respected participants in the lineage's affairs, but their influence is ultimately dependent upon the consensus of male patrilineal descendants. Women and their offspring have rights to lineage land which might be described as "revocable": they can be driven out or expelled from using the lineage's land if they cause its members harm.<sup>iii</sup>

The difference between "revocable" and "irrevocable" rights can be defined by the conditions under which people can be 'expelled' (*lliko*) from a lineage. Threats of expulsion are frequent, but rarely conducted against any member of the lineage. Males who are the patrilineal descendants of the original founder have virtually inalienable access to the land of their father's lineage. Some people claim that a father could expel his sons for disobedience. In fact, although there was some discussion and threats of such expulsion, I could not confirm any recent examples and only a very few legendary ones. By contrast, most people agree that females and their descendants have more tenuous rights to lineage land, and face possible expulsion if they do not behave in a proper manner to the male members of the lineage. In most cases, just cause for expulsion of these females and their descendants includes adultery, seriously improper conduct to a member of the lineage, or testifying in a land case against the interests of the lineage.

Within a lineage, female offspring and their descendants are encouraged to activate their rights to use land. Lineage members are proud of the number of relatives who are using the lineage's land through female links. Genealogical relationships are often described as connections through the 'belly' (*manava*) or 'umbilical cord' (*uso*). Relatives traced through female links are referred to as *pale*, which also refers to supporting posts in construction. When talking about social relations, *pale* are people who provide support.

Lineages and clans without offspring in a generation are described as being

`blocked up', *puni*. The verb *puni* also describes a drain pipe which has become `blocked' with leaves or rubbish. Reflecting the patrilineal tendencies in Sikaiana thinking, some people distinguish between descent lines which are `blocked' by having no male successors in any particular generation and those which have neither males or females.

Lineages are important groups in determining access to land, but not necessarily in other aspects of a person's life. A wealthy person living in Honiara may feel a general allegiance to other members of his lineage, but he decides how much he helps them. Any land he acquires in other parts of the Solomon Islands belongs to him, not the lineage. He may decide to allow all his children, both male and female, to inherit property he has acquired in other areas of the Solomon Islands.

### **Household: Family, Residence and Cooperation**

Some older Sikaiana people told me that their elders used the term *kano hale* to refer to a group of people who shared a residential area and cooperated in daily activities. This usage applied to residential patterns before the arrival of Christianity when residences were dispersed throughout the atoll and not concentrated along the lagoon path of Hale as they are at present. Nevertheless, even at present, residence and daily cooperation shape a very important group, which I call the household. Members of a household share gossip, a common perspective on the activities of other Sikaiana, and an interest in their mutual welfare. Commitment and involvement within one household is supported by strong values that emphasize loyalty to it, daily food production and distribution, and discourage too many requests of resources from other households.

After marriage, whenever practical, couples generally prefer to establish themselves in an independent residence. A Sikaiana person's primary daily obligations are to his or her spouse and household.<sup>iv</sup> Usually, all members of a household are closely related to each other, but genealogical proximity does not in and of itself determine daily cooperation. A person may join the household of a distant relative out of personal preferences. Temotu, for example, joined the household of Uriel and Laumani, although she had other relatives residing on Sikaiana who were closer in genealogy. As a result of fosterage, a couple's natal children may leave the household and foster children may join the household (although children feel free to visit and share in the resources of both their natal and foster households.) Sometimes two different married couples cooperate and share resources, in effect forming one household. In most cases, families who are visiting Sikaiana on vacation attach themselves to a household already residing there for the duration of their stay on Sikaiana.

The members of a household normally share a house or group of nearby houses. Residence within the same house usually, but not always, implies a commitment to its activities. Sometimes, however, people who sleep in the same residence will work and eat with different groups during the day. For example, unmarried adult men who are living on Sikaiana usually leave their parents' household

to live together in a separate residence. But they remain part of the household of their parents or some other relative and eat and work there. Mature unmarried women usually reside with their parents or some other adult until they are married. Elderly widowed people tend to have separate residences, but are usually associated with the household of a close relative. Most widowed women maintain their own separate cooking place or kitchen, although frequently they are associated with the household of a relative.

Access to land and membership within a household are separate issues. Because most married couples prefer to establish separate residences and households, members of the same land-holding lineage (including natal brothers) most often belong to different households. They share some resources, visit, and provide mutual support for each other, but usually their daily activities are separate. Planted crops that require cultivation, notably taro and banana, belong to the person who plants and cultivates them. Coconuts for copra are harvested on a first-come basis by people who have rights to the land on which they grow. Almost always, coconuts are harvested for the welfare of the harvester or his/her household and not the land-holding lineage as a group.

Residence in towns raises different issues because there is often limited housing and cash is necessary both to pay rent and buy food. Again, whenever possible, couples prefer to establish separate and independent residences. As on Sikaiana, attachment to a household in towns is usually a sign that the person feels comfortable with the people with whom he or she is living, and is also both financially and emotionally committed to the welfare of that household. As on the atoll, decisions about where to reside in town are often, but not invariably, based upon close genealogical ties.

A person's genealogy and rights in clans and land-holding lineages are ascribed at birth. But membership in a household is determined to some degree by choices made throughout the course of a person's life: marriage, fosterage, and personal preferences among a range of kin.

## **Marriage**

Marriages should be between people who are from different lineages and extended families. Most people prefer that marriages not take place within one land-holding lineage, but in recent years there have been some marriages within a single lineage. In collecting genealogies, I found two examples of first cousin marriage (in both cases a man married his mother's brother's daughter.) Both of these marriages took place before Sikaiana's conversion to Christianity. The marriage closest in genealogy since the arrival of Christianity is between a man and his father's father's sister's daughter. This marriage was considered to be highly improper, but the couple could not be separated and are considered to be married.<sup>v</sup> Marriages between second cousins, although sometimes discouraged, are not uncommon.

Courtship, which will be described in the next chapter, is often a secret and private event. Marriage, however, is public and involves exchanges between the

extended kin of both bride and groom.

At marriage, there are two sets of exchanges involving four kinship-based groups or 'sides' (*vahi*), each consisting of the extended kin of the following: (1) the father of the groom, (2) the mother of the groom, (3) the father of the bride, and (4) the mother of the bride. The side of the groom's father exchanges with the side of the bride's father; and the side of the groom's mother exchanges with the side of bride's mother. The exchange between the fathers of the bride and groom can be organized separately from the exchange between the mothers of the bride and groom.

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## MARRIAGE EXCHANGES

### GROOM'S SIDES

### BRIDE'S SIDES

#### Cloth and Money ----->

Father of Groom <-----> Father of Bride

Mother of Groom <-----> Mother of Bride

#### <----- Food

\*\*\*\*\*

Sometimes, both exchanges take place on the same day; other times, the exchanges between the fathers' sides and those between the mothers' sides occur on different days. In both transactions, the groom's sides give trade cloth, some money and food. The bride's sides reciprocate with food. These exchanges are not between individuals, rather they are between extended kinship groups. Relatives contribute to their side's presentation and then receive goods which have been exchanged. The greatest support is expected from the people who are closely related, especially the membership of the parents' land-holding lineages.

Usually, about 100 fathoms (200 yards) of trade cloth is collected by each of the groom's sides. The bridewealth of both the groom's mother's and father's side are roughly equivalent in value, although the groom's father's side should make a slightly

larger contribution, since relationships through men are expected to be stronger. Trade cloth is considered the more valuable commodity in the exchange, and the groom is often described as "paying for" the bride.

One person, or sometimes a group of people, acts as an "organizer" for each of the four sides (groom's father, groom's mother, bride's father, bride's mother). The organizers should be close relatives of the bride or groom, but they should not be their natal parents. These organizers are responsible for the collection of goods to be given and the distribution of goods that are received. For example, an organizer on the groom's father's side will collect clothing material and money from the groom's father's relatives. As he does so, he makes a list of each person's individual contribution. During the marriage celebration, the organizer oversees bringing what he has collected to the person who represents the bride's father's relatives. The actual bringing of the goods is done by a large number of contributors and dances follow the presentation. A little while later, the organizer representing the bride's father's relatives will reciprocate by bringing food back to the groom's father's organizer. The groom's father's organizer must then distribute the food just received from the bride's organizer to those people who contributed to his collection of trade cloth. Thus, on the occasions when I contributed a little cloth to a marriage exchange, I received a leaf platter of food on the day of the exchange. The exchanges themselves are island-wide events involving large groups making and receiving the exchanges and dances at the location of each presentation.

Sometimes, close relatives will agree amongst themselves that each will make a fixed contribution. For example, the members of the lineage of the groom's father may all meet and agree to contribute ten fathoms of cloth to the collection. The organizer is responsible for collecting and recording these contributions. People who contribute a lot of trade cloth to the groom's side expect to receive a larger portion of the food brought from the bride's side after the exchange in an amount appropriate to the size of their contribution. Moreover, these large contributors expect that in the future, when their sons are getting married, the groom and his close relatives will come to their aid by making an appropriate contribution of trade cloth.

The size of the contributions from and redistributions to an individual are considered to be an important indication of the commitment to the social relationship between those involved. Normally, this is a kinship relationship. But significant contributions are also based upon friendship, residential proximity or the desire to reinforce an important social tie. There is a general expectation that, over an extended period of time, a person will receive approximately as much as he contributes. The lists of contributors are turned over to the bride and groom after the marriage so that they will later assist these contributors with their marriages.

In some cases, two separate sets of exchanges are held: one set on Sikaiana, another in Honiara. On Sikaiana, these marriage exchanges are often scheduled during church holidays. Everyone on the atoll participates in these events. Many people enter into the marriage exchanges from several different sides, giving and receiving cloth in several separate transactions through their different kinship ties. The exchanges are accompanied by dancing, singing and then drinking fermented coconut toddy.

## Fosterage

One day I was talking with Laumani. She noted that Americans do not normally take foster children and then remarked to me "you Americans do not know anything about compassion" (Koutou tama maa e iloa i te aloha"). In Sikaiana society, fosterage results from compassion felt for the young child and the social relationship, usually based on kinship, between parents and foster parents.

Many middle-class Americans feel that the nuclear family is inviolable and that allowing children to be taken from it shows a lack of compassion. Most middle-class Americans probably associate fosterage or adoption with something gone wrong: orphanage, barrenness or neglect. The Sikaiana think the converse. A Sikaiana parent has a deep and lasting commitment to his or her natal children, but the parent also has interests in extended kin which can be expressed through fosterage. A person will want to care for the children of others for whom he or she feels these commitments. The Sikaiana focus their family concern and compassion among an extended group of relatives, and fosterage is one way to express this compassion. Adults without offspring take foster children; but so do many adults with offspring.

Fosterage is a common practice in Oceania (see Carroll 1970a, Brady 1976), but by any measure, Sikaiana has high rates of fosterage. I conducted three surveys of Sikaiana households (in 1981, 1982, and 1987) in which I recorded the number of people living in each household and their relationships to the adult members of the household. In all three surveys between 40-50% of all the children living on Sikaiana were residing with foster parents (48% in 1981, 42% in 1982, 47 % in 1987). Although these rates are lower for migrants living in Honiara, they were still high: between 25%-30% of the children in Honiara are residing with their foster parents (25% in 1981, 23% in 1982, 27% in 1987). (See Chart II in Appendix.)

Even these figures do not fully represent the prevalence of fosterage on Sikaiana. Many Sikaiana children move back and forth between the household of their natural parents and the household(s) of foster parents. Many Sikaiana are proud to name several different foster parents who cared for them in their childhood, and several different foster children for whom they have cared.

Haitua, Uriel and Laumani's youngest daughter who was about six years old in 1980 provides an example of this mobility. At the time that I arrived on Sikaiana, Haitua was living in Honiara with her foster parent, Uriel's sister. Shortly after my arrival, she returned to Sikaiana and she stayed with Uriel for next 1-1/2 years. Then Uriel's sister arrived on Sikaiana during her husband's yearly vacation. At the very end of their vacation, while at the shore preparing to get on the canoe to go to the boat, Uriel's sister turned to Haitua and asked if she wanted to go back to Honiara with her. Without getting any clothing, the little girl climbed into the canoe and took the Belama back to Honiara. In Honiara, Uriel's sister often visited her daughter's house which was located closer to the center of town. Haitua went along and sometimes

stayed in town with this daughter's family even when Uriel's sister returned to her own residence outside of Honiara.

It is considered a sign of generosity or kindness to take in foster children. It also is considered to be a compliment or a sign of respect both to the foster child and to his or her natal parents. Fosterage involves undertaking responsibilities to feed, rear and socialize the child. This care results in an emotional attachment between foster parents and foster children. The foster parent is the child's *tupuna*, which is also the word for 'grandparent', or, more generally, 'ancestor'. Sometimes, Sikaiana people use the term for 'grandchild', *mokupuna*, to refer to foster children, and often they are taking grandchildren. More often, they refer to the child as their *tama too*, literally the 'taken child,' or more simply, they call the child, *taku tama*, 'my child', which is the same term used to refer to a natal child.

The care of children, including foster children, is often described as deriving from the empathy or sympathy for the helpless state of small children. The role of provider for someone else is an important theme in Sikaiana social relationships. People are often praised or criticized for their care of others, especially caring for elders and children who are not able to care for themselves. The English word, "foster," is derived from the Old English word meaning "to feed." This origin of the English term parallels an important aspect of fosterage on Sikaiana. Child-rearing, both of foster and natal children, is often described as 'feeding,' *haanai*, children.

Sikaiana people, moreover, enjoy small children, especially babies, and take pleasure in being responsible for their upbringing. For them, the care of young children is a privilege and a pleasure. Sometimes, a baby or small child is taken for a night by another person, usually a woman, even though this person does not consider herself to be the foster parent of the child. Although rare, sometimes a young bachelor will take a foster child; usually, in these cases, a female relative looks after the child.

In collecting data about fosterage, I often found that both a mother and her daughter would consider themselves to be the foster parent of the same child, because the foster child was taken into the household when the daughter was mature enough to look after it. These caretakers sometimes include adolescent girls who themselves have been fostered into the household. Since women are more involved than men in managing children, they take most of the responsibility for caring for the foster child, even in situations when their husbands initiated the fosterage.

A Sikaiana parent should not refuse someone's request to take a child, nor should a parent demand the return of their natal children from foster parents. To do so is considered to be rude and embarrassing because it implies either a lack of trust in the foster parent or that the social relationship has soured. I am aware of only two cases in which parents demanded the return of their natal children from their foster parents. Both situations resulted from bitter disputes over land rights between the natal parents and the foster parents.

At present, a group of people become the child's godparents during the Christian

ceremony of Baptism. These people are expected to look after the child's welfare, although their actual involvement varies. They may act as primary caretakers or they may have very little direct involvement in the upbringing of the child. A person who intends to take a foster child is often present at the child's Baptism and serves as the child's Christian godparent.

Within a household, all children, both natal and fostered, should be treated equally. Some people claim that foster parents are more indulgent with their foster children than with their natal children, in some cases spoiling them. In the households where I lived, I observed no obvious differences in the treatment of foster and natal children. In every family with which I lived, the focus of attention was the youngest child, whether it was fostered or natal.

Parents and their natal children retain strong obligations for mutual commitment and support regardless of where the child is raised. It is often assumed by both natal parents and foster parents that, at maturity, children will return to live with their natal parents. Mature foster children provide support for their natural parents whether or not they were raised by them.

Parents told me that they always thought about their natal children when the children were living with someone else. Moreover, children inherit their kinship and land rights from natal parents.

Foster children are often less than a year old when they are moved from their natal family into the household of their foster parents. If both families live in close proximity, the child may be moved shortly after birth and visited daily by its mother for nursing. If the distance is far, as between Honiara and Sikaiana, the child is usually at least six months old before it is taken away from its natal parents.

Normally, foster parents should be genealogically related to their foster children. Some people claim that it is preferable if the child is a little distant in genealogy and not a member of the same lineage since fosterage serves to reinforce kinship ties that are becoming distant. Women often explained to me that they fostered a child because the child's mother had fostered them. These exchanges of fosterage may continue over several generations.

In some cases, children are fostered to reinforce a personal relationship or alliance. In former times, immigrants to the atoll were cared for by sponsoring families. Often these immigrants and their Sikaiana sponsors fostered one another's children in order to reinforce their social relationship. Fosterage between the two lines of descent may continue for several generations. The Sikaiana describe a case when, before the conversion to Christianity, the male children of one lineage were being killed by an angry ancestral spirit. A man from another lineage, who had his own powerful ancestral spirit, took one of the male children from this lineage. This foster parent said that his ancestral spirit would protect the foster child, and foster child's lineage would have an heir. This fosterage established a strong relationship between these two families that continues until the present and is expressed both through intermarriage and continued fosterage.

People sometimes take foster children from families with whom they are residing because the members of those families helped them, or simply because they liked or felt compassion for the child. A comparatively wealthy man explained to me that one of his foster children was taken simply to help the child's father. This man sponsored the child's education through secondary school and continued to advise him as an adult.

Under normal circumstances, foster children do not acquire any rights in their foster parents' land, except to use it as part of their foster parent's household. Sometimes, however, conditional, temporary or usufruct rights in parcels of land are given to a foster child as part of land transfers between lineages.

For the Sikaiana, fosterage is a way to fulfill, express and reinforce kinship relations. Sikaiana family obligations and emotional attachments are not exclusive to the natal family, but extend to a wide range of kin. Whether raised in the natal family or a foster family, the children find that there are people in addition to their natal mother and father who are concerned with their welfare. In this sense, fosterage creates relations which might be termed as diffuse, although this does not mean they are somehow shallow or insecure. Sikaiana fosterage is, as Carroll (1970b) suggests in his discussion of adoption elsewhere in Oceania, something additional to rather than a replacement of natal parenthood.

Although fosterage is statistically frequent, it is a relationship that is recognized as special. Natal parents have an obligation to care for their children. Foster parents have made a choice to undertake these obligations. By fostering a child, the foster parent is creating an emotional bond that reinforces a set of mutual obligations with the foster child. The foster parent is also demonstrating to the child's natal parents that they have a significant social relationship.

## LAND TENURE

Sikaiana is a small atoll with only limited land. And land is necessary for survival. Swamp land is an essential resource for planting a major staple, taro, and dry land is an essential resource for planting coconut groves which provide the main cash crop, copra (**although copra is no longer produced**). Emigrants who lose their jobs, retire, or choose not to work for wages, will return to the atoll and depend on land for their basic needs.<sup>vi</sup>

Fane, the elderly woman who told me the story of Peia, remarked to me that land has the same basic significance for the Sikaiana person that money has for Europeans. Without it, one does not survive. Land has even more significance for the Sikaiana because money is by its very nature alienable and circulated. Sikaiana land rights are not alienable, and land is not only an economic resource. Rights in a specific tract of land are important for a Sikaiana person's sense of identity.

## Sikaiana Corporations

On Sikaiana it is lineages, not individuals, who ultimately hold rights to land. A person has rights to use land by virtue of his or her membership in a lineage. Sikaiana lineages are like corporations in industrialized societies in the sense that: (1) the lineage endures in perpetuity; (2) the lineage is treated as an entity or individual in its jural relationships, both with other lineages and in court; (3) the lineage possesses assets.

One young man, who had attended college, described membership in these lineages as being something like a "trustee." Like the trustees of a corporation or trust, members have rights in the lineage, but they are expected to act in the best interests of the membership, both living and unborn. They are not owners in the sense that they can alienate, or otherwise unconditionally transfer the land.

Lineages endure over time. Rights to land are inherited through a succession of patrilineal father-to-son links. Usually, these extend back six to ten generations (as of 1980) to a founding ancestor, and in theory these rights will continue to be transferred indefinitely according to this principle. Lineages are also like corporations in the sense that they represent the rights, obligations and interests of a collectivity. Members have interests in all the holdings of the lineage; exclusive use of land by any one member of the lineage is temporary. As collectivities, lineages enter into relationships with one another based upon conditional transfers of rights to land to one another. In court, lineages are represented by one individual who acts as a spokesman for the interests of the lineage membership.

Each lineage was founded by an ancestor who acquired rights to its land, although the Sikaiana disagree about how these rights to land were originally distributed. Some Sikaiana claim that in former times the chiefs had complete control over all of the atoll's land. Two chiefs of the Saalupe clan, who lived about 8 to 10 generations ago, took pity on the commoners and decreed that any land a person worked or cleared would be held by this person and his descendants in perpetuity. Many members of the Vaka Vusu disagree with this claim and assert that these Saalupe "chiefs" were usurpers. According to Vaka Vusu leaders, land was distributed by one of their powerful chiefs to the families of his many wives. For this reason, the Vaka Vusu clan claims that it retains residual interests in all this land.

In either case, land was distributed between 6 to 10 generations ago to men who became the founders of the land-holding lineages. A lineage has rights to the tracts of land that are inherited through patrilineal descent from this founder (many claim that a woman could receive a grant of rights to land from her father if he cleared or otherwise inalienably acquired these rights). The rights to this land are inalienable.

In addition, most lineages have transferred rights to tracts of land to other lines. Often these transfers occurred after a marriage when a woman is given rights to use some land, usually swamp land for gardens or a housesite. With the approval of lineage members, rights to this land are inherited or transferred to her children. In these transfers, the donating lineage has "residual" rights in the land and the receiving line

has "conditional" rights. If the membership of the receiving line causes harm to the membership of the donating lineage, then the donating lineage may repossess the land. Moreover, the receiving line cannot freely transfer rights to use the land to any other group. Such transfers are not necessarily made to an entire lineage. Often, they are made only to the descendants of the wife; other members of this woman's husband's lineage do not have any rights in the land. Thus, members of a lineage share rights to large tracts of land from a founding ancestor. There are lines or segments within the lineage which have conditional rights to different plots of land, usually garden land or a housesite, which have been transferred through female ancestors at a marriage.

One man, whom I will call "Joe" explained his line's relationship with another line, that I will label as Peter. Joe's family line holds some garden land which was given to his ancestors by Peter's ancestors. Joe recognizes the interests of Peter's lineage in this land. He would never transfer rights to it to another lineage without first asking permission from the representatives of Peter's lineage. Under certain circumstances, Peter's lineage would have the right to repossess that land, although Joe maintains his rights to use the land so long as he remains on good terms with the lineage and causes no harm to its members. Indeed, Joe proudly recounted many of the ties between their families: he learned how to make a canoe from Peter's father; they cooperate in many activities; Joe's brother was the foster child of Peter's father, and this brother, in turn, has taken in one of Peter's sons; more recently after I left in 1987, I learned that Joe's son had married one of Peter's daughters. Joe also has rights to different land which he shares with other members of his lineage. These other members of Joe's lineage have no rights to use the land transferred by Peter's to Joe's family because they are not descended from the same female ancestor. On the other hand, they may possess rights to land through a female ancestor where Joe does not have rights.

### **Land Disputes and Social Relationships**

Because of its economic importance and emotional significance, arguments about land result in bitterness and enmity between the litigants and their supporters, and create schisms within the community. Parents try to discourage their children from marrying spouses who belong to opposing lineages. The composition and administration of local institutions, especially the government council and court, are affected by rivalries and alliances in land disputes. Alliances between members of different lineages can be fragile, and they may change. When I returned to Sikaiana in 1987, two men who were close allies in 1983 had become bitter enemies.

In some land disputes, litigants agree about principles of land tenure, but they disagree about the circumstances of how rights to a parcel of land were acquired. One lineage may claim inalienable rights to a tract of land to which another lineage claims it has residual rights. In this type of dispute, which is fairly frequent, litigants disagree about whether the rights to a parcel of land were originally acquired by the patrilineal ancestor of one lineage, thereby implying full and unconditional rights, or acquired through a transfer at a marriage, thereby implying conditional rights.

Disagreements about principles of land tenure often center around the circumstances under which rights to land can be transferred through a woman. For example, some descent lines may have no male heirs in one generation. There is a debate about whether or not in this situation full rights can be transferred through a woman. Some argue that without any male successors, such lines are "blocked" (*puni*) and land rights must be transferred to patrilineal relatives in other lineages of the clan of the lineage's founder. Others argue that the land is held by a woman for that generation and then inherited by her male descendants.

There are several obvious environmental factors which put pressure on land and lead to disputes. The need for imported goods has made people more dependent upon copra production and this has increased pressure on the harvesting of coconut groves. The population growth in the 20th century further increased this pressure on land. The missionaries' prohibition of arranged marriages also may have contributed to land disputes by preventing the possibility of resolving a dispute between two lineages by arranging a marriage between them.

Generally, people prefer to avoid the hostility of a court case and are reluctant to take cases to court. Once a major land case goes to court, there is likely to be enduring animosity between the litigants that will extend through several appeals. One major land case that was still being contested during my stay was described in government reports written in the 1930s, and some people claimed that the case had started in the 1920s. The litigants may start new cases against one another over different parcels of land.

Moreover, major land disputes may trigger a chain reaction involving other lineages. Another lineage may enter the case by asserting that neither of the litigants has the right to the land being contested. One long-lasting dispute involves at least three different lineages, and their allies. In another case, a plaintiff called a friendly witness to support his case. The two men had been recognized as allies in many land disputes. Part of the testimony of this witness described his rights to a parcel of land not directly involved in the case. The plaintiff heard the testimony and disagreed with it because the plaintiff believed that the parcel of land belonged to his own lineage, not to that of his witness. By my return in 1987, this plaintiff had taken his former witness to court over that parcel of land and the men were no longer on good terms.

Discussions of land tenure are often contradictory and complex. Whenever I tried to get explicit answers about the jural principles involved, there were often contradictions, not only between different people but also between the explanations of the same person at different times. When I pressed informants for specifics, they often shifted their responses away from defining specific jural principles to broader social values which determine how land is actually utilized. Although they disagree about the jural rules governing rights to use land, they do agree about these social values and how they apply to land tenure.

Land use can be seen as embedded in broader social values. Among the Sikaiana, there are important expectations for generosity, compassion and providing aid for those

who need it. But at the same time, there are strong expectations for self-sufficiency: people should not make unnecessary requests or beg for others' resources. People value self-sufficiency while recognizing the need for the help of others. To refuse resources or a request to use a resource, including land, is considered a sign of stinginess or meanness. At the same time, a person who makes a request to someone outside of a close relationship risks being criticized for begging.

The Sikaiana like to make land available for as many people as possible. A lineage is admired for allowing many different people to use its land, including people whose ties are through females. It is considered improper or shameful to prohibit someone from using land so long as she or he has not caused serious personal harm to members of the lineage. Even in situations where there are clear cases of disobedience and hostility against the lineage or one of its members, the offender is not necessarily prevented from using the land. After the most bitter court cases, a spokesman for the winning lineage usually lets it be known that members of the losing lineage may continue to use the land, providing they ask his permission and admit that his lineage has ultimate entitlement to it. But because of norms about self-sufficiency, members of the losing lineage will not make any requests and often simply stop using the land. If it is a large or valuable tract of land, they will plan an appeal in court.

A person who wishes to use land to which he does not have full rights and does not normally use-- for example a person who wishes to activate his rights through a female-- must ask permission from lineage members. Some people are reluctant to request use of the land for fear that they will not be considered self-sufficient. Using land without asking permission implies full entitlement. Land disputes are often started when a person asserts his full rights to a parcel of land by cutting down a coconut tree on land normally used by another. The latter is forced to either acknowledge the man's right to do so, or to contest it by taking him to court.

Some men are descended from male ancestors who arrived after the distribution of land. As a result, they do not possess rights to any land through patrilineal descent. They, however, have access to land in several ways. First, upon arrival, their ancestors were looked after or sponsored by certain lineages. In some cases, these sponsoring lineages still feel an obligation to provide land for them, and, in Sikaiana thinking, it is an admirable sign of their generosity to do so. Second, these immigrants have access to the land of their mother's or wife's lineages. Sometimes, there are threats to disinherit these immigrants and their children. But such a threat reflects very poorly upon the person who makes it. Although people may agree that a lineage spokesperson is within his jural rights to expel another, he risks public condemnation for doing so.

Kinship and personal friendships also affect land use and disputes. A person is often very reluctant to start a court case with a close relative, especially if the two are on good terms. People lament disputes between people who are kin, even when, by Sikaiana standards, that relationship is distant in genealogy. One woman told me that she foresaw a land dispute between her children and those of her first cousin. But she had asked her children to wait until she died before bringing the case to court. When relationships are good, land is shared and disagreements are ignored. When

relationships have soured, land becomes a center of contention.

Moreover, personal relationships are often contradictory and ambiguous, in some cases intentionally so. One young man suggested that all the Sikaiana gather together to write down the names of every tract of land on Sikaiana and their owners. This plan was never accepted. From what I know about land use it would not be practical. It would cause arguments between people who disagree about rights to certain tracts of land, but who are willing to ignore their differences because they have good relations. Moreover, it would remove the ambiguity of future maneuvering and change, something that many Sikaiana want to keep available. Land tenure is about relationships between people, and it reflects the changing conflicts, solidarity, trust, distrust, and ambiguity found in those relations.

According to the Sikaiana people, there were no land disputes before the arrival of the Protectorate's government because everyone knew who had rights to each tract of land. In these former times, the Sikaiana assert that their elders settled disputes among themselves. The Sikaiana claim that there was one set of "true" principles and lineage histories about which everyone agreed. After the arrival of the government and its courts, they claim that different versions of land tenure were developed by people who wanted to use the court system in order to acquire more land.

I believe, however, that land disputes are inherent in Sikaiana social relations. Land use concerns access to resources. At present, there are too many Sikaiana people with rights to use the atoll's limited resources and this is one obvious source for land disputes. Even before the introduction of the court system and the increase in population of the last 50 years, land use was subject to the fluctuations of the environment, natural disasters, migration, and changing technology. Sikaiana legends recount various immigrations, disasters, and other events which must have affected land use. Land tenure was never once and forever codified; rather, it was constantly being modified. All legends agree that land was somehow distributed from the chiefs to commoners about six to ten generations ago, although they disagree about how this came about. These legends about land distribution probably involve some now forgotten conflicts. It seems possible that about ten generations ago there was conflict between the more recent immigrants who were commoners and people from older chiefly families who held rights to the land. The commoners may have pressed the chiefly lines to provide greater access to resources, or perhaps there was conflict among different chiefly clans which resulted in the distribution of land to gain allies. But there may have been continuing disagreement about the implications of this distribution: some chiefly lines arguing that still retain ultimate rights to the land, while some commoner lines arguing that the distribution entitled them to irrevocable rights to that land.

In the 19th century, it is probable that the increased demand for copra as a trade commodity forced changes in the use of land, and as a result, the definitions of rights to land. More recently, in the 20th century, the population increased and a court system was established on the atoll to adjudicate land disputes. These changes caused new pressures on land use, and it is very possible that the Sikaiana responded by developing new interpretations of land rights.

Many Sikaiana, especially younger ones, say that they are tired by Sikaiana's constant arguments about land. Some consider that their future is in towns working for wages. Others have bought or hope to purchase land in other areas of the Solomon Islands. But most Sikaiana people, even those with land elsewhere and a general aversion to the animosity engendered in Sikaiana land squabbles, are drawn into the disputes. They aid relatives and take sides when they feel others are unjustly using land without proper entitlement. The animosity in Sikaiana land disputes suggests the intensity of Sikaiana relations. Conflict may not be pleasant but, as Georg Simmel (1908/55) notes, it is often one of the most intense and intimate of relations.

### **Dependence and Independence in Social Relationships**

The population tripled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Sikaiana lineages gained more members with access to lineage resources. Lineages themselves maintained solidarity among their increased membership at the same time that they entered into conflicts with other lineages. At the same time, many people migrated away from Sikaiana and some have bought land in other parts of the Solomon Islands which they possess only for themselves and their designated heirs, and they are proud of this legacy.

In Sikaiana life there is a tension between the desire to be self-sufficient, and needs and obligations, often derived from genealogical ties, to other people. Rights to land provide most Sikaiana men with an inalienable resource and a basis for self-sufficiency, although these land rights must be shared with other members of the lineage. Sikaiana men are proud of their land rights and this makes land tenure an especially volatile issue when there are disputes. Rights to land, however, are not simply a list of rules about inheritance and access, they are also shaped by values and concepts of self-sufficiency, cooperation, sharing and reciprocity. Men pride themselves on their independence and self-sufficiency which is ultimately grounded in access to land. Although they want to show their generosity by allowing others to use their land, they do not like to be in the position of being dependent on others.

Individuals use reciprocity and sharing to develop relationships, often out of a framework based upon genealogy. Among a large number of kin and associates, special ties are created through fosterage. Within a household, members share resources and labor on a daily basis. Outside the household, people develop relationships in their patterns of support and exchange. Throughout the course of his or her life, a Sikaiana person builds upon relations, often through patterns of sharing and reciprocity. Some relationships are emphasized; others are allowed to atrophy. Despite the many changes that have taken place in Sikaiana society during this century, kinship, descent, sharing and reciprocity remain important bases for their relations with one another.

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i. Sikaiana kinship terminology, for the most part, is of the Hawaiian or Generational type. Relatives in the same generation, both lineal and collateral, are called by the same term. In the Sikaiana terminology, opposite-sex siblings, brother to sister, call one another *kave*. Same-sex siblings, brother to brother and sister to sister, call one another *taina*.

These terms are extended to cousins. I'd call a male cousin *taina*; he'd call me *taina*. I'd call a female cousin *kave*, which is what she'd call me. These terms are extended to any of my generation I consider to be related. Normally, this system is extended to second cousins (the grandchildren of a person's grandparent's siblings). However, a person may extend this terminology further. In the parental generation, all females including mother, her sisters, father's sisters and both parents' female cousins are called by the same term, *tinna*. Father, his brother's, and his male cousins are called by the term, *tamana*. A mother's brothers and mother's male cousins are often called *tamana* also; however, they are sometimes referred to with a special term, *inoa*, which has ritual and ceremonial implications. All ancestors of both sexes of two generations or more are *tupuna*. All descendants of two generations or more are *mokupuna*. Children and their cousins, a person's nephews and nieces are referred to as *tama* ('child' or 'person'). Sex can be distinguished among natural and foster children by using the words for 'male' (*tanata*) and 'female' (*hahine*): *taku tanata* 'my son', *taku hahine* 'my daughter'.

ii. Jacob Love (personal communication) informs me that Levao is a perfectly good Samoan name.

iii. Many Polynesian societies, and indeed many other societies in Oceania, have land tenure systems in which rights to land are acquired through principles of descent and filiation that are non-unilineal, that is through both female and male ties: Tuvalu (Noricks 1981:119-124, Brady 1974:138), Nukuoro (Carroll 1966:200-201), Kapingamarangi (Lieber 1968:86; 1974: 85, 87), and Tokelau (Huntsman 1971:chapter III); see also Goodenough (1955), Davenport (1959), and Firth (1957). In these societies, decisions relating to land use are flexible and based to some extent upon individual choices and preferences. On Kapingamarangi (Lieber 1968:86-87), Tuvalu (Noricks 1981:117-124), and Tokelau (Huntsman 1971:141-150) for example, land is redistributed every few generations, usually through both male and female ties. Thus, the land-owning groups in these societies do not maintain the same degree of perpetuity that is found in Sikaiana lineages.

Sikaiana land-owning lineages are enduring and they retain essentially sovereign and inalienable rights to the same tracts of land. Although portions of land, usually swamp gardens and housesites, may be transferred to another line, the donating lineage maintains residual rights in this land and expects eventually to repossess it. All patrilineal members of the Sikaiana land-owning lineage have equal rights to all of the lineage's land.

On Ontong Java, a neighboring Polynesian outlier with many similarities to Sikaiana, Ian Hogbin (1934/1961:140) found that a man can be fully incorporated into the "joint family" of his mother's brother. On Sikaiana, it is not possible to incorporate non-members, foster children, or immigrants as full members of a land-owning lineage as long as that lineage has surviving patrilineal male offspring. In some respects the Sikaiana land tenure system resembles that of Tikopia. In the Tikopia system, however, the chiefs exercise rights over all the land (Firth 1936/57:376). Although some members of the Sikaiana chiefly clans assert similar rights of eminent domain, they never tried to exercise these rights, and each land-owning lineage manages its land independently of other lineages.

iv. Many Polynesian societies organize significant social relationships around the sibling group, and especially a complementary tie between brothers and sisters (and their

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respective descendants) that has both economic and ritual significance (see Marshall 1983, Huntsman 1971:159). By comparison, on Sikaiana the brother-sister tie is of limited importance. Units of daily consumption and distribution are not formed around them. There is no ceremonial relationship in which a sister may curse her brother or her brother's children as in Tuvalu (Noricks 1981:173) and Tokelau (Huntsman 1971:97). On Sikaiana, the brother-sister tie is important, but it does not take precedence over the husband-wife relationship. After marriage, brothers and sisters are not obligated to cooperate on a daily basis in the production and consumption of resources. On Sikaiana, it is husbands and wives who have such obligations.

v. Tom Russel, a Protectorate administrator who had some anthropological training, reports that in former times the *hale akina* ('clans') were exogamous (BSIP 27/vii/5 1955). Reviewing genealogies, I have found a few, but not many, marriages between members of the same *hale akina*.

vi. There is an extensive discussion of Sikaiana land tenure and land disputes in Donner (1992a).