

# **MARKSCHEME**

**May 2004**

## **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**Standard Level**

**Paper 1**

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1. **What values of rural Fijian life are highlighted in the sevusevu and the speeches that accompany it? Discuss how the ritual communicates these values.**

**[6 marks]**

This descriptive question seeks to elicit candidates' understanding of the most straightforward meaning of the sevusevu in the rural Fijian context. Sevusevu rituals emphasize the importance of several inter-related themes: the solidarity of the community, the agreed-upon nature of activities such as worshipping the Lord, the shared nature of values and mythologies, and the conduct of social relations with overt reference to everyone's pre-set place in a social hierarchy. These materials are to be found in the first three paragraphs of the passage, and constitute answers to the first part of the question.

The second part of the question ("Discuss how the ritual communicates these values") requires candidates to approach the text slightly more analytically. Most straightforwardly, the values in question are communicated in a concrete and direct way in the conduct of the ritual, in that they constitute the topic of the speeches that Fijian orators deliver during the sevusevu. More subtly, the values are also communicated non-verbally. For instance, the expectation that all participants in the sevusevu set aside their own personal agendas and concerns until the ritual is over, thus foregrounding their social duties while backgrounding their individualistic concerns, is a way in which the ritual tacitly affirms the importance of everyone attending to the needs of the group and setting aside personal designs and desires. The high frequency of occurrence of the sevusevu in village life also elaborates the importance of village values, and so does the predictability of behaviour in the ritual: repeated and pre-ordained appeals to mythic pasts and timeless traditions lend credibility to the values that are talked about overtly in the speeches accompanying the ritual.

Candidates must answer both parts of the question in order to obtain **[3 marks]** or more, and should do so in their own words. The best answers will be couched in terms of anthropological notions such as rights and duties, role and status, and social solidarity. Candidates need not follow the order or the wording of the above, but should present sufficient evidence of having understood the basic workings of the sevusevu ritual as it is described in the first three paragraphs.

**2. How have the new audiences of the sevusevu ritual affected its meaning in rural Fiji?**

*[6 marks]*

The new audiences that Brison identifies are tourists visiting Fiji from overseas, Fiji's inhabitants who are of Indian descent, and indigenous Fijians who live in cities or who have migrated overseas. There are important social, economic, and cultural differences between rural Fijians and these other groups, as can be clearly deduced from the passage. These differences are both concrete and ideologically constructed: village Fijians are indeed poorer and, out of necessity, more community-orientated than Indo-Fijians and urban Fijians, but the difference in wealth and ideological orientation is also ideologically elaborated in contexts such as the sevusevu. So the sevusevu has acquired new meanings.

When performed in abbreviated form for the benefit of tourists at holiday resorts, the sevusevu enables rural Fijians to display themselves to overseas visitors as a friendly, hospitable, and community-orientated people, and as owners of customs, traditions, and acts that seem to hark back to a timeless past. These themes are very useful not just for the tourist industry but also for Fijians' own sense of self-esteem, hence the pride that they take in thinking that tourists like what they see. When performing the sevusevu in the presence of Indo-Fijians, rural Fijians can subtly emphasize the separation between themselves and Indo-Fijians: they are communally orientated, concerned with others, and driven by altruism, while, in their view, Indo-Fijians are individualistically orientated, concerned only with themselves, and driven by greed. Sevusevu performances foreground similar themes when conducted before urban or migrant Fijians, in addition to another important theme: villagers present themselves as the true guardians of timeless tradition and sacred rituals, which are more important than the monetary wealth that non-rural Fijians accumulate and value. This emphasis on guardianship implies that non-rural Fijians should act generously towards their rural relatives, and not see them as ne'er-do-wells as they are prone to do.

Candidates can present the above materials in any fashion they wish. For example, they can organize their answers in terms of the three new audiences, describing the different themes that rural Fijians foreground in sevusevu performances for the benefit of each audience. Alternatively, candidates can focus on themes, and describe the extent to which each theme applies to each of the three new audiences. In all cases, they must couch their answers in analytic terms and describe the materials in their own words.

**3. Choose a ritual, object, or symbol found in another society you have studied that carries multiple meanings depending on who is using or witnessing it. Compare your choice with the sevusevu ritual in rural Fiji.**

*[8 marks]*

A wide range of case studies may form the target of comparison for this comparative question. However, responses must demonstrate that the comparative case of their choice carries more than one meaning, and must show how meaning differences are dependent of who is involved as either agent (owner, performer, guardian) or audience. The best answers will draw out possible consequences of the different meanings of the ritual, object or symbol in the target of comparison, as Brison does, for example, when she describes how sevusevu performances before urban Fijians imply that modern Fijians are indebted to their rural relatives. Answers must be organized in a clear manner and must be presented as comparisons with the Fijian material, highlighting similarities, differences and generalizations. Responses must situate the comparative case in terms of group, place, author, and ethnographic present.

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