

Finch & C^o



A RARE AND UNUSUAL FIJIAN 'BOWAI' WAR CLUB

A RARE AND UNUSUAL FIJIAN 'BOWAI' WAR CLUB

WITH A CARVED INSCRIPTION TO ONE END READING 'J.LONG'

TRACES OF WHITE LIME STILL REMAINING IN THE CARVED FORMAL DECORATIVE PATTERN COVERING THE SHAFT AND
HANDLE

OLD SMOOTH SHINY PATINA

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 61.5 CMLONG – 24¼ INS LONG

LITERATURE

'BOWAI' ARE WAR CLUBS USED IN CLOSE COMBAT AND ARE SHAPED LIKE A BASEBALL BAT WITH A TAPERED SHAFT AND ROUNDED TIP. HOWEVER THEY WERE PROBABLY INTRODUCED TO FIJI FROM TONGA. A WATERCOLOUR NOW HELD IN THE FIJI MUSEUM DATED 1841 PAINTED ON THE BACK OF AN OLD LETTER BY THE REV THOMAS WILLIAMS SHOWS AMONGST A VARIETY OF FIJIAN WEAPONS A VERY SIMILAR SHAPED CLUB TO THIS EXAMPLE.

CHIEF RATU SERU CAKOBALU PRESENTED HIS FAVOURITE 'BOWAI' TO QUEEN VICTORIA AT THE TIME OF CESSION, AND IT WAS LATER RETURNED ORNAMENTED IN SILVER BY KING GEORGE V TO FIJI TO ACT AS THE PARLIAMENTARY MACE.