Bringing Peace to Vanuatu: The Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site

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COUNTRY: Vanuatu

INTENDED AGE GROUP: Class 6 or age 12–13

CATEGORIES: Social studies, social science, history, geography, language and literacy and the arts
Unit Abstract

This unit has been developed to teach students about the Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site in Vanuatu and actions they can take to actively preserve their own cultural and natural heritage. The unit focuses on a cultural and natural “living” landscape, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain. Through learning about the Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site, students will gain valuable knowledge and skills to help them protect and preserve natural and cultural heritage throughout the Pacific.

Chief Roi Mata’s Domain became a World Heritage Site in 2008. The area includes three early 17th-century sites on the islands of Efate, Lelepa and Artok. They are associated with the life and death of the last paramount chief of central Vanuatu, Chief Roi Mata.

This World Heritage Site celebrates moral values, social systems and conflict-resolution methods that Chief Roi Mata promoted. Chief Roi Mata’s Domain illustrates the relationship between oral tradition and archaeology. It is a “living” cultural landscape that is associated with a chiefly system that is still influential in Vanuatu. Chief Roi Mata remains a source of power and inspiration.

This unit is not about our past, even though it draws from our history. It is about our future. Cultural and natural heritage is extremely important for future generations. Students are our future decision makers. It is important that they think about culture in terms of past, present and future.

The unit provides an opportunity for students to gain a deep understanding of natural and cultural heritage sites and custom stories to which they may have cultural links. As they study a site, students can look at it from different viewpoints. These might include cultural values, cultural identity, environmental protection and archaeology. They will begin to understand the importance of their own heritage and how important it is to protect it.
How to Use This Unit

This unit includes student activities that draw on curriculum links to social studies, social science, geography, history, language and literacy and the arts. Each activity uses modes of learning that reflect a teaching approach called Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD aims to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. This will help students understand the complexity of the world around them. ESD strives to equip students with life skills that will enable them to contribute to a sustainable future for their communities. Complementing this approach is an inquiry that is focused on developing students’ critical thinking and problem-solving skills in order to increase their knowledge, challenge their attitudes and develop their citizenship skills. Activities in the unit involve your students in finding out, sorting out, drawing conclusions and planning.

There are five suggested student activities. They include:

- Information for you (the teacher)
- Photocopy masters of information to give to your students (the student handouts)
- Photocopy masters of student activity sheets

These activities are offered as a guide only. Responses and discussions do not need to be limited to the suggestions in this unit.

Fels Cave, Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site


This unit is in plain English to support translation into local languages.
Relevant Curriculum Links

Environmental Studies  This unit links to teaching and learning about the environment. It will help students to understand the interaction between ni-Vanuatu people and their environment.

Geography  The unit develops the skill of locating relevant areas and features on a map.

History  Students will learn about the social, spiritual, political and natural history of Vanuatu, as well as about archaeological remains from about 400 years ago.

Language and Literacy  Students will learn and use modern and historical vocabulary about society and culture in central Vanuatu.

Social Studies  The unit examines the kastom stories that led to modern social structures in central Vanuatu. It will help students to investigate the relationship between people and place in their own community.

The Arts  Students will use drama to role play and critically reflect on events in history and to explore how oral legends form part of their own local and national identity.

National Studies  Students will reflect on how the Roi Mata kastom stories links to national identity and modern cultural values.

Chief Roi Mata’s grave site is marked with headstones and large conch shells.

Photo: Chris Ballard
Unit Objectives

Knowledge
To help students develop knowledge and an understanding of:
• The cultural significance of Chief Roi Mata’s Domain
• The importance of Chief Roi Mata to the cultural, traditional and chiefly systems of central Vanuatu
• The need to conserve Chief Roi Mata’s Domain and other natural and cultural heritage places for Vanuatu, Pacific and world conservation value
• The role of site conservation in ensuring sustainable development in the Pacific

Attitudes
To encourage students to:
• Value local, regional and global cultural and natural heritage sites
• Appreciate their own sense of place and belonging in a living natural and cultural landscape through understanding and interpreting kastom stories and their importance to life today and in the future
• Value the efforts that individuals, communities and organisations make together to restore and maintain heritage sites in order to create a more sustainable future for the Pacific region
• Ask their families to teach them about their own cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge

Skills
To help students develop their ability to:
• Carry out individual and team-based research activities in order to develop their competence in contributing to the development and protection of cultural heritage and local indigenous knowledge
• Apply critical thinking and reasoning skills to explore social and environmental complexity and holistic systems in the world around them
• Reflect on the role, significance and value of natural and cultural heritage
• Make links between what they are studying and the real world in order to become protectors and promoters of their own cultural and natural heritage and to contribute to healthy communities with sustainable futures
Suggested Student Activity 1

Linking Heritage and Culture

Objective:
For students to develop an understanding of intangible culture and the cultural and environmental values that make World Heritage sites important.

Your students could:

- Contribute to a brainstorm activity. On the board or a flipchart, draw two columns: one with the heading "cultural heritage" and the other with the heading "natural heritage". Ask the students to give examples for each column. When they have finished, identify some examples of mixed heritage. Ask them what their life would be like without their heritage. Ask them how much they currently know about the things they listed under the cultural heritage heading.

- Use the 'Values of People and Place’ student activity sheets on pages 12–13. Working in pairs or small groups, have the students discuss and record their answers to the questions on the activity sheet.

- Use the 'Intangible Culture and Living in Balance with the Environment’ student activity sheets on pages 14–15.

To deconstruct the activity in ‘Values of People and Place’, focus on values of cultural and natural heritage and the differences and connections between the two types of heritage.

Where appropriate, ask the students, "Why do you feel/think that?" to encourage them to critically reflect on their answers. Have them give reasons that substantiate their answers.

- You could also discuss some of the differences between the materials used in the Nepal example with some of our traditional building materials here in the Pacific. Note that, because we historically used natural materials, including timber, leaves and thatch, many of our buildings have rotted away over time. This means that we do not have as much lasting architectural heritage as some other cultures, though we do have ancient stone structures in places such as Pohnpei and Tonga. Discuss the positive and negative heritage and environmental aspects of this with your students.
CHIEF ROI MATA’S DOMAIN

Vanuatu

The Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site is in Vanuatu. Vanuatu is a country of many volcanic islands and limestone atolls. People live on 67 of them. Vanuatu’s neighbours include the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Vanuatu means “the country that stands up”. The people are known as ni-Vanuatu.

In the 1999 census, 78.5% of Vanuatu’s population of 187,000 was living in rural areas. Around 75% of the population was living on the coast.

The majority of people in Vanuatu are Melanesians, whose ancestors have lived there for centuries. Vanuatu is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, with over a hundred different local cultures and languages. Ni-Vanuatu celebrate a huge variety of customs. Dances, funerals, weddings, systems of rule, art styles and agriculture are different from island to island.

Archaeologists believe that the first people to reach Vanuatu were the Lapita people, who arrived from the east about 3,200 years ago. Their descendants lived in small, clan-based villages, each with their own language, separated by mountains, jungle and the sea. In their agricultural cultures, magic was the main defence against angry spirits (including famines and cyclones).
The first Europeans to visit were members of a Spanish expedition in 1606, led by the Portuguese explorer Pedro Fernández de Quirós. In 1768 a French expedition visited, led by Louis-Antoine de Bougainville. An English expedition led by James Cook visited in 1774. James Cook charted the islands and renamed them the New Hebrides. The mountains reminded him of the Hebrides islands of Scotland.

In the 1800s, European traders, settlers and missionaries arrived. An Anglo-French condominium in 1906 meant that the English and the French governed together. This resulted in two official languages, two currencies, two education systems and two police forces.

On 30 July 1980, the country declared its independence and became the Republic of Vanuatu.

Chief Roi Mata

Chief Roi Mata’s life is celebrated in modern drama and song. For example, the ni-Vanuatu theatre group Wan Smolbag sings:

Roi Mata, Roi Mata, Roi Mata!
Your name falls down the years
And is remembered with great pride.
Roi Mata! The man who brought peace
To these islands!

Chief Roi Mata’s Domain became Vanuatu’s first UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008. It is an example of a place in the Pacific that celebrates the connection between Pacific people, their environment and their traditions. The domain is often described as “a living cultural landscape”. It is a place where a Pacific chiefly and moral system brought peace to the surrounding islands. This still affects the lives of people in central Vanuatu.

The last holder of the paramount chiefly title Roi Mata, Chief Roi Mata lived on the island of Efate. He died about 400 years ago. He is remembered as a great leader who brought peace after a long period of warfare. He did this by setting up a tradition of peace feasts and social structures linked through women. These social
structures still exist today and Chief Roi Mata remains a central figure in kastom stories that continue to inspire the ni-Vanuatu people.

The title Roi Mata is sometimes spelled Roimata, Roy Mata and Roymata.

**Three Sites in Chief Roi Mata’s Domain**

Chief Roi Mata’s Domain is located in the Lelepa region of central Vanuatu. It includes part of the mainland of northwest Efate and two offshore islands. Efate is the fourth largest island in Vanuatu. It is where the capital, Port Vila, is. The small islands of Lelepa and Artok are on the western boundary of Havannah Harbour, which is a deep-water harbour on the northwest coast of Efate.

In the 1960s, archaeologists were guided by the oral kastom stories of the people on the island of Lelepa to three key places that featured in the life of Chief Roi Mata. They are now collectively known as Chief Roi Mata’s Domain. The domain has local and international cultural and natural heritage significance. It includes:

- Mangaas Village on the northwest coast of Efate, where Chief Roi Mata lived
- Fels Cave on Lelepa, where Chief Roi Mata died
- Artok, where Chief Roi Mata, his family and members of his court are buried
WORLD HERITAGE

There are many places of heritage importance in Vanuatu and elsewhere in the Pacific.

Heritage is something we inherit from the past. It is what we live with today. It is something we pass on to future generations. There are two main types of heritage: cultural heritage and natural heritage.

• Cultural heritage is the culture we inherit from our ancestors. It includes using spears for hunting and shells and mats for money, traditional food, music, songs, dances, stories and arts and crafts.

• Natural heritage includes the traditional landscapes we have inherited, for example, volcanoes, hills, rivers and cloud forests.

Some of the things we inherit are a mixture of our cultural and natural heritage, such as dance grounds and burial places, which provide cultural landscapes and space.

Our cultural and natural heritages are sources of life and inspiration for our modern communities and our personal and national identities.

Another way of thinking about heritage is to think about places and objects we wish to keep safe for the future. We value our cultural and natural heritages because they come to us from our ancestors, they are beautiful and they are scientifically important and irreplaceable.

In many ways, our heritage reflects the continuity of communities and their identity and the lives of our ancestors. It survives today only because of the special efforts they made to look after it.

Can you imagine your life without heritage? Think about this question in relation to the place where you live. What things in your environment represent the past?
What things should be kept safe for the future? What could be replaced? What could not be replaced?

The world’s heritage is made up of some very unique places, including the grasslands of East Africa’s Serengeti, the pyramids of Egypt, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the East Rennell World Heritage Site in the Solomon Islands.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage sites belong to all the people of the world, no matter where the sites are. The UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted in 1972 and is known as the World Heritage Convention, protects and preserves cultural and natural heritage around the world of outstanding universal value. Chief Roi Mata’s Domain has this status. Some other UNESCO World Heritage Sites are shown on the map. Each site has a cultural, natural or mixed world heritage value.

Some World Heritage Sites

- Giza to Dahshur Pyramid Fields, Egypt
- East Rennell World Heritage Site, Solomon Islands
- Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, Philippines
- Kuk Early Agricultural Site, Papua New Guinea
- Chief Roi Mata’s Domain, Vanuatu
- Tongariro World Heritage Site, New Zealand

Source: World Heritage Collection, UNESCO database
Values of People and Place

Look at the pictures and descriptions of the two World Heritage sites on page 13. Work in small groups to discuss and record your answers to the following questions.

1. Why do you think these sites are important and valuable to the heritage of everyone in the world?

2. How are these sites different from your own cultural and natural heritage sites?

3. What would your life be like today without cultural heritage?

4. What would your future be like without heritage?

5. Describe a place you have visited that you value and think of as a special place (for example, a place with remarkable carvings, unique landforms, spectacular natural beauty or somewhere with amazing plants or animals). Explain why this place is a special place to you and why you think it should be protected. How do you plan to look after it so that it will still be there in the future?
World Heritage Site 1: Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

The cultural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley can be seen in seven groups of monuments and buildings that show the historic and artistic achievements for which the Kathmandu Valley is world famous. The seven sites include the Durbar Square, Buddhist stupas and Hindu temples.

![Kathmandu Valley, Nepal]

Photo: F. Bandarin
Source: The World Heritage Collection, UNESCO database

World Heritage Site 2: Sangay National Park, Ecuador

Sangay National Park in Ecuador has outstanding natural heritage, including two active volcanoes. It contains examples of many different ecosystems, from tropical rainforests, glaciers and snow-covered mountains to flat lowland plains. Its isolation has helped ensure the survival of many unique animals and plants.

![Sangay National Park, Ecuador]

Photo: Photographer unknown
Source: The World Heritage Collection, UNESCO database
Intangible Culture and Living in Balance with the Environment

Some of our culture and heritage can’t be seen or touched. We call this “intangible cultural heritage”.

Intangible cultural heritage is all the parts of our living culture that we can’t physically touch. It includes knowledge and practices, including the stories, songs, dances, rituals, festive events, canoe-carving techniques, gardening methods, fish-herding practices and traditional knowledge about harvesting animals and plants that have been transferred orally from our ancestors. In this way, our elders are our cultural “libraries”.

1. Name some forms of intangible cultural heritage you have learned from your community.

2. What intangible cultural heritage activities have you participated in this week?

3. a. Is there any form of intangible cultural heritage that you would like to know more about or be good at?

   b. If so, how will you plan to learn these skills and how will you teach others about them in the future?

4. For your homework assignment, think about some intangible cultural heritage that your elders can share when you next see them. For example, you could ask your elders questions about a traditional fishing technique, you could listen to stories about how tapu areas help to safeguard the environment, or you could ask your elders to share a story from your area that relates to the past.

5. Once you have this new information, write two short paragraphs on the back of this sheet about how the story or information is important to your life and how you plan to share it with other people in your family when you are an elder.
Much of our intangible cultural heritage is linked to how we use and live in balance with natural resources. For centuries, before cargo and European influence, our ancestors lived in harmony with the environment. All the resources they used came from the bush and the sea. Natural resources have always been limited, but our ancestors knew how to use the environment wisely, as their survival depended on it.

6. Describe how our people’s balance with nature has changed over time (from the past to today).

7. Why do you think this change happened?

8. How has the change affected our culture and the way we live together and interact with the environment?

9. What do the changes mean for your future, the future of your community and the future of the Pacific?

10. What is a change you could make in your life to live more in balance with the environment?

11. Are you willing to make this change? Why or why not?
Suggested Student Activity 2

Tell Your Story

Objective:
For students to understand the oral traditions and stories that belong to Chief Roi Mata’s Domain and why they are so important to so many ni-Vanuatu.

Your students could:

• Compare and contrast the three Chief Roi Mata stories on the student handout on pages 17–19 with other stories they have heard about Chief Roi Mata (or other similar stories from their community).
• Discuss the impact of the Chief Roi Mata stories, or similar ones, on their lives today.
• Complete the ‘Reflecting on the Chief Roi Mata Kastom Stories’ student activity sheet on page 20.
• Role play in small groups the following three scenes:
  — Scene 1: One of the major events from Chief Roi Mata’s life (for example, the introduction of the naflak system, the great feast and the end of the Efate war, being held captive and using his natkar to escape captivity, or his death).
  — Scene 2: Community life on Lelepa just after Chief Roi Mata’s death.
  — Scene 3: The effect of the Chief Roi Mata stories on people in Vanuatu today.

Each role-play could take from 3–5 minutes.

To deconstruct the role-playing, consider asking the students the following questions.

• How did you feel being Chief Roi Mata? What responsibilities did you have?
• What did it feel like to be alive 400 years ago?
• What do you think life would be like today in Vanuatu if the Chief Roi Mata stories did not exist? How would people live peacefully and settle their disputes?
• How can we make sure that important kastom stories in our culture continue to be shared and respected?
**CHIEF ROI MATA KASTOM STORIES**

Chief Roi Mata kastom stories have been shared by older people with younger people for a long time.

One story from Lelepa is about a very early chief who held the Roi Mata title about a thousand years ago. He was the leader of a great fleet of canoes that came to central Vanuatu.

About 400 years ago, the most famous Roi Mata title holder controlled parts of Efate and the neighbouring islands by installing new chiefly systems that brought peace to central Vanuatu.

Thanks to these kastom stories, Chief Roi Mata exists for people in at least three different ways. He is:

- A mythical or historical person in oral stories
- An archaeological presence
- An important living spirit

There are many kastom stories that celebrate the last chiefly holder of the Roi Mata title. They differ, depending on where the storyteller comes from. Three Lelepa stories are shared in this handout. You may have heard them before, or you may know other kastom stories about Chief Roi Mata or another community leader.
Naflak and the End of the Great Efate War

The first story is about Chief Roi Mata’s introduction of the naflak system and the natamwate peace feasts that ended the great Efate war about 400 years ago.

The legend says that Chief Roi Mata called all of the warring communities of Efate together for a feast. He asked each person to bring something. At the feast, he ruled that whatever food or item anyone had brought to the feast was now a naflak (a symbol of their identity). The symbols included yam, stone, wild ginger, octopus, breadfruit and coconut. Chief Roi Mata then ruled that people could not make war against other members of the same naflak. Roi Mata’s naflak system provided everyone with friends in other communities.

Naflak became a kinship system that was handed down through female family members. Children belong to the same naflak as their mother. The naflak system also created new forms of land rights, property rights and rights to chiefly titles passed down through women. Chief Roi Mata’s naflak was octopus and the land of the chief has belonged to the octopus naflak ever since.

These new systems ended the great Efate war and brought peace to central Vanuatu.

An old man from south Efate told the story like this:

He [Chief Roi Mata] found all the naflaks. He said, “Enough! Now you are naflak you must not hit each other. You cannot argue anymore. You will talk about your troubles. You will all be one.” That is why Vanuatu was able to get ahead and its people were able to grow. That man was called Roi Mata. That man is the one who made peace.

Chief Roi Mata’s Natkar

In another story, Chief Roi Mata’s canoe is blown out to sea. He lands on the island of Emae in the Shepherd Islands. On Emae, he is held as a slave by Chief Ti Vaitini until he uses his natkar (his strong chiefly power) to make the whole community sick and escapes.
Chief Roi Mata’s Death

A third famous story about Chief Roi Mata is about his death. In some versions, Chief Roi Mata is murdered at his brother Roi Muru’s own hands. In other versions, Roi Muru kills him with a poisoned arrow.

In the Lelepa region, they tell a different story — a story in which Roi Mata visits the settlement of Lou Patrou, on Lelepa Island, for a big feast.

At the feast, chiefs and their munuwai (magic specialists) compete against each other at producing and eating food in a naleoana (a competitive feast). But Chief Roi Mata had become an old man, and his natkar powers had left him. He falls ill after eating the feast. He is taken into Fels Cave on Lelepa and dies there. Then he is taken home to Mangaas by canoe.

At Mangaas, Chief Roi Mata’s family and his court are fearful of his natkar, even in death, so they choose not to bury him at Mangaas. Instead, they decide to bury him on Artok.

The people in Lelepa explain that, on the day before his kastom burial ceremony, the sea between Mangaas and Artok pulled back, allowing the community to take Chief Roi Mata’s body to Artok by walking on the sea floor.

The story tells that around 300 members of Chief Roi Mata’s court and family are also buried on Artok. Many are believed to have volunteered to be buried alive with him. This shows the enormous amount of respect people had for Chief Roi Mata and the power of his natkar. His political and spiritual power was so great that no one has since been willing to take on the Roi Mata title.

Artok was declared to be fenua tapu (forbidden land) afterwards. It remained undisturbed for 400 years.
Reflecting on the Chief Roi Mata Kastom Stories

1. What did you learn from the Roi Mata stories?
   a. What is natkar and what did it do for Chief Roi Mata?
   b. How did naflak bring peace to people in central Vanuatu?

2. How do the Chief Roi Mata kastom stories make you think and feel about:
   a. The last Chief Roi Mata’s values and social systems?
   b. The importance of kastom stories?
   c. The future of Vanuatu and its social systems?
   d. Your own identity, your own stories and your own heritage?
Suggested Student Activity 3

The Chief Roi Mata Domain as a Time Machine

Objective:

For students to become familiar with some of the major heritage sites within Chief Roi Mata’s Domain and with the language associated with the site.

Your students could:

• Separate into three groups and draw or make models of one of the three archaeological sites that make up Chief Roi Mata’s Domain.
• Present their drawing or model to the class and use words from the kastom stories to explain the site and some of its important cultural and natural heritage features.
• Write a poem about Chief Roi Mata’s Domain, or another site that means a lot to them, expressing its cultural value.
• Invite someone to talk about one or more of the following:
  – The Chief Roi Mata kastom stories
  – Tangible and intangible heritage
  – The importance of oral histories to the future of the Pacific and environmental conservation
• Be guided by the local communities of Manaliliu and Natapao during a visit to the site (or be guided by a local community to another site) to answer research and reflective questions. Before the visit, they could develop these questions with you.
• In small groups, imagine the society that existed when the artwork and paintings were drawn in Fels Cave. They could discuss what it may have been like to live in that society and the story the artwork might be trying to tell. The groups could report back to the whole class.

After the students report back on the society they think may have existed when the cave art was drawn, you could facilitate discussions around the following future-thinking questions. First explain to the students that there are no wrong or right answers.

• Generally speaking, do you think people in the Pacific are moving towards a good future? Why or why not?
• What will your society be like 400 years from now? Explain the reasons for your thinking.
• Do you think that studying the past helps us solve the problems of the present? How?
• Do you think the future of the Pacific is in your control? Why or why not? If you’re not in control of your future, who is?
• In your view, can the people of the Pacific look towards their future positively? What needs to happen so that they can?

Be aware that some of the images on the ‘Uncovering the Past’ student handout that follows on pages 22–28 may not be acceptable in some cultures, as they show human remains.
UNCOVERING THE PAST

During the 1960s, archaeologist José Garanger went to the Lelepa region to search for archaeological evidence of Chief Roi Mata’s life. Archaeology is a science that studies how people lived in the past. José Garanger listened to the legends from the Lelepa community. He used information in them to find Chief Roi Mata’s burial site, which he began to excavate. Archaeologists like José Garanger use what they find to understand changes that have occurred in human lives over hundreds — and sometimes thousands — of years. Archaeologists have an exciting job that requires a lot of patience as they dig up evidence of the past.

While digging, José Garanger found evidence of 50 burials, which suggests that the stories of voluntary burial of up to 300 members of Chief Roi Mata’s court and family are true. This finding was remarkable, because no other large-scale mass burials of this kind had been uncovered before in the Pacific.
The sites in Chief Roi Mata’s Domain are all associated with the life, death and burial of the last Roi Mata title holder. The locations include the abandoned site of Mangaas, Fels cave and the small island of Artok.

**Mangaas — Chief Roi Mata’s Home**

The site of Mangaas Village on the island of Efate is where Chief Roi Mata lived. Important cultural and natural heritage features at Mangaas include:

- Tamanu, banyan and canarium trees planted 400 years ago
- Likana (large coral heads)
- Traditional stone walls
- Sacred stones

Mangaas has been under tapu restrictions ever since Chief Roi Mata’s death. The tapu has meant the conservation of three large tamanu trees, which, according to a kastom story, Chief Roi Mata planted. Today, pregnant women and young children are not allowed to enter the site, as the local people believe that this could upset the spirits and they could become sick.

![A tamanu tree at Mangaas](Photo: Chris Ballard)
Near the beach, an old and very large banyan tree towers over the surrounding forest. It is clearly visible from the sea. The tree's roots have now swallowed up the wall it was traditionally planted on. The banyan's age is probably over 400 years, so it could have been planted before the abandonment of the settlement 400 years ago.

Members of the local community tell stories about a sacred white rooster that lives in the roots of the banyan trees at Mangaas. They have heard its calls early in the morning, but have never seen it. They believe that the rooster belongs to the spirit world. Elders think that it is better if visitors wait until mid-morning and the rooster has gone before visiting the site.

This banyan tree is home to a sacred rooster.

**Photo:** Chris Ballard


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Not far from the banyan tree, there is a flat area believed to be the mwalala (dance ground). It includes the location of the tamtam (slit drums) that were beaten to summon the members of Chief Roi Mata’s court and to accompany dancers. The passage to the dancing ground is marked by likanas.

The site and entrance to Chief Roi Mata’s residence is marked by a canarium tree and stone walls enclosing small residential yards associated with different members of Chief Roi Mata’s court.

Throughout the area there are sacred stones that are regarded as being extremely powerful and are treated with respect by the local people.

![One of the sacred stones at Mangaas](Photo: Sally Asker)

It is very important that the sacred stones are respected by visitors. Each one has a different purpose, meaning and spirit. There are stones for security at the entrance to the chief’s residence. Here, visitors must ask Chief Roi Mata’s permission and let him and his warriors know when they are about to enter his residence. There is a stone for pigs, another for fish and another for magic. The stone in the photograph is near the large banyan tree. It is where Chief Roi Mata sat when he became a chief. People are expected to be quiet when they are near this stone as a sign of respect for Chief Roi Mata’s spirit and power. It is tapu to touch it.
Fels Cave — Where Chief Roi Mata Died

According to the kastom stories, Fels Cave is believed to be the place where Chief Roi Mata died. The cave is a large, circular chamber near the top of a small hill. The cave belongs to the wild ginger naflak. Inside the cave, the walls are covered with ancient paintings and engravings. Almost all of the eye-level surfaces are covered in art.

The entrance to Fels Cave is located at the top of a small hill.

Photo: Sally Asher

The rock art at Fels Cave includes a diverse range of painted and engraved images. Black painted images include birds and fish. There is also a small section of red-painted rock art and a large picture of a male figure with a head-dress and raised hands.

A drawing of a hand inside Fels Cave

Local people believe that this figure is a drawing of Chief Roi Mata.

There are special cooking places in the cave were people used to prepare and cook laplap. Some of the pictures in the cave depict whales. Kastom stories tell that yams for laplap are ready for harvest when the first whale is sighted in the harbour.

Fels Cave is regarded with deep respect by the local community because it is associated with Chief Roi Mata in a number of different kastom stories, and with the belief that it is a place of the dead. An observed tradition is sweeping the floor at the cave entrance following someone’s death and then returning to find footprints on the following day.

You can see the island of Artok from the cave mouth.
Artok — Where Chief Roi Mata Is Buried

Artok is where Chief Roi Mata and members of his family and court are buried.

Ever since Chief Roi Mata was buried there, Artok has been tapu. Because of the tapu, people are forbidden to garden and do not usually sleep there. The diversity of local plants, the dense forest, the abundance of fish and the health of the reef reflect the isolated nature of this island and the strength of the tapu. It shows the part that traditions such as tapu can play in environmental conservation and the management of scarce resources.

Chief Roi Mata’s grave site is marked by headstones and large conch shells. This site is still the focus of offerings of fish and other items by the local communities. Before leaving Artok, people seek the Chief’s blessing for their fishing trips and for their safe return home across a calm sea. Visitors are expected to show their respect by talking quietly.

Chief Roi Mata was left undisturbed on Artok Island for almost 400 years. Following an excavation in 1967, the site was re-covered and has not been disturbed since.
Suggested Student Activity 4

World Heritage in the Media: ABC Radio, Pacific Beat Interview

Objective:
For students to reflect on the value of the Chief Roi Mata (or another important) heritage site and understand its significance for a sustainable future

Your students could:
• Imagine they are the head of the Vanuatu National Museum and Cultural Centre and are invited to do a radio interview on the day the domain gained World Heritage status in 2008.
• Interview a partner for one minute, pretending that they are taking part in the ABC radio programme Pacific Beat. They could describe their excitement about the World Heritage listing, the value of Chief Roi Mata’s Domain and what the listing means to the people of Vanuatu and the rest of the world now and in the future. They could use a pretend microphone, such as a ruler, for the interview.
• Present the role-played radio interviews to the class.

If you are doing this activity outside Vanuatu, adapt it to an important local heritage site valued by the people in your country.
Suggested Student Activity 5

Managing World Heritage for Our Future

Objective:
For students to start to understand the challenges and planning needed to sustainably look after the Chief Roi Mata Domain World Heritage Site for the future

Your students could:
- Divide into small groups and develop a management plan for the Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site using the ‘Chief Roi Mata’s Domain Site Management Plan’ activity sheets on pages 36–37. The groups could:
  - Brainstorm and list all the natural and cultural features to be managed.
  - List possible risks to and pressures on each feature listed.
  - Formulate an action or solution to protect each feature and manage the risk or pressure listed (for example, an action to manage and reduce damage to the cave mouth from earthquakes, an action to reduce the likelihood of people stealing sacred stones, an action to avoid visitors leaving rubbish at the domain or an action to reduce the likelihood of vandalism to the rock paintings in Fels Cave).
  - Think about and assign who should be responsible for each management action (for example, the local communities, the national government, a cultural centre, researchers and other people).
  - Share and present their management plans to the whole class.

To deconstruct this activity, you could:
- Ask the groups to explain the conservation challenges facing the heritage site. Ask the groups to discuss different ways of dealing with a risk or challenge.
- Ensure that the students compare, contrast and evaluate the different solutions that are presented.
- Guide the students to democratically choose the best solution or management option, explaining the reasons for their choice.
- Organise the students to evaluate the consequences of their planning choices. Ask them how they determined that one option was better than another one.
- Ask the students questions such as:
  - Why do you think it is important to have a management plan for Chief Roi Mata’s Domain?
  - How will your plan fit in with custom methods of managing land?
  - How will you ensure that everyone follows the management plan?
  - What do you think should be done if people ignore the plan and remove or destroy a heritage feature?
  - How could you manage this situation in a peaceful manner?
  - How do you plan to manage and promote your own natural and cultural heritage?
SITE CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT FOR THE FUTURE

There are many benefits of sites gaining World Heritage listing as examples of Pacific cultural and natural heritage. Being added to the World Heritage List brings increased public awareness of the site and its stories and values. World Heritage status creates opportunities for younger members of the community to learn more about their natural and cultural heritage, as elders are invited to tell the stories once again.

World Heritage Status Helps to Promote a Site for the Future

The former head of the Vanuatu National Museum and Cultural Centre, Ralph Regenvanu, shared his hopes for Chief Roi Mata’s Domain with the media on the day the site gained World Heritage status in 2008. He said:

The site will continue to develop its significance for the people of Vanuatu and, in particular, for future generations, who will now continue to learn about the site. The cultural and historical significance of the site is now increased by the World Heritage listing. It will develop into a showcase of Vanuatu history and culture for both international and local audiences.
COMMUNITY-LED TOURISM CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SITE CONSERVATION

The conservation of the special features at Mangaas and on Lelepa is managed by the local communities of Mangaliliu and Natapao. During the four-year application process for World Heritage listing, these communities set up a community-based tourism development project. Their cultural heritage tour company is community owned. The community’s World Heritage and Tourism Committee manages it. This project helps to keep visitors and young people in the community interested and involved in local customs and traditions. It generates a small amount of funds for village development projects and activities. The council of chiefs from the area makes sure that the area is protected and maintained by the World Heritage and Tourism Committee.

Signs in Port Vila advertise tours of the Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site.

Photo: Sally Asker
Hellen Zacharie lives on Lelepa in Natapao and is the youngest member of the community’s World Heritage and Tourism Committee. The committee has an equal number of women and men on it. Helen guides tour groups around the sites. She talks about why she thinks the Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site is important.

Roi Mata is important because it’s part of our identity. Through the legendary chief, we now have family and friends around Efate. If not for Roi Mata, we’d have tribal wars. Now we live in peace and, when we travel, we have friends everywhere.

(left) Hellen Zacharie guides visitors at the Chief Roi Mata’s Domain World Heritage Site.
Photo: Sally Asker

(below) Local guides take part in traditional performances depicting the time of Chief Roi Mata.
Photos: Chris Ballard

Managing Risks and Threats to the Survival of our Heritage

Chief Roi Mata’s Domain needs to be carefully managed and looked after for the future. Our cultural and natural heritage is fragile and is threatened by different risks and pressures.

Natural Risks

In the past, natural risks, including major cyclones, have damaged reefs, coastal areas and communities in Vanuatu. Earthquakes are common and can cause significant damage to parts of Roi Mata’s Domain. For example, in 2002, an earthquake struck the island of Efate and caused part of the mouth and roof of Fels Cave to collapse.

Human Pressures

Tourism could have negative impacts on the site if it is not managed appropriately. Visitor numbers need to remain in balance with the environment. If groups become too big and frequent, issues such as trampling on plants, moving artefacts and leaving rubbish could spoil the site. Pressure on land owners from new residential developments near Mangaas and pressure to sign lease agreements on Efate pose risks to the area next to the domain.

To ensure the legacy of this World Heritage site and its natural values, social and cultural benefits need to be carefully planned for and monitored so that risks and pressures are managed.
Ways that You Can Help to Promote and Conserve Chief Roi Mata’s Domain and Other Sites of Natural and Cultural Significance

Students play a very important role in promoting and conserving heritage and heritage sites. Hellen Zacharie believes that every student can make a difference. She believes that “a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step”. You can:

• Appreciate your local natural and cultural heritage by helping to protect and promote its value.
• Talk to your elders about your cultural heritage and listen and learn from them so that you can teach your own families in the future.
• Tell others about the importance of your local natural and cultural heritage.
• Support and contribute to the work of your local community to conserve areas of importance.
• If you visit a site of cultural or natural importance, be sure to respect the site and leave only footprints. Take away only memories.

Can you think of any other actions you could take?
Chief Roi Mata’s Domain Site Management Plan

A major challenge for World Heritage conservation is balancing visitor pressures and other natural and human risks and threats with protecting a site for the future. Consequently, each site requires a carefully developed management plan.

In small groups, create a management plan using the following format. Examples are given in the first two rows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Features</th>
<th>Possible Risk/Threat/Issue Related to the Feature</th>
<th>Management Action or Solution to Reduce the Risk/Threat/Issue</th>
<th>Who Should Be Responsible for the Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fels Cave paintings</td>
<td>An earthquake could make the cave roof or mouth collapse or visitors touching the paintings could be destroying them</td>
<td>Strengthen the cave roof with metal brackets and educate visitors so that they do not touch the paintings</td>
<td>Local community, National Museum of Vanuatu, Vanuatu Cultural Centre and Chief Roi Mata’s Domain tour guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred stones</td>
<td>Visitors moving them</td>
<td>Educate visitors about the importance of the stones and what happens if the stones are moved</td>
<td>Chief Roi Mata’s Domain tour guides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo: Sally Asker
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<tr>
<th>Site Features</th>
<th>Possible Risk/Threat/Issue Related to the Feature</th>
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Assessment

Please refer to your ministry or department of education’s guidelines on assessment as you plan your teaching for this unit. Design an assessment activity for each of the subject areas that are covered by the unit linked to the specific outcomes for each curriculum area. Write these assessment activities in the space below.

Assessment Plan
Glossary

Artefact: A human-made object that gives information about the culture of its creator and users.

Conservation: The protection and management of natural and cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage: The heritage of cultural artefacts (such as fishing spears and pounding stones) and cultural items you can’t touch (such as music and songs).

Intangible culture: Living cultural expressions and traditions (including songs, music, drama, skills and crafts) that were typically passed down orally by our ancestors.

Kastom stories: Oral stories that combine spiritual and physical elements to explain things in the physical environment.

Likana: A large coral head.

Munuwai: A magic specialist.

Naflak: The social structures and practices that are associated with clan identities, which are passed down through women.

Naleoana: A competitive feast.

Natamwate: The peace feasts that ended the great Efate war.

Natkar: Chiefly power.

Natural heritage: Landscapes, landforms, plants, animals and other natural features.

Tamtam: A slit drum.

Tapu: Forbidden.

References


Acknowledgments

The UNESCO Office for the Pacific States would like to thank the Vanuatu Ministry of Education, its Curriculum Development Centre and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre for their assistance during the development and trialling of this unit. Thank you to the Manaliliu and Natapao communities, to Hellen Zacharie, and to the World Heritage and Tourism Committee for sharing their stories; to Meredith Wilson and Chris Ballard for making their research accessible to all; to Ralph Regenvanu, the former director of the National Museum of Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, who helped obtain World Heritage status for Chief Roi Mata’s Domain; to Cindy Dube for her contribution to the background research for this unit; and to Eratap Primary School and North Vila School for trialling the unit.

Our Place World Heritage is a New Zealand-based project dedicated to promoting the World Heritage sites to the widest possible audience. This major global project has partnership status with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and aims to raise awareness of the world’s heritage so that it can be protected and preserved for future generations. The Our Place World Heritage photograph collection can be viewed at www.ourplaceworldheritage.com

Also consulted:


