



## Necklace (Wasekaseka)

**Date**

19th Century

**Medium**

Sperm whale tooth and fiber

**Description**

Adornment with necklaces is a shared trait of nearly all Oceanic cultures. For Fijians, using whale teeth for

adornment had a special importance due to the strong connection to the ocean, but the difficulty of acquiring whale teeth meant that they first came to prevalence in the early 19th Century. Previously, shells had been the main element of necklaces. Though sperm whales do have curved teeth, which gives the individual ‘tusks’ their curvature, each tooth is individually sawed into about seven different tusks which are then polished until smooth. There are citations of teeth necklaces being worn atop one another like ruffles. Various fiber bindings were used to connect the teeth. We can see here that holes drilled through the teeth ensured the fiber cord could only be seen from behind.

**Dimensions**

13 × 12 3/4 × 1 5/8 in. (33 × 32.4 × 4.1 cm)