

TOPIC: PROTOCOL(INSTALMENT OF NEW CHIEF)

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YASAWA. M 83yrs

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INSTALMENT OF NEW CHIEF

- Can you tell me something about the traditional way in which a new chief here in Tamasua is chosen and instaled?

Very well. I have seen this ceremony done, the instaling of a new chief for this yavusa(big clan, including I TOKATOKA and MATAQALI) of Tamasua. The descendants of those people who belong to the group of people who are responsible for the choosing of a new chief and later that nominee is going to be made chief of the village of Tamasua. These people belong to the group of NASESAVU, and they belong or is a group under the I TOKATOKA of NAMOLI and they come under the YAVUSA of TAMASUA.

A long time ago when they decided to pick a new chief they went out to the usual place where this ceremony is done. All the chiefs here in this village went there. They went to this stone which gives the decision on who to become chief. The name of this place where this stone is situated is Namoli. Also for the people who are responsible in the choosing of the new chief, they come also from the I TOKATOKA of Namoli. As named after the place where the stone stands. We have their people alive today. At this place where the stone stands, they have made a house for it, and the name of this house where the stone is kept is called BETONISAU. This is where the stone for the instalment of a chief is kept and protected.

These people who belong to the I TOKATOKA of NAMOLI come up to this stone near the house, and they are to pick a person whom they think best for the position of chief and to lead the people. This is like they come to confirm everything with the stone and also to beg the stone to give them the right choice. They arrive at the stone where they remain standing outside near the door. Then they think of the best people who fit this new position.

They pick one person, only one name is picked. Then again they pick someone else who should go inside the house to inform the stone of who they have in mind. He goes in and he stands there near the door when he is inside and he tells the name of this person whom they want to make chief.

They have chosen a name and say they have picked Anitivasa or Petemeo. The name is announced and the stone listens to this name. If the stone agrees or does not agree with the name, there is a way in which this thing is shown. There is a sign which he gives and this person who came in to bring the message knows what it means once the sign is given. If the stone does not agree with the name they have picked he makes a farting sound. He makes this sound when he does not agree with the name picked by the people who are responsible for the choosing of a new chief. The man who called out the name return outside and again they think of another name discuss it and then he goes back inside to report. And again this stone made this sound. Again he came out to inform those people of what had happened, they think of another name, as for all the names which they picked, the stone made this sound to show he does not agree and then they decided to ask him whom he thinks best. They have thought of all the people of Tamasua who lives in other places and has the right to hold

this title, but the stone kept on refusing it and does not agree with them. So, they returned to the village where they spend their time thinking of who should be the right one. A man came to the village of Tamasua and his name is TINALEVU. He lives in NATAVOTAVO in NADALA district. He came to this place where they have the BETONISAU and he rested there. But when he was travelling around, he decide to stop over here in Tamasua so ehd did just that. When he came to this village, it is right at the time when this group of people were having trouble with names to ask to the stone. They have not come up yet with a name of a right person.

The next time they took a trip to this stone to call out more names the stone spoke to them this time and said, "Go down to the beach and when you look up, coming down the path is a man, this is the one whom I have chosen to be the chief of Tamasua village. Hang the MASI for theinstalment of a chief over him."

They came down to thisplace and when they looked around, they found Tinalevu coming along the way. They came up to him and they asked him to come with them. He was later told of what the stone have decided for him. The news of the coming instalation was taken around to all the people of Tamasua living out. Also, other important people were informed. The news of this coming ceremony was taken as far as Nadala, Nabekevu, and to Lau and other places where the people of Tamasua have made their homes. The people arrive at the village to witness the instalment of their chief.

They all waited there at the village called SUETOLU which is near to the big church there in Yasawa. They were told to gather here since the ceremony will take place there. They brought food and everything which they know is important for this day and other gifts.

When Tinalevu left this place he went up to this other village where he thought he is going to take a rest. That is when he was coming to Tamasua and before anything of this excitement happened, of his being chosen chief. The only reason why he wanted to stay here for a little while in the village of Tamasua because a heavy rain came and he was right there, so he went up to this place called ROGOUA (an old place where they once had a house, but it is all gone). He went into this house where he planned to rest.

Not long of his being there, the people who pick the chief came to him and they asked him to come to Suetolu after what I have already told you about have occurred. So he was made chief of the village of Tamasua. It does not mean that he is the chief of all the villages here in the Yasawas, but the only main thing for his being made chief is that he could lead his people to any place where they might have a meeting, he could represent ~~him~~ them in anything which deals with Fijians.

The instalment ceremony took place, and the chief -to-be and the other chiefs of each mataqali stayed with the new chief inside this house. After they have done all the necessary ~~informal~~ ceremonies, people return again to their own homes and districts. But for all the people in Yasawa, they came to witness this ceremony.

When it is time for them to instal this new chief, we all stayed in one house, the new-chief-to-be and the rest of the important men in the village. We are called YVUSA BULI (people responsible for the choosing of a new chief). This is how we instal a new chief here in Tamasua when ~~a~~ the former chief dies. That is all.

- I really like your report on this topic of instalment of a new chief held here in your village. Can you tell me the meaning of the word

BETONISAU, you told me that this is related to this stone which the people ask....

This stone is the one which tells them that this is the right person for this position. He is the one who makes the final decision. They have a house which they call the BETO (means house) and inside this house they have this stone. If they do not have anything to do with this stone, then the door to this house is kept close all the time. Only when they need to have a new chief do they go to this stone and making recommendations and the stone is going to give the final decision. This is how the selection of the chief is made in this village.

- I heard that the stone is going to speak to the people, and also if they mention a name which he does not agree on, he is going to make this farting sound. Can you explain how they come to inform the stone of the names of the chief, and also how do they say it....

Very well. In those days, people do not speak like the way we do today, for them they can communicate with their Vu (originators) who tells them what to do. They are wanted in all parts of their life, when they are confused of something the gods or originators help them out and the only way they communicate with people is by showing some signs like this one of the stone talking to them.

This stone which talks to the people, make these important rely on him to make the best decisions. If they pick on someone and the stone reply with a IO (yes), then they are going to do that. And if he does not reply with a yes but a farting sound, then it means no.

- I really like your story of chief installing held here in this village. Can you tell me of all the things which they use when it is time to

do this ceremony?

We have this group of peopl who perform the ceremonies and all that other things relating to chief instalment. They use this things the tabua and the masi, but now they also use yaqona, but for the yaqona it is something which is used today but not during those days. I am not really sure if they do use this yaqona ceremony or it is not yet introduced. Today, they have the yaqona ceremony as the utmost important part of the ceremony. When it is time to show that he is now chief, they present the tabua to him and they place the piece of masi over him. This is all.

THANK YOU.

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