

TOPIC: FARMING Investigator: Jovillist P. M. ...

INTERVIEWED: Tantele Momelevu.....Yasawa-i-Rara, Yasawa.

SUBJECT: FARMING

- Could you talk to me about traditional Farming in this

village of Yasawa-i-Rara.

Talk to me about the methods and beliefs when they do their

farming.

Thank-you. Farming is one of the most important part

of our daily life since we all eat everyday in order to

survive and to work.

In yasawa, we always do a type of farming for the Tui

Yasawa which is called TARI. The meaning of the word TARI

is that the farming should be done in the traditional way

by everyone in the island of Yasawa. Firstly, the meeting

or Bure-Kalon when to have the TARI is usually done by the

Yasawa Rara but before it reached the Yasawa, it was

initiated by a Tokatoka within the Yasawa called YAVUSA

HARA. Yasawa Ratu decides and to see that it is done in

the traditional way before the news reaches the Yasawa.

This farming is usually done in June, After the Yasawa

Ratu meeting, the news is passed to Tokatoka Yawini and

NAPALAU and finally to the village heralds or Mats ni

Vanna or either the TOKATOKA NAKAKUUIU to approve the decision made by YAVUSA RATU when to have the TARI. When the news has been spread throughout YAVUSA RARA, which includes eight TOKATOKA, the village heralds or Mata ni Vanna will than pass the message to YAVUSA YASAWA which also includes eight TOKATOKA that they've decided a particular day to have the TARI. Then a village meeting is called for everyone to know what to do during the TARI. The message is then passed to the other five villages within the island of Yasawa. The preparation begins with the villages of Yasawa-l-Rara, which consists of two Yasawa the task of feeding the men from throughout the island of five villages. Before that, they are organised in groups to fish turtle, using nets, for the feast after the TARI. Since there are two Yasawa, they do their own fishing on their own beach or reef. Competition is on who catches the largest and the amount of turtles. They do their tasks in respect of their chief and tradition, while the men are doing their fishing, women prepare fine mats for the VAKAMAMACA or gifts for men planting the TARI. Tabua, Yagons and food are prepared before the big day comes for the TARI to be planted. Today food items such flour, sugar, rice and tea also included, after the preparation, turtles would reach the amount of twenty to twenty five. Then the chosen place for the TARI is prepared, their will

be five huge plots prepared for the Yam. One plot measuring fifty yards by fifteen yards and one village is in charge of one plot. Yam is the only food crop planting in a YARI because in Yasawa yams are regarded as a magiti Vakaturaga or chiefly food. Preparation of the place usually take quite a long time because of the weeding and clearing until it is ready for ploughing. When the day comes for ploughing to be done, village representatives in Yasawa-i-Rara leave for their villages respectively and approach their Mataniwana or Village Heralds to announce that the men leave straight away to Yasawa-i-Rara for ploughing. On that day the two Yasawa in Yasawa-i-Rara will be divided to play there different roles. Yasawa Rara will leave for the chosen place to prepare breakfast and lunch for those doing the ploughing. When the men arrive on the place, there are ceremonies performed such as Galoqalovi. Approaching the place to be ploughed, there'll be two tabua hanging on a pole. People from Tamusua will receive the tabua. One for Galoqalovi or a tabua presented to welcome them and the other tabua was meant for "i dege ni mata i va" or orders to start ploughing. One interesting point is that these two tabua was not presented in the usual way of presentation, it was just left hanging on the pole and when it was seen by the men, they knew what it meant. It is very interesting to see the men dressed in Fijian way approach the place with their forks and knives and one point why Tamusua received the Tabua apart from other villages was that

there is a relationship between Yasawa-l-Rara and Tamusua Village. This relationship is that the chief of Tamusua acts as servant to the Tut Yasawa in any ceremony such as the TARI which involves the whole island of Yasawa. After the ceremony the Mataniवानु then directs the men to their plots according to their villages respectively. Then the ploughing starts, villages competes who finishes his plot first and Bukama Village is known to have won all the competition so far. From what I saw at that time when Bukama finished his plot, they sing songs or Vucu. The words describe that they've finished their plot and all about planting. When Yasawa Rara heard the singing or Vucu, they know that a certain village has finished his plot. The singing starts one after another village which tells Yasawa Rara their position until the fifth village. When they heard the last village, Dalomo, the Mata niवानु will present a tabua called Nai Vakatala or to invite them for lunch. The lunch prepared in those days ranges from the best Fijian recipe and it was prepared in traditional Fijian style. After lunch it was announced that it was time for planting and as we know, every person from each village contributes one yam towards the TARI for planting. When they leave for planting, Yasawa Rara will also leave for the village to get prepared for the next ceremony. Everybody will then go to the village after planting and when they approach the village, the women in the village will be

preparing for the ceremony.

This ceremony is done to welcome the men planting the TARI to the village and it is usually done by women holding sticks with long piece of cloth tied at the end of the stick.

When the men arrive at the village, they will chase the women until they catch them when the davi is sounded. The route which the women will run leads to the village green or rars where all gifts of mats, food, turtles and small items piled and where the rest of the ceremony will be done.

This ceremony of presentation of gifts is called SOLEVU. After the presentation, the women will perform a meke after which the Tui Yasawa will make a speech to thank everyone who took part in the TARI and after the speech.