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FUNERAL.

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TITLE: FUNERAL.

- Could you talk to me on the subject - Funeral. The typical of a traditional Fijian Funeral in the olden days. The step by step taken concerning the funeral and their meaning in the olden days.
- We people, I only know about us Fijian we have a place or a village for spirits. This place for spirits is called NAICOBOCOBO which is in Bua, Vanua-Levu. This village is a small rocky island by itself in the ocean which belongs to a couple. The man is known as ROKOUA and his wife is called NAIOBA. In their island lives a governor, this governor acts as a prisoner officer. This governor's job is to punish the spirits that comes to the island. He gives the punishment to the spirit that comes to the island. When a person dies his spirits will go straight to the land of the spirits that is NAICOBOCOBO. If he is to swim he will swim across. Across NAICOBOCOBO there is a place called the NAVUNIEVU: all dead people spirits from all over the place are to go through NAVUNIEVU before they reach NAICOBOCOBO. As spirits go through to NAICOBOCOBO villagers here get to know the place and know very well if the spirit passing by is from a nearby village or from across the shore. If the spirit is from a nearby village

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- or the place spirits follows the right track to NAICOBOCOBO if it is a stranger the spirit will bump on to trees and crashing on to mountains looking for the track to NAICOBOCOBO. Passing through the NAVUNIEVU village to the sea shore the spirits comes face to face with a huge bamboo tree called the VUNIGASAU-LEKA. The bamboo tree is just short and you can easily see me ~~standing~~ over the tree standing from that side. But you won't be able to look me down or see me through this tree because it is very thick. The tree is short but very wide and through the tree unless you look over the bamboo tree you won't be able to find me. In the past there use to be saying that if there is a dispute between two people they say to each other "O.K" well meet at the VUNIGASAU-LEKA this is the what they refer. At the sea shore near the VUNIGASAU-LEKA is a tree called the VUNI- BALAWA- VIRIKI. When a person dies his relatives are to go and search for a tabua that is to be placed on the dead man's chest. This tabua is known as the VATU \* ni - BALAWA or the stone for the Vuni Balawa Viriki. When the dead man or the spirit reaches this place he is to use the tabua which was placed on his chest. If this target is right and the Vatu ni Balawa hits the Vuni Balawa Viriki his journey across the sea to NAICOBOCOBO will smooth hand round the VUNIGASAU LEKA; that is the huge bamboo tree not knowing the way across the sea. This also applies to those who do not know the way across to NAICOBOCOBO. For there is no fairy.

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- or transport to take him across the sea. This also applies to those who do not have any VATU NI BALAWA, because they will have nothing to aim the Vunibalawa Viriki wutg so their punishment is to go around and the round huge bamboo tree. When the aim hits the target the Vunibalawa Viriki the dead man or the spirit calls across to URAIAMU, the fairyman who takes the spirit across the sea to NAICOBOCOBO saying URAIAMU bring the canoe'.

URAIAMU's canoe has names to both streamline facing of the canoe. The stern and the back, the stern is called the MUA VESI and the back is called the MUA DOLOU - or the breadfruit side. When the spirit calls for Uraiamu's canoe he will reply "MUA CAVA" or "WHAT SIDE" ?

If the spirit is a chief he will answer the Mua Vesi if he is a Commoner he will call for the Mua Dolou. So the Mua Vesi will be facing towards the land as he paddles on shore.

If a chief has called for the Mua Vesi.

On the other side waits the Governor, NAQANAQA and his wife LIKU Sui. In the olden days there use to be a saying that NAQANAQA is the Bachelor boss. Here Naqanaqa waits with his wife Liku-Sui. Her clothing are the bones of Bachelors who come to the land of the spirit. As the spirit arrives on land (Naicobocobo). He will be taken to the governor, Naqanaqa the governor will then ask him.

"Had God bless you and given you a wife in the land of the living ? Were you married in the land of the living ?

Did you use God created being when you were back on earth ?

God created you so that you could use your strength, your mind and your body as well.

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- If your answers are 'no' to his Questions then he will take you to where spirits are punished. Here there is long rope that is used for hanging spirits. Below this rope is a stern sharp stone where spirits are to stand before they are hanged. A little further from this standing stone are two huge rocks. After the spirits is being hanged on the rope his body will be thrown over the standing stone to the two sharp rocks below. Here the spirits penis which he did not use on earth will be break into halves and smashed. This is his punishment for not using his organs which was made to be used. Here he is suffering the result of not having a wife back on earth. If you go to this place you will still be able to see the standing rocks the ropes and two sharp stones where body are thrown to and men's organ's are punished.

Liku Sui, the governor's wife would say 'my clothing are dirty' I need a change, I need a change, the husband will then answer and say 'Do not worry there are handsome bachelors crossing over the island. This is how things goes in this island. Only the bachelors will be judged by Naqanaqa the governor of this island.

Little children are not brought here, they do not come to this place. When travelling across the oceans to NAICOBOCOBO the spirits go across the coral reefs. Short trees called the VUNI TIRI TABUA line the path to Naicobocobo. These trees are covered with TILOKO, from the tree tops to the bottom. This fruits are said to be the spirits of children

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- If you want to prove this you could follow the spirits path to NAICOBOCOBO. Say two of your children died. When you come to this coral reef with Vuni Tiri Tabua that line both sides. You will feel that two Tiloko's will jump on you. The first thing of the first Tiloko is the spirit of your child who died first and the second one who will jump on your shoulder is the spirit of the second child who died later. After the travelling this place for sometimes you see the Tiloko will jump back to the trees and you will finish the journey yourself. You will know here that those Tiloko's are the spirit of your two children.
  - How about the Good People or the Righteous spirit will they also have the Vatu ni Balawa.
  - Yes, all has to have the Vatu ni Balawa. The difference he is only judge those who did not use their body in marriage life back in the place of the living. This is where the difference is, Naqanaqa will only judge those who are not married before they died.
  - How about the ladies or spinisters ?
  - Yes, the spinister's too, they will all be judged here.
  - Which way will the spinisters follow. Where will they be taken ?
  - They all go to the same place. To the same sharp stones, their body will be thrown to. They be treated just as bachelor's are treated.
- The Righteous have a special place where they only hear songs of praise and meke.

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- I heard a story and it may sound rude but I have been able to his place and I have proved this story. This is a story about the couple who owes this island, Naicobocobo.

I have been to this place and I have seen it. The couple have changed to stones. The man sits side ways is the image or sculpture of a real man. This is Rokoua. With his penis hanging. Opposite Rokoua is Naioba's wife. Well Naioba is just a real sculpture of a woman. She was not sitting properly and between her things runs a small stream. If we are to touch this water the smell if this water will remain on you for sometimes. This stream is just YASI TABU KASI which is used for oiling brides body for her wedding. The smell is so sweet that it is very hard to give away this particular oil. People in the olden days believe that this is the bleeding from this lady Naioba. The sculptures and the little stream is still there today.

The story of the Vuni Balawa Viriki is also true. The Vuni Balawa Viriki is still there and the Vatu ni Balawa to the Vuni Balawa Viriki. At times villagers hear of shouting of the spirits looking for the way to Naicobocobo. These are the spirits looking for the way to Naicobocobo. These are the spirits who missed the target round and round the Vuni Gasau Leka. Here the lost spirit calls from one side of the Vuni Gasau Leka and another lost spirit answers it from this side and they will be just running around this Vuni Gasau Leka.

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- Before coffin was introduced to Fiji. How was our people in the olden days buried.
  - They are buried just like us but they are wrapped in mats, as their coffin. Before the olden days old men are buried in their own bure. When someone dies they dig the grave in the house and bury the dead person in there. Then all the village men will come to this particular bure and do the BIKABIKA.
- The Bikabika's sat on the grave for four nights and a magiti is prepared. This is what we call the BIKABIKA to sit on the grave.
- Will this house be used again ?
  - Yes the house will be used again by the dead man's children and wife.
  - I use to hear that in the olden days chiefs are not buried in graves was only introduced when Christianity came.
  - That what I do not know. But the only thing I know is that people are buried in their own homes.
  - Who will be there to take the dead man's lands etc.
  - It is for his children.
  - Some say that in the olden days when someone dies his head or skeleton ~~xx xxxx xxxxxx~~ ~~skelton of brave warriors~~ is kept is that true ?
  - Yes only some people skeletons or head are kept. These are the skeletons of wise people skeletons of brave warriors.
  - They undug the grave to bring the skeleton?
  - Yes, they do that after sometimes when flesh is gone and only skeleton is left.

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- They bring this and worship it. This will be his guard or shield and it will give him power to be a brave warrior and to kill people.

They bring this not just for fun but for worship.

- Could you talk more on this matter - how they dig the skelton drink the yaqona they have mixed. In Fijian we say (E ra vagunuva) like they feed the skelton or the head which they have brought.

- Will the person who goes to dig for the skelton go alone or with others.

- Yes it can be anybody. His relatives or anyone who wants to worship him. A thief can also rob the skelton from the grave. That take him as their shield in the time of the war. These are demon worships.

- That is looking for power ?

- Yes, when the skelton is been worshipped it goes about. The worshipper does the mixing of the yaqona and what not and the skelton will go about killing people which the worshipper wants to kill. That is what I hear but I have not seen it.

There is a house down in Suve where they have kseltons and heads of dead people. Europeans go to this place to worship, asking or wishing to be rich or asking for wisdom. But we Fijians we do the opposite we do all this so that when some one is promoted we ask for the spirit to smite him. When a kid goes up to Uni, we ask the spirit to do the killing instead of asking for wisdom etc.

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- Some ask for talents like composures of meke etc.
- Just say my two children are dead and I die after them. Will we meet in the land of the spirit.
- No, your children will behappy at the coral island where as you will be taken to Naicobocobo. We won't know each other in the land of the spirit.
- Some people say that after sometimes when the dead is burried his spirits comes back and is possessed by someone.  
What do you think.
- This is how it goes. If a young man say with a good job dies suddenly without any sickness. This relatives will suspect that an evil spirit had killed theyoung man. To know what happens the relative of the dead man will take the lamp and hang it on the top of the grave. This is on the fourth night. It is belived that dead people spirits stands up and go about on the fourth night. The lamp is to be lighted and the village is to be quite. Just opposite the grave yard is a house where a relative of thedead person lays asleep. When everything is ready and quite one of the dead man's relatives will come to the grave with a coconut leave and call for the spirit to sit on the coconut leaf. The dead man's spirit will than sit on the cocnut leaf and the relative will drag the leaf to the house where someone is asleep. The house which is prepared for the spirit. No one is to go across this two's path or meet them on the way until they have reached thedoor of the prepared house. Here the relative will say to the spirit 'would you please enter' the house.

- The spirit will then enter the house and will go straight to the sleeping man. This sleeping man will then be possessed by the spirit and he will tell everyone present there the reason he died early. Who fed the spirit to kill him and all this. That is what we call the YARATAKI SASA.

Others use mats to drag the spirits home. They tie both side of the mats and call for the spirit to journey home.

When they hear the squaking and rambling on the mat they know that the spirit is there. Sometimes banana leaves are used for dragging the spirits home. Here the leaves are not to get torn.

- Does this spirit really belongs to the particular dead man.
  - That is what I do not know. But the spirit enters the sleeping person and show up every hidden secret that is sometimes how we have to dispute in the village. It is because of this.
  - Some say that when the spirit comes back they become as shields to us, to watch us.
  - Yes they do that when you hates someone the spirit goes and kills. That is how they go, but this days we hardly do this.
  - When people die they only dress in masi or .....?
  - Yes they are dressed with masi. Sometimes they are wrapped with mats sometimes they are just burried without being wrapped.
- If you go to Bau now you will see the coffins of the old Baun chief's. Ratu Seru in his coffin and others. A new grave dug built in cement and the body are burried in here again. When a chief of Bau dies there are special tribe from the village will announce his death to other villagers.

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- They are called the MATA NI VEIBULU MAI BAU. In Bau there are only two tribes who handles the body of the chiefs those in Bua and Namuka. Thsi are the tribe who are digging the graves in Bau now. Transferring or taking the chief's body to their new graves. They are presented with a magiti to do this job. They are the only ones who are able to touch the chief's skelton.

When a chief from Bau dies the news is taken up to this two villagers with a SEVUSEVU. The chief's of thsi two village will then announce the death of the chief to the villagers. This two are than to go down to Bau to dig the grave for the chief. In the past it takes ten days before the grave is doneand the chief is burried.

They use ti be weeping andmourning in this two villagers because when the men goes down to dig the chiefs grave some of them will also be the 'COCONI QARA' that ~~does this~~ is to be burried with the chief. The man who does this job will stay at the grave until the chief is burried. They will have to sleep there if they want to, their yaqona and cigarette are brought and they do not eat the food from the kitchen before the chief is burried. Their food is the plant called the KURU which they toast it in the open fire and eat.

When the grave diggers goes down to Bau to dig the grave they will also bring with them the magiti which is prepared by the villagers. This magiti is the BURUA of the one who will be chosen by the chief to be the COCONIQARA.

When the grave is been dug and the fneral is about to take placē

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- the chief of Bua and Namuka would come up and tell some grave diggers to jump down and clean the bottom properly.

Then they would call the rest out and leave two in the grave.

This two are th ones who will be burried with the chief.

They are the ones who will be burried with the chief.

They are the COCONIQARA , then the rest would go down to the house where the chief's body lies and carries him up to the grave. The two COCONIQARA will lie flat on theground and the body of the chief will lie on top of them. This is how things go in the old times in Bau.

This came to an end when Adi Cakobau's father died. Adi Cakobau send a messenger up to the two village with a Sevusevu and asking them to come down and dig Ratu Seru's grave. When the messenger reached this two village the villagers were both vacant. He came back and told Adi Cakobau that the villagers had run away. So Adi Cakobau send themessenger up again with a tabua, telling him to tell the villagers that no one is going to be burried with the chief of COCONIQARA because Christianity was accepted in Bau. So here the practice of people being burried with chief's came to an end.

- I refer to what you said about the BIKABIKA, this is only done by the ladies or ?

- If a man dies man will do the Bikabika. If the woman dies then the ladies will do the Bikabika. But now it seems that only ladies are doing the Bikabika.

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- I heard when a chief dies only the beat of the lali is heard.
- In Bau when a chief dies there is no weeping heard. Only the beat of the laiis heard and tears flows. No weeping is heard. Only those who are very close cries like in whispering. No commoners is allowed to cry. I was one who went to the Bikabika of Adi Cakobau only few ladies cry was heard. They just burst out and closed again. This is how the thing goes in the past. Thank you.

T H E            E N D